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Life Out of the Fast Lane:

Getting to know
Charles Mooney III,
former lead guitarist
of the Toadies

Possum Kingdom is more
than a great place to spend
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In Love and Public Service:

Mayor Nin and
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The Beauty of the Longest Day of the Year

Midsummer nights leave me both rested and restless. Rested because this time of the year is less organized and traditional; somewhere between weddings, school graduations and the autumn holidays, this season allows time for stolen shuteye and weekends at home. The days are long though, almost too long. I find myself drained before the sun goes down, then immediately feeling regret for not packing in more checked off to-dos while there's still daylight.

Just when we're ready to buckle under the never-ending status of limbo, the summer solstice approaches, a new cycle, a turning point for our calendars and our minds. The longest day of the year is an ascendancy of all we've accomplished (and can't remember) and an encore to the end of another chapter. Most noticeable, is the newfound energy and excitement we feel for the next season we recognize around the corner.

For this year's special solstice, hone in on this energy for the parties you know you'll host, the cherished friends and family you know you'll make an exception to see, for the end of chapters and for new beginnings. Inside this issue, you will find inspirational stories of perseverance, sounds of our youth, and time-honored Texas culture. Let them encourage and remind you of the strength you already have to face the known and unknown in this next walk.

See you when the pumpkin spice lattes begin to expire.





Melissa McGavock
MANAGING EDITOR



FROM OUR READERS

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Thank you again for all you do and all your hard work. Your publications look amazing and I look forward to a continued relationship between the Chamber and enVision.

**- Tammie Hines, Marketing and Communications Director
Granbury Chamber of Commerce**

First National Bank of Granbury is very pleased with the Lake Granbury Living publication! The magazine itself is beautiful and the quality of printing is exceptional. We feel as though the featured articles tie our community, local residents, and families together. Thank you LGL!

- Michelle Lucero, First National Bank Marketing Manager

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Summer Reflections



Dawn Skinner | Rachelle Pritchard | Melissa McGavock | Lindsey Haase

The lazy days of summer often give us time for reflection and contemplation. At Lake Granbury Living, we often find ourselves turning to the fascinating community that we live and work in.

As always, our goal is to be a true reflection of the beauty and intrigue that can be found in Granbury. But as anyone who lives here will tell you, these delightful details are best reflected in its people.

In this issue, you'll find the stories of some of the movers and shakers you're sure to have heard

of, hidden gems you didn't know were here, and features that reflect the lives and ideals of our charming town.

We hope that you'll enjoy reading about the people and places that make Granbury so great, and maybe even soak up the joy of one more lazy summer day.

Rachelle Pritchard

Rachelle Pritchard, CEO

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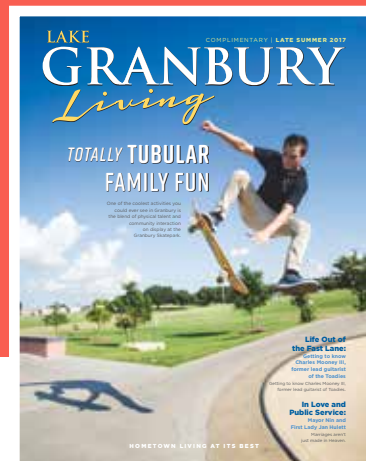
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ABOUT THE COVER

One of the coolest activities you could ever see in Granbury is the blend of physical talent and community interaction on display at the Granbury Skatepark.

Photo By: Layth Taylor

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Make Yourself at Home at Rooster's GuitarBQ

Words by [Tui Snider](#) | Photography by [Layth Taylor](#)

Most American restaurants are designed to seat you, dish up the food, then scoot you out the door as quickly as possible. Linger too long and the servers may give you the stink eye, as if to say: You are taking up valuable real estate. Move along!

Admittedly, there are times when I simply want to place my order, eat up, and hit the road. A trip to Roosters GuitarBQ, however, is not one of those

times. Dining here is a much different experience.

If you've ever thrown a backyard barbecue, you know the drill. Friends and family come and go through the day, some drink a beer or two, and there's lots of chit chat. It's the same at Roosters GuitarBQ. It truly feels like a laid-back country party. Plus, with three acres of lawn, the kids can run around and wear themselves out without getting underfoot.



If you are tense when you arrive, the friendly vibe at Roosters GuitarBQ quickly puts you at ease. Even the journey to get there, which includes a winding two-lane road through the countryside, helps set the scene. And don't worry if your GPS gets confused towards the end. Just keep an eye out for the rusty old pickup with a great big Texas flag waving beside it. That's how my husband, Larry, and I knew we had arrived.

It really did feel like we were crashing

a family gathering as we drove up. Roosters GuitarBQ had only been open for an hour, but a band was already playing and the lawn was dotted with clusters of people. Most had brought coolers and lawn chairs, but a few set up tarps to provide shade. Customers, yes, but everyone clearly felt right at home!

Owners Rooster Beane and his wife, Lori, are a dynamic team who make you feel welcome the moment you arrive. Speaking of teams, sports fans may recall

that Rooster was a kicker and offensive guard for the Dallas Cowboys during Tom Landry's reign. Around these parts, however, Rooster's claim to fame is his barbecue skills. In fact in 2011, Rooster was featured on an episode of the Travel Channel's television show, "Man v. Food."

Rooster and Lori like to keep things simple. "Our motto explains how we run things around here," Lori says, pointing to a chalk sign that reads, "Nothing



If you are tense
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the friendly
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Also known as Rocky Mountain Oysters, in Texas, typically these are seasoned and fried up calf or bull testicles.



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on the verge of ordering a hamburger when his Texan buddy said, “Hey, Tennessee boy, you need to eat some brisket.” According to Rooster, it was love at first bite.

Just as Rooster and Lori now divide their time between Tennessee and Texas, Rooster’s signature barbecue style is a marriage between those two states, as well. When I asked how this constant commute affects his cooking, Rooster confided that, “In Tennessee, we did more Texas style. Here in Granbury, we’ve brought a little of that Tennessee influence back with us.”

Portions are satisfying, so my husband and I were not able to eat our way through the entire menu. I’d heard rave reviews about their homemade banana pudding, but that will have to wait until next time. Everything we did sample, however, was hearty and flavorful. I especially enjoyed the brisket; it was tender, with a wonderful smokiness in every bite.

To get that deep flavor, Rooster uses

a 1000-gallon propane smoker. When they first opened three years ago, he used hickory wood. Once hickory got too expensive, Rooster switched to the “sister of hickory,” a.k.a. pecan.

The sides are tasty, too. The potato salad is creamy, and the coleslaw isn’t overly sweet (a pet peeve of mine.) My favorite side, however, is the Cowboy Beans. They are spicy, but I could’ve made a meal out of those beans with a slice of Texas toast to sop it all up.

I certainly could have lingered all day. Roosters GuitarBQ is more than a great barbecue joint, it’s a chance to kick back, chat with other diners, relax in the countryside and maybe even take a twirl around the dance floor while a band plays on the outdoor stage.

On my way out, I asked Rooster if he had any barbecue tips to pass along, to which he merely laughed and said, “Just take it low and slow.” Much like a visit to Roosters GuitarBQ, the end result is better if you take your time. ■LGL

Owners Rooster Beane and his wife, Lori, are a dynamic team who make you feel welcome the moment you arrive.





In Love and Public Service:

Mayor Nin and First Lady of Granbury, Jan Hulett

Words by **Jan Brand** | Photography by **Shad Ramsey Photography**

Marriages aren't just made in Heaven. Some of the best take place in Granbury.

Standing on the balcony of Granbury City Hall, Nin and Jan gazed into each other's eyes. With the sound of splashing fountains, birds trilling and family and friends looking on, the groom recited the words that the bride insisted be written into the groom's vows.

"I promise never to ask you to leave Texas."

Judge Andy Rash nodded. "You may now kiss the bride."

Jan Caldwell Hulett, who is now First Lady of Granbury, had reason to ask for such a promise, because her new husband had moved fourteen times during his career with General Motors. Like a true Texan, Jan viewed the Lone Star State as the center of the universe. Nin liked Granbury so well, he had already settled down and had no desire to leave. With a heart for the community, it comes as no surprise that Nin Hulett is now the city's mayor.



Running for mayor resulted from a conversation during a game of golf, when his golf buddies pointed out some concerns with the city operations.

Growing up on a farm in Bethany, Missouri, Nin learned about hard work and responsibility. On a farm, you never get a day off. There are cows to milk, seeds to plant and crops to harvest. He soon decided this wasn't the kind of work he wanted to do all his life. He didn't want to be a farmer.

Nin's mother put great confidence in her son's ability and willingness to work hard. She was forever loaning him out to help relatives or neighbors with their chores—anything from vacuuming his aunt's floor to mowing a neighbor's yard. She expected him to do a good job, even if it was without pay. A sense of achievement became its own reward. It was a lesson that would follow him for life.

Music brought relief from the monotony of farming. Nin's dad formed a family band that played for area carnivals and special events. He was an engaging man who loved to entertain. They mostly sang country and gospel. Nin also played in the local high school band.

When Nin finished high school, he joined the U.S. Army paratroopers so he could afford an education through the G.I. bill. He trained at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and spent a few months in Vietnam before the end of the war. After his discharge, he played drums and guitar in the Whiskey River Band in the Kansas City area.

When he went to work for General Motors, the company co-opted with the G.I. bill to pay his way through college while he worked. He received his Bachelor in Business degree from Park College in Parkville, Missouri, and began working his way up the corporate ladder at GM until his retirement as business manager of the GM, Arlington, plant.

In 2008, after a round of golf at Harbor Lakes Country Club, a lady friend asked Nin if he was dating anyone. She had someone in mind: Jan Caldwell. Nin agreed to meet her, and they clicked.

As Community Relations Director for Luminant Energy, Jan was known throughout the region for



her civic involvement. Nin's efforts to impress her fell short of the goal when he took her to nice restaurants and the patrons didn't notice him, but met their arrival with a friendly, "Hi, Jan."

Nin wasn't a man to be easily discouraged. If nothing else, his mother had taught him to never give up. He decided to use his musical talent to woo Jan. For years in Missouri he had faked the Spanish words to Freddy Fender's "Before the Next Teardrop Falls." The Missouri locals had no idea he faked the Spanish. Strumming his guitar and giving his best Latin lover rendition of Fender's song, he sang to Jan. When finished, she laughed. "Never do that again," she said. "My father was German. My mother was Mexican, and they came here from Mexico. I'm a second-generation immigrant from our neighboring country, and you just sang to me in an unknown language."

It was getting harder and harder to find a way to impress her. He finally sealed the deal after he realized they shared the same goal for a life of community service.

Like Nin, Jan was challenged to succeed and graduated early from Tarleton State, the first person in her family to get a college degree. Her driving desire was to leave the world a better place than she found it. After teaching high school for a brief time, Jan realized that wasn't her calling and applied for the job at Comanche Peak Nuclear Power Plant. For the next thirty-five years, she worked as an advocate for energy.

Since our lives revolve around energy, Jan's time was consumed keeping the business community and civic leaders informed about everything happening at Comanche Peak. She was sometimes called upon to spend time in Austin, lobbying energy issues.





It's important to them to be an ongoing part of the community and its progress.

When it became evident to others she was committed to making a difference, Jan was asked to join the board of groups and organizations that made an impact on the community. She was a founding member of the Granbury Education Foundation, which raises money for educational enrichment such as art, scholarships and field trips. She also serves on the board for the The United Way, Lake Granbury Beautification Council, Rotary Club of Granbury, and Lake Granbury Country Club.

Nin had been retired about a year when he met Jan, so now they had time to pay attention to everything happening in Granbury. Jan coming into his life validated the old adage that “iron sharpens iron.” Having someone to cheer his efforts caused him to kick into overdrive.

Running for mayor resulted from a conversation during a game of golf, when his golf buddies pointed out some concerns with the city operations. He told them if they didn't like it, they should run for office and change it. They had another idea, saying he was the one who should run. A seat was coming open on the city council, so Nin filed and won. During his

second year on the council, he was appointed mayor pro tem. Later that year, Mayor Ricky Pratt suffered a stroke, and Nin had to step in and assume the mayor's responsibilities.

In 2013, he ran for mayor and won. The time spent with General Motors made him a natural fit for the job. He says, “If you listen to people, they'll tell you what they need and help you succeed.” In addition to his mayoral responsibilities, Nin also serves on the Clean Air Coalition Board, Granbury Historic Properties Board, Optimist Club and the TV Advisory Board.

Even with their busy lives, the Huletts delight in time spent with their children and grandchildren. They hope to do more traveling and are excited about ongoing beautification efforts for the city parks and downtown area of Granbury. It's important to them to be an ongoing part of the community and its progress.

As schedules permits, you may see the Huletts do more traveling, but you can be sure they'll always be coming home to Granbury. After all, it's in their wedding vows. ■LGL



Pianist and composer, Danny Wright, makes music that touches and uplifts people every day, all over the world. www.dannywrightpiano.com



Moving "Forward" with Danny Wright

May 6, 2017

Photography provided by Annie Rose of First Fruits Photography

The mission of Forward Training Center (formerly Christian Women's Job Corp) is to educate, support, and inspire life changing growth in men and women.

For the benefit concert, Danny invited singer songwriter Elizabeth Wills to perform with him. Wills also paired with Wright for songs on his new album featuring original song "Pay it Forward", available on iTunes.

forwardtrainingcenter.org



RESTORE YOUR *Glow*



CARRIE L. MORRIS MD, FACS

“ *Many things have fallen into place since we have moved to Granbury and we feel this is the place we are suppose to be. I look forward to serving and getting involved in the community, which we have quickly fallen in love with and are grateful to be here. My passion is to listening to women, being able to offer them state of the art treatments, and restore their glow and confidence.”*

- CARRIE L MORRIS, MD, FACS

M meet Dr. Carrie Morris, Granbury's first and only Oculofacial Plastic Surgeon! She is also the owner and medical director of Radiance Wellness Spa. Dr. Morris is a nationally recognized board certified oculofacial plastic surgeon and cosmetic laser surgeon. She is one of a handful of plastic surgeons that has received subspecialty training in Oculofacial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery. She graduated at the top of her medical school class and received her specialty training at Duke and Vanderbilt. Her specialty involves cosmetic surgery of the eyelids and brows, blepharoplasty, eye socket surgery, and complex revisional eyelid surgery. Additionally, as a board certified cosmetic laser surgeon, she has expertise in CO2 laser resurfacing, laser hair removal, photofacials, chemical peels, sclerotherapy (vein treatment), Femtouch (vaginal laser rejuvenation), and Botox, Kybella, and filler injections.

Dr. Morris founded RWS to allow women an opportunity to sit down with an expert on skincare. The difference to my approach is actual one on one time with your surgeon in a relaxing environment. I have Partnered with Blushes Salon in Granbury where I fell in love with the ambience and beauty specialists where I am a client myself! Blushes has been recognized as the best Spa in Hood County for many years including 2016 and 2017.

At RWS, expect a customized treatment plan from Dr. Morris, whether it be hormone wellness using bioidentical hormone pellet therapy or skin rejuvenation procedures. She is also working with Propell, a nationally recognized bioidentical hormone company that delivers the most accurate and safest treatment, which maximizes results and improves the patient's well-being while minimizing side effects.

RWS provides medical spa services to both men and women, helping patients achieve a more youthful look while defying the aging process.

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To the Brink *and* Back

Words by **Brandy Herr** | Photography by **Shad Ramsey Photography**

*Paula McDonald transforms
a life of intense struggles
into one of empowerment
and inspiration.*

“What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger,” never rang truer than it does for Paula McDonald. In a life fraught with difficulty, McDonald chooses to turn each obstacle into an opportunity for growth. From health issues to heartache, she has now become a published author, a revered motivational speaker, a leading real estate agent, and a general inspiration for women everywhere.

A Granbury native, Paula McDonald’s struggle began at eighteen, when, upon applying for college, she noticed an anomaly on her birth certificate. Upon bringing it to her mother’s attention, she discovered the shocking confession that the man who had raised her was not her biological father, and that he had passed away two years earlier. She learned that she had a grandmother still living,

however she was in a coma in a Houston hospital. Filled with the determination that she must see this newfound relative before she passed, McDonald boarded a Greyhound bus in Fort Worth.

Paula McDonald arrived at the hospital and nervously approached the side of the bed where the frail woman lay as if sleeping. She lifted the woman’s hand and placed it, palm first, against her own, marveling at their identical size. As she stared, captivated by the hand of the grandmother she had never known, the elderly woman’s eyes fluttered open as she breathed, “Hello, Paula.” Her grandmother, who had been on her deathbed, lived on for six more years.

The doctors and hospital staff had called it a miracle. Paula McDonald, however, believes it to be an act of God.

"This picture is one of my favorites as it was taken two months after losing my lung. It embodies my true feelings of 'overcoming' and 'celebrating!'"



Though she had not been raised in a Christian household, she had always been drawn to the church and could never understand why. Her grandmother, with whom she became very close, had told her, "I have been praying for you for eighteen years!" McDonald knew, then, of the power of such a deep familial connection. According to McDonald, her grandmother "had prayed this bubble of protection over" her, standing in as a real-life guardian angel.

Because of this protective guidance, Paula McDonald went on to graduate from college with a degree in biology, never once being tempted to use drugs or otherwise stray, despite growing up in the tumultuous 1970's. The high school biology teacher married and had two children, living the ultimate idyllic life, complete with a literal white picket fence.

A self-proclaimed "health nut," McDonald was an avid runner, gymnast, and all-around athlete. That is why, in 2003, when she first felt a pain in

her back, she dismissed it as part of living an active lifestyle.

A friend, concerned about the pain, urged her to see a cardiac doctor. She trudged to the doctor, convinced it was a waste of time. The doctor assured her that her heart was fine, though he did hear something in her chest that caused concern. She consented to an X-ray, and then headed home.

The next day, Paula McDonald received, as she put it, "that phone call that changes your life." The X-ray indicated an enormous mass in her chest, and she was immediately referred to a thoracic surgeon in Houston. She arrived at his office, stunned to see people from all over the world in his waiting room. This surgeon was among an elite tier of doctors, having worked alongside the likes of Dr. Michael DeBakey. Still in denial that anything was wrong, especially anything that would warrant the need to visit such a high profile doctor, McDonald shook her



In a life fraught with difficulty, Paula McDonald chooses to turn each obstacle into an opportunity for growth.

head and thought to herself, “I shouldn’t be here.”

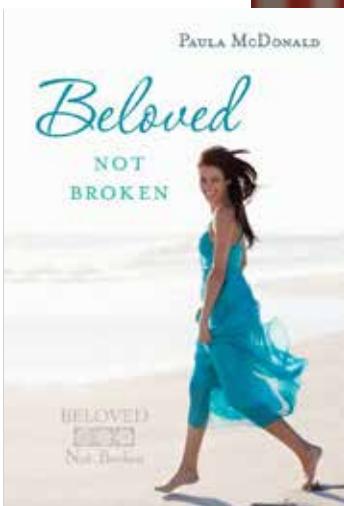
When it was her turn, an older man, bald, with bright blue eyes and cowboy boots protruding from his scrubs entered her examination room. He put her immediately at ease, and she knew that he would take good care of her. She was admitted to the hospital, where she underwent three days of tests with no results. The doctors finally theorized that it was non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma of the thymus gland, and the dangerous surgery would take place the following morning. The outlook was bleak as the staff told her, “We don’t give you much hope, so get your affairs in order.” That night, McDonald was joined by her husband and children to say good-bye. After they left, she stayed up to plan her own funeral, making music choices and writing out letters to loved ones.

When the anesthesia wore off, Paula McDonald found herself wide awake in the hospital bed with a different doctor at her side. He explained that he

was a neurosurgeon that had been called in because, as it turned out, the tumor was not on the thymus gland, but instead was completely wrapped around her spinal cord. He told her that he was amazed she wasn’t in a wheelchair with the severity of such a tumor, to which she laughed and said that she had just been running three days ago. She would require an additional surgery to remove the tumor from the spinal cord, which happened three months later.

Paula McDonald spent one long year recovering from both surgeries, making improvements little by little and working through the pain. Finally, after several excruciating months, she began feeling better and celebrated her new lease on life. Then, one day, it all came crashing down around her as her marriage of twenty-one years crumbled. As she fell into a stupor of self-pity, a friend encouraged her to join her at a women’s retreat. Fellowship with other, seemingly happier women was the last thing she wanted to do,

Challenges may still arise in the future, but Paula McDonald won't let that stop her from living for today. As she says, "People are so terrified, wondering when the next shoe will drop, that they forget to live."



but she begrudgingly agreed.

On the first night of the retreat, the speaker told each of the ladies to find a place alone with their Bibles, open it up to the first page they came to, and find a name that spoke to them. Paula McDonald flipped her Bible open with an air of petulance, convinced that God would

not be speaking to her then. Her eyes landed on Deuteronomy 33:12, which includes the word, "beloved." At the sight of that word, McDonald's world suddenly came into focus. Her divorce had left her feeling abandoned, with the belief that no one could ever love her. But she knew that she was wrong. She wasn't just loved by God, she was beloved.

Paula McDonald's newly developed strength led

her to transform her life. She took a risk and left her full-time teaching job with benefits to jump into real estate, a field she had always had interest in, but was never encouraged to pursue during her marriage. She remarried and moved back to Granbury to further her entrepreneurship. Though her life has still been far from easy, from another surgery that involved the entire removal of a lung to the formal adoption of her own grandson, McDonald maintains her positive outlook on life. Her experiences, and what she has chosen to take away from them, have led her to publish a book and become a life coach. In a sweet example of life coming full circle, she is now often asked to speak at women's retreats just like the one that had changed her life.

Challenges may still arise in the future, but Paula McDonald won't let that stop her from living for today. As she says, "People are so terrified, wondering when the next shoe will drop, that they forget to live." ■LGL



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DISCOVER HISTORY IN TEXAS COURTHOUSES



Words by [Dan Haase](#) | Photography provided by [Dan Haase](#)

Visiting courthouses is about appreciating history and celebrating the Texas spirit. Take a day trip with your family and explore a few. It's a great reason to explore the back roads of Texas.

Texas is blessed with a rich, varied history. County courthouses are an important part of that history. They represent the touchstones in many communities—a cathedral of democracy, if you will. It's where important legal records are kept. It's where courtroom trials occur, where you are better off being a juror than a defendant.

Courthouses can be fun to explore. About fifteen years ago, I began a quest to visit all the county courthouses in Texas. The vast majority of Texas courthouses are in small towns to which you might otherwise never go. I would encourage you to pack

up the kids and plan a weekday trip to see a few. You will discover a new town or two with true Texas character, see some interesting architecture, and meet some really nice people along the way. So see the countryside and have fun exploring some history!

Most Texas courthouse construction occurred in two distinct periods of time. The first major construction period began in the late 1800's. Courthouses from this period are quite ornate and detailed, with clock towers and other features. The second major construction period occurred during the Great Depression. Many of the courthouses from that era are white limestone Art Deco designs, generally fairly simple in detail.

Over the years, terrible things were done to some courthouses by well-meaning people. By the 1930's, those late 19th century courthouses just looked outdated to their citizenry. Some courthouses had their clock towers removed under the guise of being structurally unsound, and the exterior would then "modernized." In other cases, a still-serviceable courthouse was demolished so people could be put

Tarrant County
Courthouse stands
tall in Downtown
Fort Worth, Texas.





In the center of the Johnson County courthouse is a beautiful stained glass skylight.



A photograph of the Weatherford courthouse from 1939. (courtesy TXDOT)

to work building a new one during the Great Depression. The promise of federal financial assistance for the construction (through the Works Progress Administration, or WPA) was too much to resist in many struggling communities.

Despite these short-sighted alterations or demolitions, many courthouses survived until the movement to preserve our past took hold. In 1999, the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program was established, signed into law by Governor George W. Bush. The program identified candidates for restoration, and sought historic designations for them. Today, 136 Texas courthouses are on the National Register of Historic Places. To date, 63 courthouses have been historically restored with state assistance, and more are in various stages of planning.

I want to share some of my favorite small town courthouses and just a bit of each county's history, all within an easy drive from Granbury. You should plan a trip that includes a few of them and make a day of it. Let's start with the one right here in Granbury.

Hood County is named for Confederate General John Bell Hood. Fort Hood, the army base in Killeen, is also named for this man. The courthouse was built in 1890. The architect, Wesley Clark Dodson, designed thirteen Texas courthouses, six of which still stand today. Three are featured in this article.

The courthouse clock tower narrowly escaped removal after being damaged by a 1968 tornado.

The Ellis County castle-like courthouse is astonishing for its level of detail.



The community rallied to the tower's defense by convincing the county commissioners to not remove it. This nearly unprecedented historic preservation effort began a spark that led to downtown Granbury business owners reinvesting in their properties over the following decades, and the eventual restoration of the courthouse. It was rededicated in 2012.

Today, Granbury has what is likely the most intact and active courthouse square in the state, full of life and interesting things to see and do. The citizens of Granbury have every right to be proud of the efforts they and earlier generations have made to preserve their history.

Parker County is named for Isaac Parker, who served in both the Texas House and Senate. He introduced the bill to create the county. The courthouse is in Weatherford, and was built in 1886. The architect was again Wesley Clark Dodson.

The prominent location and distinctive red roof of this three-story white limestone courthouse makes it hard to miss. The exterior was restored in the early 1990's, and the heavily altered interior was restored in 2004. Park the car and pay this grand old lady a visit. Take in some of the small downtown shops, too, and be sure to see the nearby farmer's market.

Johnson County is named for Middleton T. Johnson, who served in the Mexican War, the Civil War, and the Texas legislature. The 1913 vintage Prairie Style courthouse with its massive clock

tower is in Cleburne. It was restored in 2007. It has a "sister" in Gainesville, designed by the same architectural firm.

While the exterior of the courthouse is certainly interesting, the interior is stunning, a truly unexpected surprise. There are white marble panels with black and gray streaks that form mirror images of each other, creating some interesting optical illusions. The dark wood and ornamental details bring to mind an African motif. In the center is a beautiful stained glass skylight.

Bosque County derives its name from the Spanish word for "woods." The courthouse is in Meridian, and was built in 1886. It was significantly altered by removal of four corner turrets and the clock tower in 1934 as a WPA project. It regained its original beauty in a restoration completed in 2007.

The restoration dramatically changed the appearance of this courthouse—I felt I had never seen it before. This once lackluster, rather sad courthouse sparkles again. When the new clock tower was set by crane, the area school children sat on bleachers and watched—a history lesson in the making.

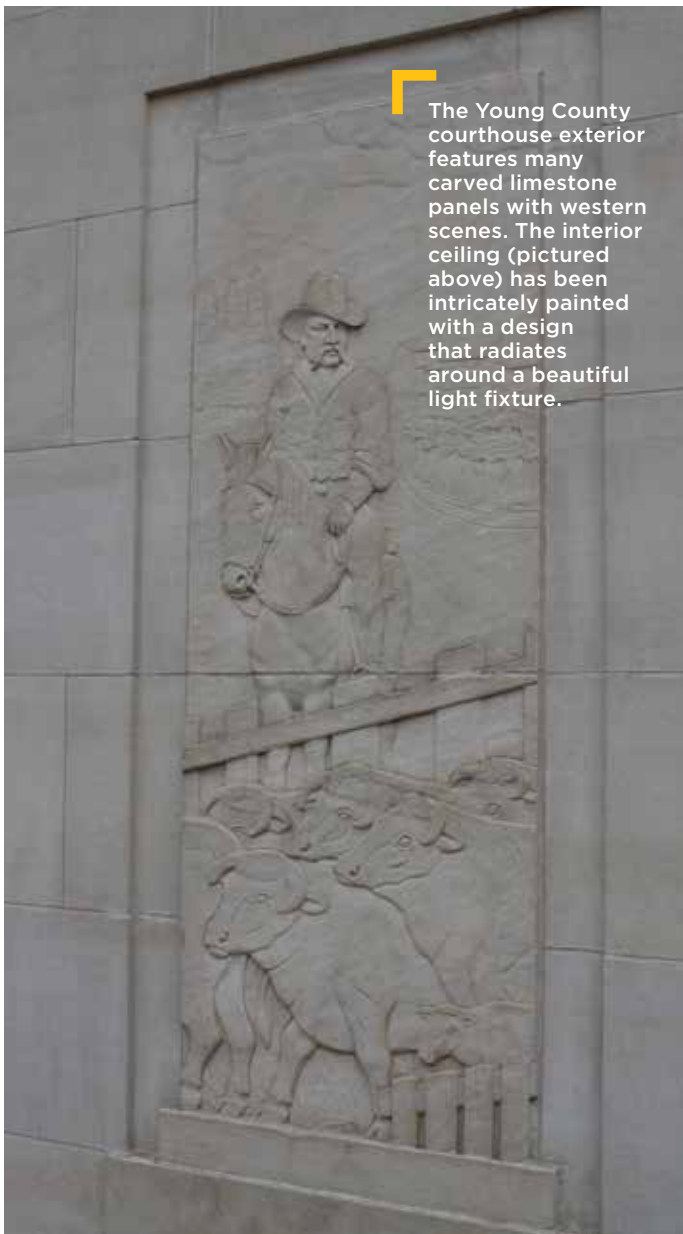
Ellis County is named for Richard Ellis, president of the Texas Constitutional Convention. The courthouse was built in 1896 in Waxahachie, and was designed by J. Riely Gordon. He designed sixteen courthouses in Texas—twelve of which are still standing. The courthouse was restored in 2002.

This castle-like courthouse is astonishing for its



DID YOU KNOW?

The Ellis County courthouse was featured prominently in the 1984 movie "Places in the Heart," for which Sally Field won an Academy Award as Best Actress.



The Young County courthouse exterior features many carved limestone panels with western scenes. The interior ceiling (pictured above) has been intricately painted with a design that radiates around a beautiful light fixture.

level of detail. There are small turrets or spires everywhere, numerous pattern and texture changes in the masonry, and sandstone carvings of every imaginable detail. I have never visited this building and not discovered something new on the façade. This courthouse also has a “sister,” in Decatur.

The Ellis County courthouse was featured prominently in the 1984 movie “Places in the Heart,” for which Sally Field won an Academy Award as Best Actress. Come and see this “movie star” in this special town.

Lampasas County is more than likely named for Lampazos de Naranjo, a Mexican town with mineral springs. The courthouse is located in the city of Lampasas. This red-roofed courthouse was completed in 1883, and is a third example of a design by Wesley Clark Dodson. It was restored in 2004. This courthouse has an interesting feature, noticeable the minute you step inside. You can clearly hear the clock ticking in the tower. This is because a small third floor room was created and the clock mechanism sits in the middle of the room, echoing to floors below.

The courthouse square is a few blocks off the main highway through town, but worth looking for. The square is somewhat reminiscent of Granbury’s, with quite a few shops and a café or two. And like its Mexican namesake, Lampasas has a mineral spring, too—Hancock Pool,

one of the few free-flowing pools in Texas.

Young County is named for William Cocke Young, an early Texas settler and soldier. This Art Deco courthouse is located in Graham and was completed in 1932. It is perhaps the most interesting of the white limestone Art Deco courthouses built during the Great Depression in Texas.

The courthouse exterior features many carved limestone panels with western scenes depicting activities such as cattle ranching and Native American buffalo hunting. The exterior light fixtures feature a Native American chief in headdress. Just inside the building, be sure and look up. You will see that the ceiling has been intricately painted with a design that radiates around a beautiful light fixture. It resembles a Persian rug. One can only imagine the number of hours needed to complete this work of art.

Be sure and check out the Graham town square. If you are really nice to the lady in the Liberty Theater Building (now a clothing store), she may give you a sneak peek at the still-intact balcony and movie screen.

Texas has 254 counties, so this list is obviously only scratching the surface. Other cool north Texas courthouses worth a day trip are Shackelford County (Albany), Hill County (Hillsboro), Navarro County (Corsicana), and Hopkins County (Sulphur Springs). ■LGL



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Submitted to Granbury Field of Flags by John Pelham Memorial Day, 2016

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To the shores of Tripoli
Some gave all
To preserve freedom for you and me.

From the jungles of Vietnam
To the atoll of Midway
Some gave all
And we remember them here today.

Iwo Jima, Guadalcanal, Falluja
They answered their country's call.
To extend the freedoms we enjoy
Some gave all.

Some gave all
Without whimper, without cry.
Our nation said go, they went;
Never questioning the reason why.

Some gave all
In far away places they never knew

Their blood stained foreign soil
To ensure liberty for me and you.

Some came home
But these we honor never will
But, thankfully, in our memories
They abide with us still.

Many of us here today gave someplace
Some great, some small
But, today we here honor
Those who gave their all.

We came back, they never did
Some here today saw them fall
It's that sacrifice we honor
For those who gave their all.

So, on this Memorial Day
As we hear these heroes' call
Please pause prayerfully with me
As we honor those who gave their all.

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LIFE OUT OF THE FAST LANE:

Getting to know Charles Mooney III, former lead guitarist of the Toadies

Words by **Jonathan Hooper** | Photography by **Dawn Skinner** and provided by **Charles Mooney**

It is not unusual for the children of bankers and financiers to become artists and musicians: painter Paul Cezanne was the son of a French banker; Winston Marshall of Mumford and Sons is the son of the co-founder of one of Europe's largest hedge funds; Yoko Ono is the daughter and granddaughter of two of Japan's most successful bankers.

But it is altogether a different matter when a trendsetting Rock and Roll musician turns to banking and finance for the next step in the pursuit of embracing life as it gets thrown at him.

ROCK AND ROLL IS HERE TO STAY, BUT MUSICIANS COME AND GO...

If you were born after the peak of the Big Band Era, the soundtrack of your life has been guided by those who influenced Rock and Roll, from Robert Johnson and Bob Dylan to Jimmy Page and Jimi Hendrix. If you were fortunate enough to be born after the downfall of Disco, you may know that Possum Kingdom is more than a great place to spend the hot days of summer.

"One day in 1987 you are a student at TCU, studying Finance while working part-time at a record store, and the next thing you know, you are asked by a co-worker to become the lead guitarist for a punk-grunge band. But you don't know how to play guitar or read music. And it's okay, because the bass player doesn't know anything about music, either. But at least she had money and could buy a bass and amp."



If you were fortunate enough to be born after the downfall of Disco, you may know that Possum Kingdom is more than a great place to spend the hot days of summer.



Charles Mooney,
former lead
guitarist of
the Toadies

Vaden Todd Lewis & Charles Mooney performing in the Battle of the Bands at TCU in 1988. They placed 2nd in the contest and won enough money to make the first official Toadies release, a cassette single with 2 songs.



“The mind plays a lot of tricks about our history. We remember the good stuff, but I also remember there were some challenges along the way, too. But it was worth it. I had a great time.”

- Charles Mooney

This is how the seminal Fort Worth band Toadies got started, as explained by Charles Mooney III, former lead guitarist of Toadies. Six years later, shortly before Toadies became a national powerhouse with “Possum Kingdom,” Mooney left the band to pursue a career in banking, currently as the Operations Supervisor at Chase Bank in Granbury.

The earliest lineup of Toadies had come in 2nd place at a Battle of the Bands at TCU, which gave them enough money to record a cassette to shop around on radio and at clubs, leading to their first EP, “Pleather.” Mooney helped to co-write most of the songs with singer and co-founder Vaden Todd Lewis.

They honed their skills by playing gigs in living rooms before making it into the local Fort Worth clubs on Wednesday nights “with ten people in the audience, if we were lucky.” They continued on to headline clubs across DFW, and gained

a national following after winning Battle of the Bands competitions from Los Angeles to Daytona Beach and “Best Unsigned Band” awards. Finally, Toadies hit the big time. It had taken about two years for their single, “Possum Kingdom,” to become a hit.

But after a few years of life on the road, dragging equipment around the country and playing music with his best friends, Mooney was fast approaching a major crossroads in his life.

“I was finishing my Finance degree at TCU and getting married, and so I bowed out. I quit the band. There was frustration, lots of sadness, and more animosity than any of us wanted. But life was out there beyond the band, so I did what I did. It was time.”

There are very few regrets for Mooney.

“The mind plays a lot of tricks about our history. We remember the good stuff, but I also remember there were some



The first Toadies show, held at the Axis club Fort Worth, in April of 1988. Vaden Todd Lewis singing, Charles Mooney on acoustic, and Lisa Umbarger on bass.

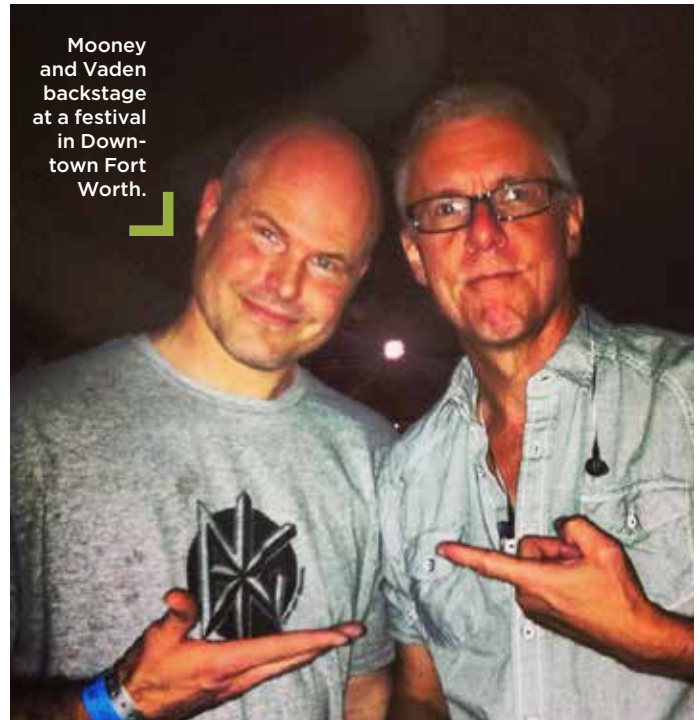
challenges along the way, too. But it was worth it. I had a great time.”

Even creating the band name and image was a good memory. Wanting a name that did not give away the style of the band, and not wanting anyone to make an assumption based on their name, they were influenced by the Pixies out of Boston. Sitting in a McDonald’s on Beach Street in Fort Worth late one night, they just came up with Toadies.

“That doesn’t make a good story, so we came up with another one about getting kicked out of line at a Star Trek Convention and William Shatner yelled, ‘Get rid of them, they’re just little toadies.’ That never happened, but it was a much better story. Good times.”

ON BECOMING A “RESPONSIBLE CITIZEN”

Mooney has been in banking for more than twenty years. He calls himself “a happy homebody who just wants to be with my family,” and lives rather quietly in Benbrook, just outside Fort Worth. He



Mooney and Vaden backstage at a festival in Downtown Fort Worth.

credits life with Toadies with helping him grow up and become more aware of how things work. As a younger man, he was a bit socially withdrawn, but performing on stage night after night brought him out of his shell. “It forced me to get out there and learn a lot about a lot.”

The pitfalls of the music business have been chronicled for decades. Life on the road takes its toll, and there are predators around every corner waiting to exploit and crush the unsuspecting artist.

“Music has a lot of dirty stuff behind closed doors. Everything you hear is true, only worse. And that statement coming from someone in the banking industry! But I enjoy the banking business these days, and don’t plan to change.”

Emotions were laid bare over his difficult decision to quit the Toadies, and he decided to mostly leave the music scene altogether. These days, he remains good friends with not only the other founding members of the band, but with the current Toadies as well, occasionally getting on stage with the band for a reunion gig, as long as it is local. “I went inside their current tour bus. It is very nice, but no thanks! I would rather sleep in my own bed,” he says, laughing.

MUSIC TODAY

Mooney never joined another band. He still plays guitar, doing a bit of studio work adding guitar tracks to recordings with established bands, and mentoring younger bands as they start out. He also plays guitar in his church band at High Ridge

Church in Benbrook. The church knows about his past with Toadies, of course, and they embrace it for what it is. Meanwhile, Charles is still learning about music.

“I learned to play guitar in a punk-grunge band. I didn’t even know the chords. I couldn’t really play lead guitar, which was my job, so I made stuff up. I could get feedback, and liked tremolo effects, and that created the sound for Toadies. People still try to figure out some of the chords from those songs—I don’t even know what they were! Obviously, playing in church is very different. I had to learn a new style, a new way of thinking about the music. But sometimes, the church turns me loose, and it’s fun to recreate that Toadies sound.”

He is generous with his advice to young bands, stressing the importance of dedicating themselves to the work, finding their emotion in the music, and playing as much as they can with others. If they are lucky, they might one day get a gig on Wednesday night opening for another unknown band, and lose money. “Friday night headlining gigs are years away, so be ready—this is not an easy career. If they aren’t grounded, it is even harder.”

For Mooney, being grounded has made all the difference. “It is amazing what comes out when your emotions are low, or very high. Not all of it is good, and not all of it is happy. But some of it is great. I embrace all of it. I embrace life! Everything I have gone through, and anything I have to go through yet to come, I will embrace.”

And you can take that to the bank. ■LGL

Mooney's first reunion show with the Toadies five years ago at the Palladium in Dallas.





Photography by Shad Ramsey

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- 2. **Aly Manoucheri** | Parents: Cyrus & Adriana Manoucheri
- 3. **Blayne Haydon** | Parents: Brian & Brenna Haydon
- 4. **Lesley Self** | Parents: Caleb & Mary Self
- 5. **Parker Kolb** | Parents: Kevin & Whitney Kolb
- 6. **Collier Kuban** | Parents: Steven & Kali Kuban
- 7. **Mayer Shuffield** | Parents: Sheldon & Kellie Shuffield
- 8. **Tinley Darouse** | Parents: Miles & Jacki Darouse
- 9. **Parker Cuenca** | Parents: Derrick & Nicole Cuenca
- 10. **Dallas Swann** | Parents: Justin Swann & Sandy Arnett
- 11. **Axel Pharr** | Parents: Jimmie & Jodie Pharr
- 12. **Ryder Caldwell** | Parents: Michael & Nicole Caldwell
- 13. **Joey Watson** | Parents: Eddie & Julia Watson
- 14. **Mackie & Claire Stewart** | Parents: Kolby & Katie Stewart
- 15. **Moriah Marciniak** | Parents: Michael & Meren Marciniak
- 16. **Taylen Doty** | Parents: Brad & Delaina Doty
- 17. **Samuel Raybuck** | Parents: David & Lindsey Raybuck
- 18. **Reid Dunn** | Parents: Ty & Casi Dunn



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TOTALLY TUBULAR FAMILY FUN


Words by **Andra Mayberry** | Photography by **Layth Taylor**

While skateboarding is mostly popular with the younger crowd, you might be surprised to see 30 and 40-somethings who've grown up skating now passing the torch to their children. The skatepark, built by the City of Granbury in 2014, was always talked about in certain circles, but was never quite popular enough politically to get official approval. Now that it's been here for three years, kids with their families have become a permanent

fixture, making the skatepark everything it was ever meant to be.

If you casually drive by the skatepark, located on Crossland Road near the soccer fields, you'll see the name Keith Callahan etched into the structural sign. Callahan worked tirelessly for the City of Granbury in several capacities for 32 years and when he retired in 2014, it was the Parks and Recreation Board who unanimously insisted he be recognized somehow for his dedication.

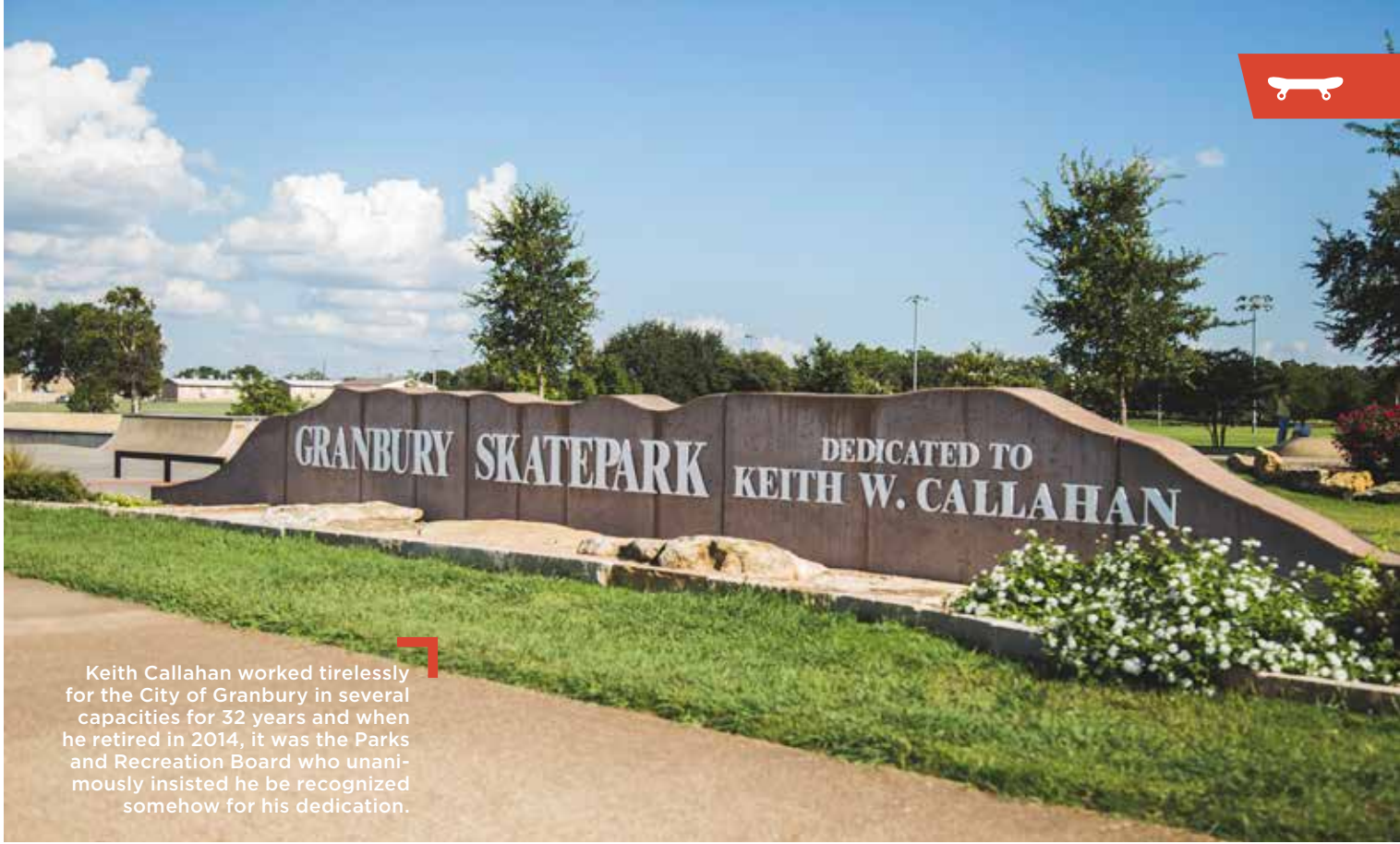


A young man in a black t-shirt and khaki pants is captured mid-air, performing a skateboard trick on a concrete ramp. He is wearing blue sneakers and has one foot on the board while the other is tucked up. The background shows a clear blue sky, green grass, and some trees. A tall light pole is visible in the distance.

One of the coolest activities you could ever see in Granbury is the blend of physical talent and community interaction on display at the Granbury Skatepark.



In the end, “three plaza lanes and a fully encapsulated bowl” were selected as skills to be included in the park, according to the SPA Skateparks entry about Granbury Skatepark.



Keith Callahan worked tirelessly for the City of Granbury in several capacities for 32 years and when he retired in 2014, it was the Parks and Recreation Board who unanimously insisted he be recognized somehow for his dedication.

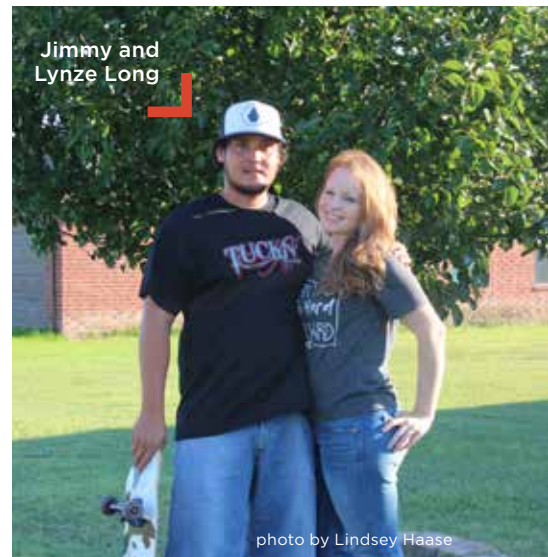
In the mid-1990s, Callahan received a letter from a seventh grader who loved skateboarding and whose teacher encouraged him to write a formal request to the person in charge of the parks department. The letter outlined his love of skating and reasoned that a skate park would be just the thing to keep him and his friends busy and out of trouble. It was a great case for the cause and was very well written, but the funds just weren't there.

Flash forward some 20 years later and the city had acquired land and amassed enough revenue for the parks board to actually propose construction of the skatepark to the council. Callahan, who was the Director of City Services at the time, was in charge of all parks projects and had the firm belief in building something made to last. He diligently researched other cities' parks and learned that a permanent concrete structure was the way to go. SPA Skateparks of Austin was selected as the winning bid for the construction. The city held several town-hall meetings to establish what the park should look like, what features were desired and how the

park would function as a whole. In the end, "three plaza lanes and a fully encapsulated bowl" were selected as skills to be included in the park, according to the SPA Skateparks entry about Granbury Skatepark.

Aesthetically, the park would feature xeriscaping, preservation of a nearby shade tree and the incorporation of Comanche Peak worked into the shape of the permanent design. The day of the ribbon cutting, Callahan was there with his family, city staff, the parks board and city council, alongside the student, now grown man who had written that letter so many years ago, J.W. Callahan, Keith Callahan's son.

Local skater parent Lynze Long says, "the family that skates together, stays together," and that's just what she intends to do. The 29-year-old mother of Zander, two, and wife of Jimmy, says it was one of the things that drew her to love her husband. She watched as he skateboarded with his buddies and he would take notice of her cruising by. It was love on the run! Jimmy continued skateboarding and Lynze continued watching. "I loved his hair. I loved his skateboard.



Jimmy and Lynze Long

photo by Lindsey Haase



photo by Lindsey Haase



photo by Lindsey Haase



photo by Lindsey Haase

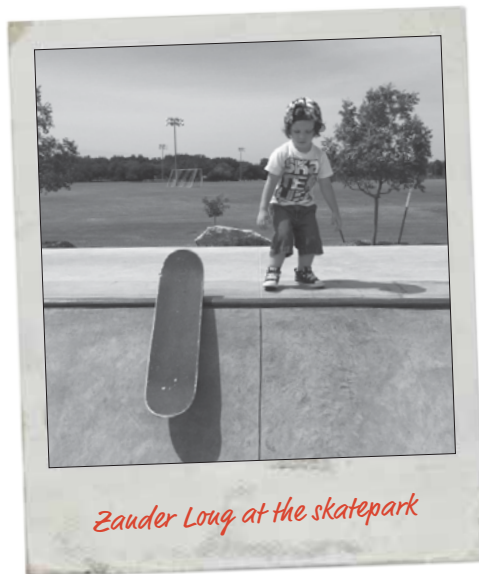
That was just him so when we got together almost seven years ago now, he still loves skating,” Lynze adds. Jimmy was eventually sponsored by a small skateboard shop in Weatherford for regional competitions and did well, but life circumstances prevented his future in competing in the big time.

The two married on October 19, 2013 and started their life together in Granbury, in a small rent house just a block away from what is now the Granbury Skatepark. “We would walk the trails back there so we saw it being built and we were super excited about it. We were probably some of the first people down there. We absolutely loved it. We could literally walk or skate to it, so we would go down there on the weekends and he would try to teach me and he would do his stuff.”

Jimmy and Lynze began building their life together so that meant long work hours and going to school. While the two skaters were now more like grown ups, they still maintained their love of skateboarding. They would meet up with friends at the skatepark when they could, but life was about to get even more exciting.

Jimmy and Lynze always knew they wanted to have children so when Zander came along in August of 2014, their lives really began to ramp up. As he’s grown older, he has watched his parents both skateboard and has been to the skatepark several times. Lynze says she knows exactly what a skateboard is and was thrilled to receive his first skateboard from his Uncle Bobby. “He immediately knew what it was, stood up on it and pointed his fingers to the air because he was so excited about it,” Lynze says. “He’s been trying to skateboard since he could walk,” she adds.

Lynze had no qualms about bringing her young son to the skatepark and encourages families of all ages to give it a try. We can all agree that somehow there has been a stereotype attached to any young boy with baggy clothes, long hair and being on a skateboard. But Lynze says she has encountered



Zander Loug at the skatepark



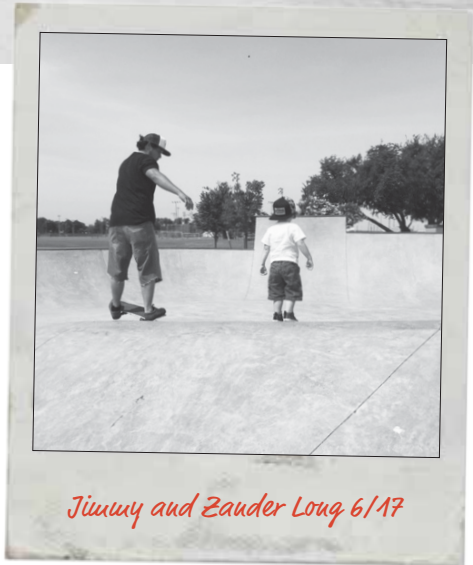
If you've ever wondered what all the fuss was about in that concrete bowl on Crossland Avenue, a new and welcoming world awaits you, so give it a try!

nothing but polite and kind people every time she's ever been to our skatepark. "We never heard any bad language. We never saw any drugs or anything like that. It was clean. The kids were nice," she says. If you ask Lynze, there is a very open and welcoming vibe with the people who frequent the skatepark. She knows people will assume skaters are an exclusive group, but she explains, "I think skateboarders have their own little community. If you're down there and you're doing the same thing they are, they're going to help you. When I was just starting out, they would offer me pointers."

When you hear Lynze talk about Jimmy, her eyes light up. Since he has been skating for almost 20 years, he feels completely comfortable helping new skateboarders out. Lynze says, "I've met tons of amazing people like my husband who is now an amazing father who gets to pass down his knowledge and love of skateboarding to our son." His love of the sport was one of the things that attracted her to him. She loves watching him instruct a beginner and is proud to see that side of him. When Lynze talks about how friendly and courteous the skateboarders are she says with

pride, "Jimmy is the same way. If he sees a kid struggling, he stops what he's doing and he will teach that kid how to skateboard."

As for skateboarding and the Long family, they are in it for life. Lynze is a very active mother and enjoys doing all things with her son. Running, walking, jumping on the trampoline are just a few of the things the family tries to do on a daily basis at the end of the day. She encourages anyone who is on the fence about whether skateboarding is a worthy sport to just try it out. "It's a different culture and once you get into it, it's really fun and the people are great. It gets you outside. It keeps you athletic and healthy," she says. If you've ever wondered what all the fuss was about in that concrete bowl on Crossland Avenue, a new and welcoming world awaits you so give it a try! ■LGL





How to Get Involved

Words and Photography generously provided by **Kylee Peterson**

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Kids' Armor of Hope (KAH) is a free standing non-profit with a local chapter formed in 2009 whose mission is to provide hope through mentoring to the abused, abandoned and neglected children in nearby rural communities where social services are limited.

KAH has created successful fundraisers such as the Hood County Youth Golf Association, the Starfish Mentoring Club, and the organization partnered with Santa Cops.

Kids' Armor of Hope is managed 100% by volunteers, over 300 of them who have served over 1,000 abused, neglected and abandoned kids of Hood and surrounded counties at least through programs.

Kids' Armor of Hope RFKC 2017 Facts:

- 62 foster children participated in this year's camp, the most ever in our camp history
- Campers' ages ranged from 6 to 12 years old
- 120 volunteers
- Our canteen ladies handed out over 629 packages of cheese crackers, 24 pounds of grapes, 884 Slim Jims, over 500 snack bags of chips, and served 53 gallons of frozen Gatorade slushies
- Full-time counselors' ages range from 18 to 79 years old

Royal Family Kids Camp

Royal Family Kids Camp (RFKC) is a curriculum based camp designed to allow hurting children experience a sense of love and security. During camp, the children are encouraged to be children for a week, and not in a protector or provider roles they typically fill for others in their households.

Beyond the week of camp, RFKC provides direction for ongoing mentoring between the campers and their camper counselors year round, creating positive relationships.

More events are scheduled throughout the year as funding allows.

Kids' Armor of Hope Board

President - Kylee Peterson

VP - Dale Alexander

Treasurer - Mark Hackney

Secretary - Christie Alexander

Directors - Charlie Chrane, Jane Cramer, June Mearns, Jeff Jeffries, Crystal Moore, Shelly Fuller

Donate or volunteer today!

www.kidsarmorofhope.org

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LOOKING FORWARD:

Philanthropic Happenings this Fall

September 1

2nd Annual Pointe Fore-ward Golf Tournament

Lake Pointe Academy

Squaw Valley Golf Course

8:00am Tee off, Light Breakfast, golf, lunch, awards & raffle

Proceeds from this annual event provide scholarships for financially disadvantaged children so they have access to highly specialized, therapeutic education services. Please help us to continue serving families in our community and children affected by developmental disabilities by participating in our 2nd Annual Pointe Fore-ward Golf Tournament at www.LakePointeGranbury.org

September 30

Wet Veterans and Acton United Methodist Church Soul Repair Day

Acton United Methodist Church

9:00am to 3:00pm

The Soul Repair Day with the topic Moral Injury will be dedicated to all Veterans, active Military and all First Responders as well as their families. The key speaker is Rev. Dr. Zachary Moon author and a commissioned military chaplain. The event includes free breakfast and lunch for up to 750 guests. Speakers will present relevant topics in the Sanctuary for Veterans, Military & First Responders as well as their families. Speakers from Paluxy River Children's Advocacy Center will be presenting age appropriate programs for kindergarten to seniors and their families in the AUMC Youth Building. Mike & Pat Stewart, "Blessed to be the Wet Veterans Founders 2012" (682) 205-3384

October 14

The Mammoth Race Color 10K/5K

Lake Pointe Academy

Dinosaur Valley State Park

We are back at Dino Valley for our third year running and it's going to be bigger and better than ever! The Mammoth is a family friendly, single day, multi-distance adventure trail run. With four different distances to offer, all ages and athletic abilities are welcome. Race individually or with a non-competitive team. Mild to significant elevation gains, low level water crossings, natural obstacles and amazing scenery will make the mammoth an adventure run not to be missed! www.mammothrace.com

November 9

Heroes with Handbags

Paluxy River CAC

El Ranchito Salon, Tolar, Texas

Doors open at 5:00pm

Join us for designer purse bingo! General admission is \$50 per person. Sponsorships are still available. All proceeds go to support Paluxy River CAC. The vision of Paluxy River Children's Advocacy Center is to reduce the trauma to child abuse victims and their non-offending family members and to work toward improving the justice system's response to child abuse by uniting the efforts of public agencies and enlisting community support. paluxyrivercac.org

November 11

33rd Annual Jewel Ball

Lake Granbury Area

Beautification Council

Granbury Resort & Conference Center

6:00 pm

Paint the Town Red at the Lake Granbury Area Beautification Council's 33rd annual Jewel Ball! Champagne reception, seated dinner, casino action, and a great live band 'No Questions Asked'. Proceeds benefit beautification projects in the Lake Granbury area. Contact Jan Caldwell Hulett, jcaldwell1961@gmail.com

Don't see your upcoming event listed?

Email the Editor

melissa@envisionrocks.com

We'd be glad to add

your event to our

website and Facebook page.

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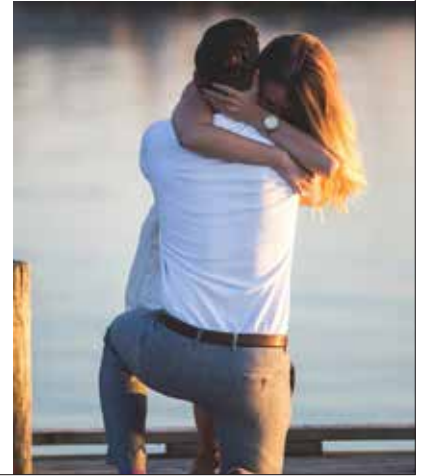
Hank FM along with The New Granbury Live are producing one of the coolest singing talent competitions in the state of Texas. Winners will appear on national TV and big time regional concerts. Winners also receive studio recording time, a photo shoot, and more!

Check the Events page at www.921hankfm.com for updates.





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5 Ways Disney Changed my Parenting Expectations

Words by **Dena Dyer** | Photography provided by **Dena Dyer**

Once upon a time, my husband Carey, our two sons, and I luxuriated in a trip to Disney World with Carey's side of the family. This was my fifth time to visit the magical land of ultimate possibilities, and I can't wait to go back.

But Disney spoils me. Now that we're home, I'm in a perpetual state of disbelief that color-coordinated cappella groups aren't on every corner, singing my kids' favorite candy-sweet pop songs in five-part harmony. It's rough, y'all.

I keep wondering: where's the pixie dust? Why are cuddly characters not lining up to give my children hugs? Where are the Mickey-shaped waffles and ice cream cones?

Thankfully, my doctor diagnosed me with DWS: Disney Withdrawal Syndrome. He said the cure was to watch back-to-back episodes of *The Blacklist* while slurping Ramen noodles.

I see it now so clearly. Disney has warped my perspective. After all, I was raised on *The Little*



Dena Dyer, her husband Carey and their two sons pictured at Disney World. Dena was inspired by their family vacation to write this parody about expectations and parenting.

Mermaid and Beauty and the Beast, and my family of four counts the days until a new Pixar movie releases. My oldest son wants to be an animator one day, and my youngest longs to make films. I'm a huge fan of Walt and Roy and all they've created.

However, it's almost insidious how magical "lies" have woven themselves into the fabric of my existence. Here are five ways Disney has wrecked my parenting expectations:

1 Food

One of my favorite Disney films is Ratatouille. A plot combining French cuisine, evil food critics, and friendly, talented rodents? Pure genius.

In Florida, my MIL made my day when she ordered ratatouille during the "Be our Guest" dining experience at the Magic Kingdom.

And there you have it. I just used the word "experience" to describe a Disney meal. At home, we don't have the time or skill to fold napkins to look

like roses. We don't even own real napkins. Most of the time, my three boys (I call my husband a boy because, let's face it, we all marry a version of Peter Pan) wipe their hands on their shirts and call it good. It's an uphill battle just to get them to use utensils...or sit at the table.

2 Bedtime

Characters in Disney films sleep so peacefully (I mean, hello—Sleeping Beauty!). Boo went right to sleep when Sully tucked her in at the end of Monsters', Inc...and this was AFTER she met a ton of monsters! In contrast, our nighttime routine consists of half an hour of begging, shrieking, and crying...and I'm not talking about the kids. We've tried to be tough, but I'm no Cruella DeVille. I'm so exhausted by doing stuff IRL, I usually give up and give in: Sure, you can have a backrub. Sure, you can consume milk and a snack and four storybooks. Sure, you can sleep in our bed. Again.

3 The Spouse

My husband is no beast. He's practically perfect, in all kinds of ways. However, Carey's often forgetful ("I'm hard of hearing in one ear" is his excuse) and clueless. He still thinks the phrase "We've got ten minutes!" equals foreplay. Sigh.

I don't need a guy on a white horse. I really don't. But I'll take a Patrick Dempsey-type who fights dragons and sends doves to my office. Here's a Disney character I'd like to see: a dashing hero who changes disgusting diapers, places his dirty clothes in the hamper and not on the floor, and even puts the kids to bed once in awhile, all by himself. THAT's a Prince Charming, my friends.

4 Housecleaning

I blame Cinderella. Those mice with housecleaning skills (what is it with Disney and talented rodents, anyway?) ruined me years ago. Real women in real homes, messed-up by two whirling dervish boys, don't get animal help when they have to put the house back together--the "animals" are the ones who took it apart.

Back when we were in the Sunshine State, my family members and I spent a day enjoying the safari at Animal Kingdom. All the while, housekeepers at our resort hotel were fluffing pillows, making our beds, and sculpting towels to look like elephants. Curse their friendly helpfulness!

5 Activities

Go on a Disney trip and you're overwhelmed with options. Want to make Simba out of towels at 6 p.m. before dinner? You can. Longing to take soundtrack-accompanied ballroom lessons at 10 a.m.? They've got you covered. Pajama parties with costumed Pooh characters and plenty of supervision? Done.

What I need at home is a Disney-trained au pair, preferably with a magic wand, to "spell" me when the kids get bored... which seems to be every five minutes.

Disney, I love you. I will always adore you. But you make it hard to love anyone else. ■LGL



About Dena

Dena Dyer is a professional writer and speaker, as well as the author of eight books and hundreds of articles. Her most recent book, written with her husband Carey, is *Love at First Fight: 52 Story-Based Meditations for Married Couples*. In her day job, Dena is the Director of Education for Brazos Pregnancy Center. She and Carey have been married nineteen wonderful years, and a couple more they don't talk about. They live in Granbury with their two sons (Jordan and Jackson) and a spoiled dog, Princess. Dena loves coffee with hazelnut creamer, traveling, reading, shopping at thrift stores, and watching British television.



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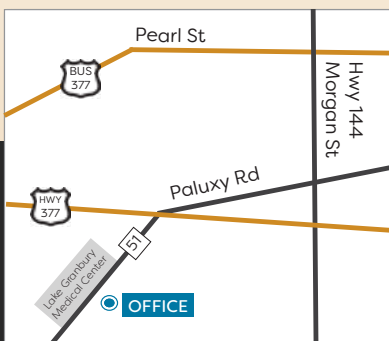
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