

MUSIC - ART - NEWS

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NOVEMBER 2019
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INSIDE

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PHASED IN
VOLUNTEER MSU TEXAS

Mystery Art

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Some people think of falling leaves, dressing up for Halloween or Pumpkin Spice Lattes when they think of the month of October. But artists and art lovers in the Wichita Falls area think of Mystery Art. Since 2005, local and regional artists of all skill levels have participated in the Kemp Center for the Arts Mystery Art Fest. Artists can donate up to two 8"x10" pieces each year and the work ranges from paintings, drawings, glasswork and mixed media with any theme or subject.

What's the mystery? Their artwork is displayed, but the artist name is hidden. On Auction Night, the mystery is finally revealed during a competitive silent auction. Should a work of art meet the highest silent auction bid possible, it then goes to a fun-filled and exciting live auction round. This year, the exhibit was held in the North Light Gallery from October 4-25, ending with the finale Auction Night. In addition to the traditional judge's awards, special awards were also chosen by The HUB at the beginning of the exhibit and posted in the gallery. Judge's awards were given by David Band, Joe Barrington, and Danny Bills. Additional awards were given by the Arts Council's Home & Garden Committee, the Wichita Falls Poetry Society, guests at the Mystery Art First Taste Dinner, and The HUB of NTX.

"Mystery Art Fest is such a special and unique event. Because the artwork is submitted anonymously, 'Professional Artists' are free to break from the expected style and subject matter. We can experiment and be playful," says one of this year's newest participants, Amber Day Scott, Gallery Manager of 9th Street Studios. "I primarily create large-scale temporary sculpture installations, so this was a great opportunity to try my hand at a new format. I'm also thrilled by the chance

to collect art from multiple artists I admire. The whole experience has been so uplifting!"

This year's entries included a family with four generations, all showcasing a different range of skill and medium of work. Mystery Art gives an opportunity for a broad range of artists to experience being a part of a gallery exhibit. Because all the work is presented uniformly, this allows the Kemp Center for the Arts to present it on the same level, regardless of the individual artist or skill-level.

"Mystery Art is one of my favorite programs we have at the Arts Council because it encompasses so many educational opportunities for the community," says Arts Council Gallery Manager, Kristine Thueson. "Beginning artists have a chance to exhibit work in a low-pressure setting. Professional artists can showcase their traditional work and experiment with new media or styles. First-time art purchasers have an inexpensive and fun way to begin their art collection. Seasoned buyers are exposed to new artists they haven't collected before and might snap up a true collector's bargain. All of this was made possible by the amazing generosity of donating artists and auction purchasers."

In lieu of an admission fee for openings and extended Gallery hours, the Kemp Center for the Arts accepts donations. Funds raised from this event benefit education and gallery programming for the community throughout the year.

The Hub of North Texas Mystery Art Picks



Best Animal
"Going to the Water"
by David K. White



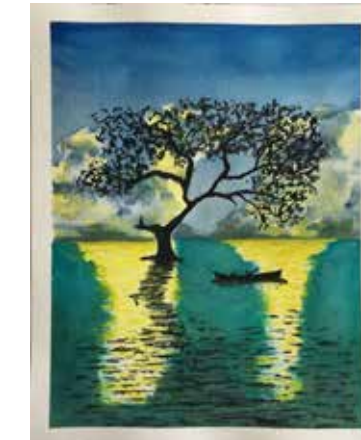
Best Abstract
"Cheshire"
by Maranda Allen



Best Floral
"Fairest Amongst the Fair"
by Cynthia Westbrook



Best Portrait
"Michael Tilson of New World Symphony"
by Belinda Strayhorn



Best Landscape
"Undisturbed"
by Kevin Claborn



Best Still Life
"Flash #3"
by Larry Hamilton



Best Symbolism
"No Worries, Mate!"
by Cynthia Westbrook



Best Portrait (Youth)
"Devine Anathema"
by Nathan Banks



Best Animal (Youth)
"Great Blue Heron"
by Kayleigh Moulton



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Faces And Places



Meals on Wheels Golf Tournament. Photo by Pam Hughes



Art Battle. Photo by David Barnard



Improv at Half Pint. Next show will be at Backdoor Theatre November 8th



Larry and Julie Ayers at the Pets HowlOGrowl Fur-Raiser at Kay Yeager. Photo by Pam Hughes



Mathis West Huffines Group attending Empty Bowls at the MSU Museum of Arts



Katie Britt from the Chamber of Commerce speaking to MSU Texas students on social media day



Zavala Latin Festival! Photo by Paul Reyes



Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours at Wichita Brewery. Photo by Katie Britt

FORD SWANSON HIGH STEAKS LEGACY



"We cut all our own steaks. I have a butcher who works in the kitchen three or four days a week depending on volume. My goal is to make sure every day when you come in and you order the same thing, it is going to be the same thing each time. We cook over a real wood fire so the temperature is very hard to control. We don't have a thermostat. We throw wood in there, catch it on fire, and let it cook down. It may be 1000 degrees in one spot and 750 degrees in another. The char marks you get is from cooking over a wood fire. It gives it flavor. We aren't cooking it over a little gas grill and throwing our steaks in the oven to finish cooking. My biggest goal is to make sure we serve a consistent product and the best you can get in town," Ford said with pride. At one time the McBride family-owned up to 12 restaurants and a meat market. Fat McBride and his four brothers were the owners. After one of the brothers died several years later, the restaurants were split up amongst the brothers and their families. "I started working in the restaurants in junior high and at the meat market. Having my grandfather be the boss was a luxury. I would go to work and he would come by in the afternoon to take me fishing for the rest of the day. I did clock out, though. It wasn't like I got paid for fishing all day," he said with a smile. "My senior year, I felt I had more of a responsibility to stay at work because I was putting myself on the schedule. I wasn't just an extra person trying to learn something. I worked at our Bar-B-Que restaurant on Southwest Parkway and ended up running that store, closing it down at night. I did some bartending here at the steakhouse, and when we had the Mexican restaurant Zocalos, I helped manage the store a little bit." "During the summer, when I was young and we weren't hunting, my grandfather and I would check out all the restaurants or hang out in his office. It was neat meeting all the customers and employees. You can imagine 300 plus employees in those restaurants and then all the customers I

meet throughout the years," he said nostalgically. Ford attended Midwestern State University, changing his majors several times. He started as a business major, but soon realized the numbers they were teaching were more for a Fortune 500 company rather than a small business. He decided if he really wanted to learn the business it would be hands-on. He graduated with a sociology major and a psychology minor. "After college, with the uncertainty of the restaurants, I applied to be a game warden. I went to several interviews, but it was a very selective process, and only 10 percent of the applicants go to school. I was beat out in that aspect. It would have been fun going fishing and hunting all the time. After going through the paperwork and application process, I realized I couldn't devote any more time for it. I bore down on the restaurant aspect. I was 35 when I bought this restaurant, and I had to do something better with my life for my family and my kids," Ford explained. Ford is married to his wife Ashley and has two children, Caroline who is six and Hunter who is three. "My greatest achievement after the acquisition of the building and the business is maintaining a good staff and making sure all of my customers are smiling when they leave. It makes me happy when I have a customer come up to me and say, 'This is what I remember McBride's to be back when the doors opened. You are following in your grandfather's footsteps and doing a great job,'" he said smiling. "As far as the future of McBride's Steakhouse, I would love to be here to support our community. I turn 40 in November and am looking forward to another 40 years of doing this. I just want to have a landmark here, not necessarily this building, but at least the name and keep it going on for as long as I can," Ford said with passion. - Cindy Kahler Thomas

When you walk into McBride's Steakhouse, at 4537 Maplewood Avenue, you experience a sense of calm. There are warm lights and a beautiful fireplace that burns on cold evenings. An array of saddles are displayed from the beams of the building. From reputation, you know a good meal soon to follow. Ford Swanson comes from a long line of restaurateurs, carrying on the McBride's family tradition as the owner of McBride's Steakhouse. Ford's grandfather, Fat McBride, built the restaurant in 1991 and opened in 1992. "My family owned McBride's from 1992 until the early 2000s. They finally got out of the business and sold the steakhouse, two other restaurants, and the meat market to an investment firm of local businessmen. I stayed on, working for them at all three restaurants and the meat market, as a manager. When Obama was elected, we were fearful of the employer-mandated health benefits program, because we were a small-town business and not a big corporation. Because of that, the investment group decided to split their investments. An individual bought this restaurant and the meat market. The other properties were sold to another individual. I worked for the individual who bought this steakhouse. After a couple of years, I made an offer to buy it," Ford said. "Over the process of a year, I brought things back to the way my grandfather had done things, with the few exceptions, like using better ingredients such as using fresh vegetables instead of canned or frozen."



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impact 100 Wichita Falls

A group of women can make an impact. And that's how Impact 100 Wichita Falls was born. Their mission is to unite women in the community to support a non-profit project each year with an impactful grant up to \$100,000. One Woman. One Gift. One Vote. According to Paula Perkins, Impact 100 President, there are over 50 chapters across the US with about a dozen in development. "Each chapter is a stand-alone group. In Wichita Falls, we received our 501c3 designation in 2018, making us a non-profit organization." The organization's mission, mirroring the premise of women's collective giving circles, is to empower women to transform the Wichita Falls community through philanthropic investment. Board members of the Impact 100 group have been meeting with potential members for several months to explain how the Impact model works and how women can be involved. "It's based on the 1 woman - 1 gift - 1 vote concept." Perkins states the group is accepting members until the end of December,



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NOVEMBER 2019

and the amount of the inaugural grant, based on the total number of members, will be announced on January 16, 2020. Every member has a vote on how the grant is distributed. The goal of Impact 100 is to give grants in increments of \$100,000 annually. During the inaugural year, nonprofit organizations in Wichita, Wilbarger, Archer, and Clay counties are eligible to apply by the February 21, 2020 deadline. "For many nonprofits, a \$100,000 grant could help them pursue a goal or dream that otherwise might not be realized. We look forward to seeing how nonprofits consider new or improved ways to solve critical issues in



their sectors that will increase impact in our community" says Ruth Jones, Grants Chair. Impact 100 members will have the opportunity to serve on grant review teams where the applicants will be narrowed to a small group of finalists. This is important, because it is not only a major part of making the grant, but, as Debi Walters, a Board Member, points out, "It's at the crux of what Impact 100 is trying to do. We want women who are interested in making a charitable impact in our community and to have the opportunity to learn more about the needs of our community, by being involved in the grant review process. One specific benefit for the applicants will be the opportunity to share their mission and needs with philanthropically-minded women in our community during site visits," Walters concluded. Pam Hughes, a Board Member, shares another unique perspective. "We have met so many new friends since we started recruitment back in July. And it's exciting to see how women in our community share the same passion for wanting to help our non-profits." The group will continue making those connections at upcoming meet-ups, hosted at various times during the day to best accommodate women's schedules. There are a number still on the calendar before the membership deadline on December 31. November 7, Noon, Foxhill Restaurant November 13, 5:30, Whiskeyta

If you would like to know more about Impact 100 WF, including details on membership, visit www.impact100wf.org or email info@impact100.org. If you represent a local nonprofit organization and are interested in applying for the inaugural grant award, please access the grants tab on the website or email grants@impact100wf.org for more information.

IRON HORSE PUB 19TH ANNIVERSARY

Iron Horse Pub is a permanent fixture downtown and has been for some time. In fact, they recently celebrated their 19th Anniversary with a weeklong party complete with free food and beer, of course.

John Dickinson and Danny Ahern are business partners and co-owners of The Pub at 615 8th Street. Iron Horse Pub is a live music venue with several bands playing weekly along with open mic night and open jam night. Many bands have played at the pub including Los Lonely Boys and Turnpike Troubadours.

“We have had some other greats like Peter Tork of the Monkeys, Pete Best who is the original drummer of the Beatles, Bernie Leadon from the Eagles, Leon Russell, and some of the Texas greats like Bugs Henderson and W.C. Clark,” John shared, “Just a lot of people, and they are all semi-famous in their own rite.”

The musical bands have changed and so has the genre of the music over the years. “It started out Blues and Rock when the Stevie Ray Vaughn genre was in vogue and that is what we started with. Then Country and Western music turned

into Red Dirt. That kind of crossed a little bit with the Rock. Then it became Americana. We do get some Jazz and Latino and then lately, in the last year especially, there has been a huge following for cover bands - Eagles cover band, the Stones, Heart, and everybody,” John recalled.

“I want people to know The Pub is a live music venue. We strive to keep a good selection of beer. We especially stress customer service. We pound that into our staff. The number one thing is customer service. Just take care of the people. We also learned early on to get involved in the city in boards, commissions, and anything we could to bring awareness to the downtown area. When we started it was us, Casa Manana, and nothing else. There weren't any streetlights down here or anything. I have been on the board for downtown development for I guess 20 years and am getting ready to roll off this year. I am on the landmark commission and the TIF board and we get involved in a lot of things and charities. My business partner, Danny, is also involved, serving on boards and commissions



Owners Danny Ahern and John Dickenson of Iron Horse Picture by Cindy Thomas



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NOV 29 - JAMES COOK, HANNAH BELL

NOV 30 - AA BOTTOM AND FRIENDS

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too,” John said. John and Danny have been a big asset for Downtown Proud. “We started Saint Patrick’s Day and Cajun Fest so we could raise money for downtown development. But also, if an individual has an illness, and they approach us, we try to help them out. We give them a place on a Sunday to raise funds. We have done many benefits over the years,” he said.

John is from a small dairy farm in upstate New York. Danny, on the other hand, is from Tipperary, Ireland. “He won a visa in a lottery when he was 18. He had to have a sponsor and at the time his aunt was married to Tom Callahan the Sheriff of Wichita County, so they sponsored him. Danny came here and then he got into the bar business. When we started The Pub, we worked all day and all night for the first 6 or 7 years. It is nonstop and now my business partner has two little boys. He is married now, so family takes a lot of his time. We now have a project manager general manager, operation manager, managers on duty, bar staff, sound engineers and security. It has evolved. This was something we both wanted to do. He had always wanted to own a pub, and I spent a lot of time on the other side of the bar,” John said with a smile.

“At the time we were thinking about buying this pub, we were going to different bars where the beer was flat, and the live music was not good. Customer service was so bad you could sit on one side of the bar and the waitress would sit at the other end of the bar. She wouldn't even look at you. You had to call the bar on the phone to place a drink order. So, we knew we could do better. I'm not going to say what bar it was. It was a natural progression of events.” He recalled.

It has been said, the movers and shakers of Wichita Falls frequent The Pub, and John can confirm that. “At the far end at those tables, when we first started, people who owned buildings or were getting ready to buy buildings and businessmen would come in. We would discuss how downtown should



Kill Devil @ Iron Horse picture by William Schultz

be going, where it is going, who owns what, or how much can we get for this other building. So, someone, I don't know who, coined the phrase, the ‘table of knowledge.’ “Over the years there have been a lot of deals made right in here., John said proudly. “It is a lot of fun. You get to interact with the people, and you get to know them. You get to have a say on how downtown is going to come back and what direction it was going to take.”

“We are looking forward to another 19 years,” John added. “I can't thank the people enough for coming back here. It is nice to know we are doing something right.”

- Cindy Kahler Thomas

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BRANNON OLIVER

PUTTING IT OUT THERE

Local musician, Brannon Oliver, has played at “every local venue” he could think of, but big things are happening for Brannon. Slow Start Records is about to “drop” his new album with a tentative date of December 1st and announce he will be playing for the record label. “This one is four tracks, so it is an EP (extended play recording). One of the tracks (songs) is a live recording at the 9th Street Studios during an After Hours Art Walk,” he said.

“This is the most excited I have ever been about putting something out. I’m not necessarily worried about what people will think, just excited about putting it out there,” Brannon said, “Once it is finished, between distribution and marketing and everything else, it will drop online on Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube music and all the different platforms. Once online the EP will be available for purchase or download. It is going to be a good year!”

Brannon is a singer-songwriter. His original music will be on the EP. “All of my solo stuff is a folk-rock, singer-songwriter sound. Very alternative to the traditional folk pattern, because I will have some sad songs and some upbeat energetic songs. The titles of the tracks are Gold, Penelope, Once Upon a Time in New Mexico and Johnny’s Song.” He shared, “I don’t know what the title of the album is going to be yet, but I have a couple of ideas. I am leaning towards Tall Tails because I am 6’9”. It’s an inside joke for me.” “All of my songs are about life events, something that has happened to me or someone close to me.” Johnny’s Song is a good example. Brannon and Johnny are “blood brothers” who were meant to be friends forever. They have been in bands together and toured extensively. When Johnny’s manic depression coupled with PTSD from his time spent in a war zone



came to a head, Johnny attempted suicide. Brannon found him, resuscitated him, and saved his life. Johnny ended up being fine, but Brannon wrote a song about it in order to process what had happened. When Brannon played the song to Johnny, he was overcome with tears but encouraged Brannon to play the song every time. Some of the lyrics are, “I wish I could sew all the tears in your soul. Let me know when you need me.” His favorite part of playing the song is when it “hits another person because they felt an emotional connection as opposed to watching a guy just play a song.”

He has another album called All the Right Reasons at All the Wrong Times. “It was about my divorce and all the things I went through personally. It is about self-realization and self-portraiture. One of the songs was a picture of me. It isn’t a great picture of me, it isn’t a pretty picture of me, but it was me. The lyrics are, ‘I’ll be alright on my own. I’ll be just fine on my own. I might be kind, but I’m not gold.’ It is one of my oldest songs and still one of my favorites to play,” Brannon said. Gold will be on the new EP.

Another song that hits Brannon close to home is Once Upon a Time in New Mexico. This song is about his girlfriend Lisa Chapman. Lisa eventually followed Brannon to Texas from New Mexico. However, they broke up when he moved here to Wichita Falls two years ago. “It was a mutual decision. We were both working on ourselves. I left in September and in February of following year I went on tour, playing my hometown. She was sitting there, and she still knew every word to every song. I couldn’t take my eyes off her. That’s when it hit me. It is still true love sometimes when you walk away, so it is still true love when you go back to it. Within a month, she came Wichita Falls to visit and never left. We have been together ever since. She is the inspiration to a lot of my songs,” Brannon said with a joy in his voice.

Brannon is pleased the EP was recorded in Wichita Falls, using all local artists. “Darian Ryan Roberts is an amazing singer-songwriter from this area. He recorded it and did an amazing job. I am happier than I have ever been with any other album. “Katie Britt did the cover art. She is a lovely soul. She did the work commission-free. I asked her for an idea, and she sent it over. When I asked her what I owed her, she said I enjoyed doing it... Such a blessing,” he said.



When Brannon plays on stage, he describes it in an unusual way. “It is weird, like a light goes off. It doesn’t matter where I play. It can be bright as all day and all the lights turn off in my head. All I see is this little tunnel of people. I can see people’s emotions and reactions. I can see people clapping and talking... I started out being terrified on stage thinking people are going to be watching me and see everything I do wrong. Then I realize they don’t know my songs and they probably don’t know who I am. Even if I mess up, they aren’t going to know. So, now when I am on stage, I am performing for myself. I think about what I would want to see, how much enjoyment I would want other musician to have performing their music? I just find the zone and go for it. When the show is over, everything comes back to me and it is like cool, thanks you guys.”

- Cindy Kahler Thomas

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- 12 Half Pint
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map: marcela trice

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HALF PINT

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NOV 15TH

DARYL FELSBERG
NOV 22ND

NOVEMBER EVENTS CALENDAR

MUSIC

- November 1**
-Rob Kirkland and Friends Tribute to Ween (Special Post Halloween Event!) @ The Iron Horse Pub
-Zack Crow @ Silver Dollar Saloon
-Halloween from Hell ft. Rig Time and DJ Whisperwish @ Vudu Lounge
-Sam Riggs @ Boulevard Night Club
- November 2**
-Forever Mac (Tribute to Fleetwood Mac.) @ The Iron Horse Pub
-Race Rutledge and The Texas Knights @ Texas Nite Life
-Trey Gilleland & The Downbeat Band @ Silver Dollar Saloon
- November 6**
-Karaoke Night @ O'Brien's Sports Pub
-Weird Ass Wednesday with Harvey and Tim @ Stick's Place
- November 7**
-Karaoke with Tom Brillhart @ The Maplewood
-Open Mic and Karaoke Night @ Vudu Lounge
-The Acoustic Parlor ft. Eb Steward @ 9th Street Studios
- November 8**
-Tejas Brothers, Jon Williams and the Coin Toss @ The Iron Horse Pub
-Open Mic Night with Nick Dan @ The Maplewood
-MJ & The Bots @ Silver Dollar Saloon
-Dueling Pianos by Fun Pianos @ Half Pint
- November 9**
-Cellar Door @ The Iron Horse Pub
-Race Rutledge and The Texas Knights @ Texas Nite Life
-Chris Shackelford @ Silver Dollar Saloon
-Metal Night ft. Letters To A Friend, A New Day Fails @ The Deep End
- November 10**
-Wichita Falls Youth Symphony Orchestra Fall Concert @ Akin Auditorium at MSU Texas
- November 11**
-Percussion Ensemble @ Akin Auditorium at MSU Texas
- November 13**
-Karaoke Night @ O'Brien's Sports Pub
-Weird Ass Wednesday with Harvey and Tim @ Stick's Place
- November 14**
-Karaoke with Tom Brillhart @ The Maplewood
-Open Mic and Karaoke Night @ Vudu Lounge
- November 15**
-Shane Smith and the Saints @ The Iron Horse Pub
-Red Brick Trolley @ Half Pint
- November 16**
-Texas Flood (Tribute to Stevie Ray Vaughan) @ The Iron Horse Pub
-Race Rutledge and The Texas Knights @ Texas Nite Life
-Austin English Band @ Silver Dollar Saloon
-Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra: Classical Tales @ Memorial Auditorium
- Hip Hop Can Food Drive Showcase @ The Deep End
- November 17**
-Schubert's Mass in G Major ft. University Choir, Oratorio Chorus, and University Orchestra @ Akin Auditorium at MSU Texas
- November 20**
-Karaoke Night @ O'Brien's Sports Pub
-Weird Ass Wednesday with Harvey and Tim @ Stick's Place
- November 21**
-Karaoke with Tom Brillhart @ The Maplewood
-Open Mic and Karaoke Night @ Vudu Lounge
- November 22**
-Throttlebody, Everything in Between @ The Iron Horse Pub
-Open Mic Night with Nick Dan @ The Maplewood
-University Jazz Ensemble @ Akin Auditorium at MSU Texas
-Chad Cooke Band @ Boulevard Night Club
- November 23**
-Jim Suhler @ The Iron Horse Pub
-Race Rutledge and The Texas Knights @ Texas Nite Life
-Bruce Lyons Sidewalk Jam @ Bruce Lyons Computers and Guitars
-Thank Goodness For Rock Night ft. Disco Rico, White Jet Heroes @ The Deep End
- November 25**
-Fantasy of Lights Junior High Honor Band Invitational with University Wind Ensemble @ Akin Auditorium at MSU Texas
- November 27**
-Downtown Royalty, Bad Badger @ The Iron Horse Pub
-Karaoke Night @ O'Brien's Sports Pub
-Weird Ass Wednesday with Harvey and Tim @ Stick's Place
- November 28**
-Erick Willis @ The Iron Horse Pub
-Karaoke with Tom Brillhart @ The Maplewood
-Open Mic and Karaoke Night @ Vudu Lounge
- November 29**
-James Cook, Hannah Bell @ The Iron Horse Pub
- November 30**
-AA Bottom and Friends @ The Iron Horse Pub
-Race Rutledge and The Texas Knights @ Texas Nite Life
-Mike McClure Acoustic @ 9th Street Studios

ART

- November 7**
-After Hours Artwalk - Encore! @ Downtown Wichita Falls, TX
- November 9**
-Regional Museum Day @ Wichita Falls Museum of Art at MSU Texas Exhibits @ Wichita Falls Museum of Art at MSU Texas

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- Paul Valadez: Collage and Community
-Luis Jiménez: The Human Family
-On the Verge: Recent Works by Matt Wedel
-The Art Express: Miniature Trains from the collection of Jim Hughes Exhibits @ The Forum
-Lynn Connolly Exhibits @ The Kemp
-Virginia Oechsner: A Retrospective
-Jules Scales
-Wichita Falls High School Art Department

EVENTS

- November 1**
-Christmas Magic @ MPEC
-Hairball @ Memorial Auditorium
-Mind Tricks with Magician Ron Wilson and Hypnotist Ron Miller @ Half Pint
- November 2**
-Christmas Magic @ MPEC
-TCC 9th Annual Bull Bash @ J.S. Bridwell Ag Center
-Los Muertos: A Celebration of Life @ 9th Street Studios
-Skeptics and Seekers Roundtable @ Odd Duck
-LipSync Battle benefitting Night to Shine @ Wichita Falls Brewing Company
- November 3**
-Christmas Magic @ MPEC
- November 8**
-Beer & Bingo benefitting The Arc @ Whiskeyta Club
-Improv Night @ Backdoor Theatre
- November 9**
-Hangar Holiday @ MPEC
-Skeptics and Seekers Roundtable @ Odd Duck
-WF Wranglers vs Kyle Stallions @ Kay Yeager Coliseum
- November 10**
-Hangar Holiday @ MPEC
- November 16**
-Thanksgiving Market @ Downtown Wichita Falls Farmers Market
-Skeptics and Seekers Roundtable @ Odd Duck
- November 17**
-Maskat Shrine Circus @ Kay Yeager Coliseum
- November 22**
-Daryl Felsberg Comedy @ Half Pint
-Texas Kart Nationals @ J.S. Bridwell Ag Center
- November 23**
-Texas Kart Nationals @ J.S. Bridwell Ag Center
-Christmas at the Kemp @ The Kemp
-Skeptics and Seekers Roundtable @ Odd Duck
-WF Wranglers vs Missouri Capitals @ Kay Yeager Coliseum
-City Lights Parade @ Downtown Wichita Falls, TX
- November 24**
-Newsboys United @ Memorial Auditorium
-WF Wranglers vs St. Louis Spirits @ Kay Yeager Coliseum
- November 30**
-Balance at the Brewery @ Wichita Falls NOVEMBER 2019

- Brewing Company
-Skeptics and Seekers Roundtable @ Odd Duck
Downtown Wichita Falls Farmers Market: Open 1st & 3rd Saturdays

THEATER

- November 21, 22, 23 and 24**
-The Mousetrap by Agatha Christie @ Fain Fine Arts Center Theatre at MSU Texas
- November 22**
-The Nutcracker Ball benefitting Wichita Falls Ballet Theatre @ The Forum
- November 22 and 23**
-Elf: The Musical @ Wichita Theatre November 22, 23, 29 and 30
-Miracle on South Division Street @ Backdoor Theatre

FOR THE KIDS

- November 2**
-Texoma's Game Day #ForTheKids benefitting United Regional Foundation/Children's Miracle Network @ The Deep End and TAG's Maniac's Mansion at 8th Street
- November 4, 11, 18 and 25**
-Youth Drawing @ The Kemp
- November 5, 12, 19 and 26**
-Beginning Anime @ The Kemp
-Elementary Art @ The Kemp
-Pre-School Storytime @ Wichita Falls Public Library
- November 6, 13 and 20**
-Toddler Time @ Wichita Falls Public Library
- November 6, 13 and 20**
-Advanced Anime @ The Kemp
- November 7, 14, and 21**
-Advanced Youth Art @ The Kemp
- November 15 - December 13**
-Santa's Mailbox @ MSU Fantasy of Lights
- November 16**
-Studio Saturday: All About Artists - Edvard Munch @ The Kemp
- November 29 and 30**
-ElectriCritters 2019 @ River Bend Nature Center

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A Downtown Jewel Amber Schacter

Local restaurateur Amber Schacter has always loved to cook. In fact, some of her fondest memories happened while laughing, cooking, and baking in the kitchen with her mother and her two grandmothers. “My mom was always reading cookbooks. We loved to try new recipes,” Amber said. “It wasn’t always successful,” she laughed, “but it was always fun.”

Opening her own restaurant was not something Amber thought about growing up. A native of Norman, Oklahoma, Amber spent much of her time in the theater and immersed in Medieval culture and history. As a member of the Order of Avalon, what she jokingly calls “the Medieval Boy Scouts,” she learned skills like fencing, Medieval martial arts, archery, jousting, leather-working, chain mail smithing, dancing, and even courtly manners. “I loved performing and traveling all over the state to different festivals. It was a great time. I made so many life-long friendships.” In fact, that is where she met her husband, Josh.

“I was 13 years old when Josh and I met at a Medieval Festival in Norman. We became very good friends, and then when I was about 15, Josh decided he wanted me to be his girlfriend,” Schacter recalled with a smile. “He chased me for about six months, and ever since, we’ve been inseparable.”

Amber and Josh have traveled through most of their lives together, learning and growing closer through each phase. Both attended college in Norman, then onto Tulsa so Josh could attend medical school. Amber pursued courses in business and real estate. It was during this time their duo grew to a trio as they welcomed their son, Jakob, to the family. From there, it was on to Columbus, Ohio, for 16



JOSH, LILLY AND AMBER SCHACTER AFTER LILLY'S BALLET PERFORMANCE

Josh to train as an Orthopedic Surgeon for the next five years. The family grew by one more as they welcomed their daughter, Lilliana.

“Being a mom is a wonderful, difficult, crazy, most perfect thing in my life. I get asked a lot how I balance my work life and my home life. I think it’s something everyone has to figure out. Sometimes I do it very well, and other times...not so much. But a big part of what has driven me to be an entrepreneur is the ability to control my schedule and to be flexible,” said Amber.

As Joshua completed his medical training, Amber cared for their young children while working at the Columbus Convention Center. There she learned about corporate event design and social event coordination. From there, Amber started and ran her own event design business until they moved to Wichita Falls. “I’ve had quite a number of jobs and careers throughout my life,” Amber said regarding her

varied list of occupations. “I’ve waited tables. I’ve hosted. I’ve done modeling and acting. I’ve worked in advertising, been a real estate agent, worked in sales. I was a makeup artist and trainer, event designer, wedding decorator, sugar artist, and at least a dozen others I’m forgetting!”

Along with her professional careers, Amber believes very strongly in supporting the community and giving back when she can. “I’ve been a part of the board of the Wichita County Medical Alliance (WMCA) for 10 years, and this year I’m the president. We work with the city and the county to improve the health of our community, and to fund scholarships for students going into the healthcare field. We provide opportunities for families to be active outside, whether it be at Doctors’ Park playground or with Hardhats For Little Heads, helping to fit kids with helmets so they can ride their bikes safely.” Amber has also participated in fundraising and has supported Meals on Wheels, Faith Refuge, Wichita Falls Ballet Theatre, Patsy’s House, and many other causes in the community. “I really feel we all have



TREE PLANTING WITH WMCA (WICHITA COUNTY MEDICAL ALLIANCE) AT THE DOCTORS PARK.

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something we can give, something we can share. As we give and share, we help our community grow stronger,” Amber says. All of her journeys have given her the experience she’s drawn on, as Amber and Josh started their new chapter together in Wichita Falls. Moving here 11 years ago, Amber decided to open her first restaurant. “There weren’t a lot of locally owned restaurants where ladies could go for a nice lunch together or for couples to have a nice romantic spot to go out on a date that served fresh, hand-made food. So, I created Ganache Cupcake Lounge. I wanted a place I would want to go and hang out with my friends and family,” she explains. Her restaurant was located in Parker Square for five years until her vision had outgrown her small space.

“When the Zales Building downtown came on the market, I immediately saw the possibilities for the space, and it was an opportunity I

just couldn’t pass up,” Amber said. “Wichita Falls has such a rich and amazing history. It needs to be shared and preserved. Creating a dining, entertainment, and residential district alongside budding and long-standing companies in our downtown area is a key component in creating a modern community and preserving our rich history.” So, Amber began work on restoring the Zales Building, recreating and preserving the beauty and vibe of the 1920s era architecture. Of course, projects of that size and scope rarely come without their own hurdles. Raising funds and bringing the old and neglected building up to modern codes was a daunting task. In December of 2017, Karat Bar & Bistro started serving up their fresh-made signature twists on American classic cuisine in the historic Zales Building downtown on 8th and Ohio. Karat is only one side of the Ganache Company. She also continued with her

bakery, Ganache To-Go. It serves not only her cupcakes she is famous for, but also a wide variety of fresh baked goods made from scratch with real ingredients in her kitchen daily. Amber also expanded into the room next door that houses the Zales vault and transformed the space into the beautiful Morris Supper Club room. Open for special events, private parties, or her gourmet Supper Club dinner experiences, Amber’s vision for the Morris Room has allowed many to gather, share, and create timeless memories.

“Everything we do is in hopes that, even in a small way, our guests can come in, relax, and take a moment to be together and enjoy the time they have,” Amber said. “That’s really what motivates me. I have always loved to feed people and to make them feel welcome.”

- Mindy Giles

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The Spririt of the Mustangs



September marked the opening of Midwestern State University's Centennial Hall, with a beautiful sculpture to enhance it. Centennial Hall is an 87,000-square-foot facility housing academic programs for Health Sciences and Human Services. Approximately 1,100 students will use the facility every semester, but the sculpture of the mustangs in front of the facility is designed to be enjoyed by all past and present students from MSU.

The monument depicts four mustangs, each of which represent a different class rank, according to Dr. James Johnston the Provost at MSU. "With the unveiling of this monument, we begin a new MSU Texas tradition," he said. "The water feature represents the educational journey. The water itself represents the educational process - fluid and changing, but a path of lifelong learning. Each horse represents a class rank, beginning with the freshman horse about to take the first step, then the sophomore horse, the junior and finally the senior horse leaping out of the water."

The sculpture was created by Vic Payne, who was born in Texas, but now lives in Wyoming. The title of the artwork is the Spirit of the Mustangs. The Mustangs represent the journey of the students through their education. In the speech Dr. Johnston shared NOVEMBER 2019

at the unveiling of the Spirit of the Mustangs, he told the story of the freshman horse standing at the water's edge, tentative and unsure with fears and doubts. However, he is at MSU and courageously takes that first step. The freshman students will be brought to the statue at the beginning of their journey at MSU, to touch the tail of the freshman horse, to signify sending them forward. Students are encouraged to visit for reassurance when they are challenged or when celebrating their successes.

Johnston went on to say, "The sophomore horse is moving faster, navigating the process and finding its way. He is gaining confidence and building a foundation, but there are still decisions to be made." Dr. Johnston asked what will be their passions or life's work? "Frequent this place your sophomore year to reflect on your options and your decisions. Be reminded of your success to this point and the foundation you've built," he reminded them.

"The junior horse is at full gallop. She is at the halfway point of this journey and has found her passion," he went on to say. "Her head is high, eyes fixed on her goals. The work is hard, but she leans into it, confident in her decision and direction. Visit here in your junior year to reflect on how far you have come." He

reminded them when the challenges are great, to be reassured of their decision and to fix their eyes on their path. "The senior horse is proud, confident and inspiring others to follow. All that is left now is to hone the knowledge and skills she has acquired. She reflects on her time here, remembering the courage she found, the confidence she gained, and the experiences along the way. She readily assumes the responsibilities of leadership. The Mustangs journey began with a tentative first step and now ends with a bold leap towards the future. Return here throughout your senior year and as an alumnus. Grow in strength and confidence. Remember your time here and be assured that you are forever a part of this Mustang family," he said in closing. The seniors will also go to the monument on their graduation day

to touch the nose of the senior horse "celebrating their success and the completion of their journey." The task of completing the sculptures was a team effort. The sculptor, Vic Payne, created the statues in the vision of Dr. Johnston, according to Vic. "First, I was thinking, "How can I make these horses represent the different age groups," Vic said. "But Dr. Johnston helped me. He had a vision. It makes you think, "This is going to be around with my name on it a long time, maybe even a thousand years. When the project was done and everyone was happy, it was a big relief - and great satisfaction to me."

- Cindy Kahler Thomas

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6TH STREET WINERY

What started out as a hobby for Bill Andersen has turned into a thriving business in Wichita Falls. Bill and his wife, Marilyn, opened the 6th Street Winery in April, and have been going strong ever since. Bill started in the wine-making business before there was an actual business, producing wine at home from a kit in 2011. He "had some success" but wanted the experience of making wine from actual grapes.

"There was a company in Dallas who would drive grapes in from California once a year. You had to order them way in advance. I ordered 300 pounds of grapes and made some wine. It was good wine. I wouldn't say at that point it was commercially sellable wine, but it tasted good and we drank it," Bill said with a grin.

He then decided to try it on a bigger scale, using part of his garage, when his wife suggested they get a building to house the equipment. They ended up with a 7,500 square building at 600 6th Street in the downtown area and opened a winery. The white wine he is now making will not be available for 8 months, and the red wine will not be ready for 20 months, but it has not stopped Bill and Marilyn. They acquired wine from other sources and opened their business.

"We get most of our wines in Texas and a couple in California. What we do is threefold. We simply buy wines a winery has already made as a bulk wine, and they sell the bulk wine to multiple wineries. Those are the specialty wines, such as chocolate-flavored and peach-flavored. It is something I will probably never make here, but they sell well. Our chocolate wine is called Chocolate Falls, which we named after the Wichita Falls falls and how they look like the Willie Wonka falls after it rains. We have a Twister Peach named after the twister in Wichita Falls. We buy those, put our label on them, and sell them as specialty wine," he explained.

"The other wine we make is contracted with a winery in the Fredericksburg area. We have them procure grapes for us. We have bought about 5 tons of grapes this year, which sounds like a lot, but it doesn't make as much wine as you think. Every ton will give me about three barrels. Each barrel will give us about 300 bottles of wine apiece, yet we can burn through it pretty quick in about a year. We are having them custom make our wine out of two different types of grapes. The problem is we must work so far in advance. It literally won't be available until 2021. Red wines take 19 to 24 months so this year's vintage will be our 2021 selling wine. The other scenarios are the California wineries. It is the same way except they are making wines for a lot of different wineries. You can say how much you want and they basically ship it to you when you need more."

"I am not the winemaker on any of our current wines. We started production here in Wichita Falls, and we have a couple of tanks in the back. Our goal is to get where we are producing wine here in Wichita Falls. Again, it won't be available anytime soon. Next year I will probably max out my capacity, which isn't a lot. I probably won't be able to



make 300 or 400 cases a year, and I can sell more than that," he shared. "The one thing my wife and I do very well is pick quality wine people will like. I think we have fairly good taste in wine, and our customers tell us they like the wines we choose," Bill said. The winery is open on Fridays from 5:00 p.m. to 10: p.m., Saturdays from 4:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m., and Sundays from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Saturday

night they have live music performed by an individual, sometimes two or three people, but mostly small acoustic bands. 6th Street Winery hosts anything from a classical guitar player, to acoustic guitar player, to a 3-piece jazz ensemble. They rotate through a series of different artists to make sure everyone is entertained.

"I think we have a good selection. We have great talent in this area that I love taking advantage of," Bill said. "Sometimes toward the end of the evening everyone will turn their chairs, and it becomes more about the music. The musicians interact with the customers and take requests. Earlier on, it is background music, so you can come in, talk to your friends and enjoy yourself. It is also part of the allure," he explained.

"I think what is exciting to me is our future plans of expansion and starting the production of wine. We are focused on being an urban winery here in downtown. We plan to have tours of the winery. I would like to have lockers where people can make their own wine in small batches, or even wine for special events like weddings. The wine would have to be started months before the big day, but when the day comes, the bride and groom would have their own vintage with their own labels on it," Bill explained.

Right now, most of the building is being leased to Backdoor Theater, but Bill is looking forward to the day when the 6th Street Winery fills the entire building with people gathered to enjoy wine and life

- Cindy Kahler Thomas





Kile Bateman, founder and CEO of Phased In, was appalled when he discovered the plight of foster children when they turn 18. Many times, foster parents cannot or will not continue to support their foster child because state funds run out on their 18th birthday. Many teens end up with no place to go, and no one to help them. The organization known as Phased In has changed that, by providing a place for displaced teens to live and pursue their goals. Kile is pastor of Evangel Temple, the first entity to back the project. "Phased In was birthed by Evangel Temple. They were the only ones who believed in this dream and the ones who purchased the property. Evangel sowed \$150,000 into it before anybody else stepped up, because we are faith based. We understand spiritual coverings, and they have been there for our protection. Evangel has been the spiritual covering since Phased In started. Now we have other churches

who have come along and partnered with us, many denominations," Pastor Kile shared. "We got the call out and the community responded. Before I knew it, we had purchased an old building we once owned. When I got the vision for Phased In, I thought the Maurine Street location would be perfect - and it was. We had people from all branches of the military help with the renovations. We had multiple church groups come out, and businesses donated items," he said. "A year later we opened our doors to our first young person. Five years later we have seen 76 young men come through our men's dorm, staying as long as they needed. We have had some stay a few days and some have stayed years," Pastor Kile said. Now, the Maurine Street Campus has been revamped for women. "We were down to just a few guys, and the call was getting louder. There were more girls needing us. So, when the last 2 guys were no longer part of the program,

we went into stealth renovation mode. What should have taken us a year, just took 6 weeks. There were people helping every day. It was a group effort with too many partners to name. With a dorm where 76 boys lived, you can imagine what the couch looked like - and smelled like," he said with a chuckle. "We got the boy out and got the froo froo in, so it looks incredible now," "We want to keep the girl's dorm where it is not overcrowded, but we don't want to turn girls away. We can have eight comfortably, but we can push it up to 13. In our 5-year history, we have never turned anyone away. There is a separate room for a resident assistant too," Pastor Kile said. The boys will be getting a new campus on East Side. Property donated to the organization on Bailey Avenue was once used as a nursing home. Pastor Kile said it came with a price tag because of the work that needs to be done to pass the state code. They are in the process of raising \$100,000 to have it renovated. "Our percentage of success is, well we don't bat a thousand. Because we are different than a lot of places. We take everyone. We care more about doing good than looking good, and more about standing before God than standing before a donor. We give everyone a chance, and we have given some kids a chance when no one else would. That is just our heart," Pastor Kile said passionately. Phased In is identified as an SIL, or Supervised Independent Living facility campus, by the state of Texas. The state has goals in the areas of academics, education and employment. Clients must be a student full-time, employed full-time or a combination of both. "We have businesses who work with us to help get these kids hired quickly. We have a great relationship with Hirschi High School because almost all of our kids have not finished high school, even though they are 18-years old. We have almost a 90 percent success rate of our students accomplishing their educational goals, and many of them go beyond high school," he bragged. "A lot of these kids have good jobs, and some have been able to hold them. And



others? We always say the best thing about Phased In is the freedom and the worst thing about Phased In is the freedom. It is not in a structured hour-by-hour, cookie-cutter program. We must, and we are instructed to give these kids their freedom. They make their own meals and buy their own groceries. We give them a stipend the state gives us, so much of the money we get from the state goes directly to the kids. In fact, less than 20 percent of our budget comes from the state. I have to raise over 80 percent of our budget." Phased In has a spiritual component. "Crystal, our first girl in the dorm, doesn't have any kind of a spiritual connection. I believe if you're not religious and not too wacky, you can't hide Jesus and you can't hide the real deal. You just love them and encourage them. I'll tell you this... We ask them if they can pass a drug test and sometimes they say no. She said no, but she said it like, 'I want to. I want a life where I can be free. I don't know God, but I know there is a God.'" "We aren't trying to make them be anything they aren't supposed to be. I always say, if you have the choice to be religious or real, choose real; and that's what we are," Pastor Kile explained. Phased In is always in need of financial support. To donate to the program, call 940-691-1400 or email them at phasedin@phasedin.org. - Cindy Kahler Thomas





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CONNECTION

Involvement in student activities on any campus can be a big plus for students. An organization called Volunteer MSU provides volunteer opportunities for students, faculty, and staff. They partner with nonprofits around Wichita Falls, so people have endless ways to get involved in their city and on campus. On-campus, there are over 100 organizations that students can join. Every year, 170 students go Greek according to the Greek Life page on the university's website. With undergraduate enrollment at roughly 2,500 students in the Fall of 2018, there are only 6% of students going through the Greek life process.

Student involvement activities coordinator, Ruby Arriaga said that the number of students that go and participate just depends on the event. If it is advertised well, there will be a good number of volunteers and students that are involved. Sometimes, if it is not advertised well, then little to no students will participate. Students are encouraged to get involved

Student involvement is something that many students are encouraged to take part in. Getting involved can be something that can improve your college experience because it makes it easier to meet people and learn more about your community. Our campus has several ways students can take advantage of this opportunity. Student involvement

Despite the many opportunities for students, not every student is involved on campus. Every week, students are informed via Minute with a Mustang on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter about popular events happening around campus. Students also have access to

MustangsLink, or the CORQ app, which shows every event on campus and what organizations are doing. MSU student Anh Tran said, "I like being involved on campus because I know everything that is happening on campus. Also, it's fun meeting new people when I'm there!" Anh is an art senior that works as a social media student assistant, Tri-Beta honor society, and the Catholic Campus Center. What's stopping students? With the endless amount of opportunities for students to get out of their dorm and attend an activity on campus, student involvement can't help but wonder why so many students do not participate. Many times, residential assistants, or RAs have trouble getting students to come to the events. Arriaga said, "Some students may feel overwhelmed with not only school, but a lot of events."

Jordan Bailey, criminal justice sophomore said, "I'm really busy with school and work, which is why I'm not really involved at all. I've gone to some events here and there, but I'm not involved in an organization."

Ruby said she believes there are enough opportunities for students to get involved and wish more students would, but is open to any more suggestions students might have for organizations on campus.

Some professors even have given their students an incentive for going to watch speakers, go to games, or participate in spirit events.

Paxton Whitaker, mechanical engineering sophomore, said, "I remember last semester going to at least four events was a part of our grade in one class. We could also go to other

events for extra credit." If students are paying for the funds of events, such as games and artist lecture series, through their tuition and fees, why aren't more students attending these events that are offered on campus? About 75% of students are full-time students. The students that are part-time most likely work and have other responsibilities that are more important to them than participating on campus. Michael French, kinesiology freshman, said, "I see most of the events, but they don't seem to interest me, honestly. If something catches my eye, I'll go, but usually I would rather do something else."

Get involved! Getting involved not only enables students to meet more people, it can also improve your overall college experience. Students can learn leadership and communication skills that will help them once they graduate. Joining an organization can look good on applications for future job opportunities as well. It helps to fill in extra time in the week and stay busy, while being a part of something you love.

- Maryn Heil

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MSU Texas Caribfest



MSU Texas Torchlight Parade and Bonfire



2019 Homecoming Queen Makaela McCoy and the Homecoming King Jose (Chuy) De Jesus Torres



MSU Texas Cardboard Boat Race on October 18th 2019



MSU Lip Sync competition

Homecoming Results:

Residence Hall/Student Organization Homecoming Overall:

- 1st: Caribbean Student Organization
 - 2nd: Radiology Club
 - 3rd: MSU Texas Cheer
 - 4th: Catholic Campus Center
- Fraternity/Sorority Homecoming

Overall:

- 1st: Chi Omega and Kappa Sigma
 - 2nd: Gamma Phi Beta and Sigma Nu
 - 3rd: Sigma Kappa, Alpha Phi, and Kappa Alpha Order
 - 4th: Sigma Lambda Alpha
- Lip Sync winners:
- 1st: Black Student Union and NAACP
 - 2nd: Sigma Nu and Gamma Phi Beta
 - 3rd: Caribbean Student Organization

Cardboard Boat Race winners:

- 1st: American Society of Mechanical Engineers
 - 2nd: Engineers for a Sustainable World
 - 3rd: Alpha Phi, Sigma Kappa, and Kappa Alpha
- MSU Texas Film Festival winners:
- 1st Place: "Grenada" by Anh Tran
 - 2nd Place: "Nostalgia" by Aodhan Shaw
 - 3rd Place: "Mania" by Brendan Wynne & Stephen Gomez

Women's Soccer:

Mustangs beat Eagles, 3-1.

Best Homecoming Banner:

Caribbean Student Organization

Best Homecoming Board:

Kappa Pi Art Honor Society

Best Tailgate Food:

Chi Omega and Sigma Kappa

Best Decorated Door:

Chemistry Department

Football:

Mustangs beat Javelinas, 70-35.

Upcoming MSU Texas events:

- November 2nd Mustang Rally
- November 9th Western New Mexico vs. Mustangs (Football) 1pm @ Memorial Stadium
- November 14th West Texas A&M vs. Mustangs (Men's Basketball) 7pm @ D.L. Ligon
- November 25th MSU-Burns Fantasy of Lights Opening Ceremony 6pm- 10pm
- November 27th till the Dec 2nd **NO SCHOOL!**

92.9
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WICHITA FALLS #1 HIT MUSIC STATION

LARGEST NCOA CLASS UNDERWAY AT SHEPPARD

SHEPPARD AIR FORCE BASE, Texas – A morning sun broke the North Texas horizon Oct. 3, 2019, ushering in a new day at Sheppard AFB, the Air Force's largest and most diverse training installation.

The base has grown accustomed to leading the way when it comes to training the future of the Air Force, as its maxim suggests – "Combat Capability Starts Here!" Half of the service's fighter pilots are trained here. Almost half of all basic military training graduates come here for the next chapter of their young careers, and all of the Air Force's aircraft maintenance force is trained at a Sheppard asset.

It's no surprise the base is now home to the Air Force's largest NCO Academy, which made history the aforementioned October morning when 285 non-commissioned officers of Class 20-1 began a professional military education journey to further grow as leaders and mentors. The new class, according to the Enlisted PME Registrar's Office at Thomas N. Barnes Center for Enlisted Education at Maxwell AFB, Mississippi, slightly edged out the 284 student load of Airey NCOA Class 19-2 at Tyndall AFB, Florida.

Chief Master Sgt. Malik J. Barnes, who officially became the new commandant for the Sheppard NCOA the day before Class 20-1 began, said he knew the Air Force was a bit behind on getting qualified technical sergeants through the second tier of PME, but he didn't know of plans for growth at Sheppard until he attended the 2019 Air Force Sergeants Association Professional Airmen's Conference, where he learned the size of each class could reach 294 students with the potential to add more. "I was excited," he said. "I get to influence that many tech. sergeants? That's amazing."

But it's not just him influencing the up-and-coming leaders, he was quick to point out. It's primarily the cadre of instructors and staff, who he said "have been killing it," who will lead the 21 flights of 12-14 students each through the six-week course. Barnes applauded the efforts of the NCOA staff of almost 40 for educating students while growing from a maximum load of 154 technical sergeants just two years ago.

Senior Master Sgt. Jason Ramon, NCOA director of education, described the



group as hard working and professional with a hunger for and motivation to take on the challenge of growing the academy, which is located in Bldg. 1900. "The growth has been surreal," he said, "but at the same time amazing to watch all the moving parts, gaining 13 additional instructors and training all 13 instructors in less than four months, and working with our mission partners." Senior Master Sgt. David Cameron, NCOA director of resources for the past four years, said the build up at Sheppard began about two years ago when the Air Force looked at the existing NCOAs and considered which location could grow. After considering several factors, it was decided Sheppard had the space, infrastructure and support to meet the demands of PME.

Once all of the initial analysis and planning was complete, the timeline for expanding the Sheppard load was relatively short. But the devastating effects of Hurricane Michael on Tyndall AFB almost a year ago sped up the transition.

Cameron said the focus of the Sheppard NCOA was to work through the challenges, makes changes as needed and keep students focused on their mission. They also had to take some of their own lessons to heart.

"For us, the challenge was being able to keep an optimistic outlook on the change," he said. "That's part of what we teach – being adaptable – and sometimes making a change happen with 200-and-something people at one time is a challenge."

An increased student load also meant a need for more instructors to handle

the growth. Master Sgt. Charles Davis, NCOA superintendent of faculty development, said the staff knew there would be a shortfall of instructors to parallel the surge of students, so he reached out to the Barnes Center for more instructors.

In addition to two instructors from the Kisling NCOA at Kapaun Air Station, Germany, the Sheppard NCOA also received 13 new student instructors, most with no teaching experience at all, who had to get trained and qualified to

teach classes in a short amount of time. Training included a 30-day course at Maxwell AFB to get the foundations of teaching, and then a 180-hour internship at Sheppard before taking on a class.

"One of the unique things is when we get instructors in from school, we immediately try to get them into the classroom ... to get that experience," Davis said. "Once they have that experience and that next class comes, they're able to be in front of the class with qualified instructors sitting in the back evaluating them."

Growing from an average of 154 students per class to being able to accommodate 294-304 has been challenging, and there is still room to grow, Barnes said. He said Sheppard has the infrastructure and ability to continue to grow, it's just a matter of funding for additional flights and continuing to work on some of the issues unique to the base. The Sheppard NCOA hosts seven classes annually with a break in the summer.

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