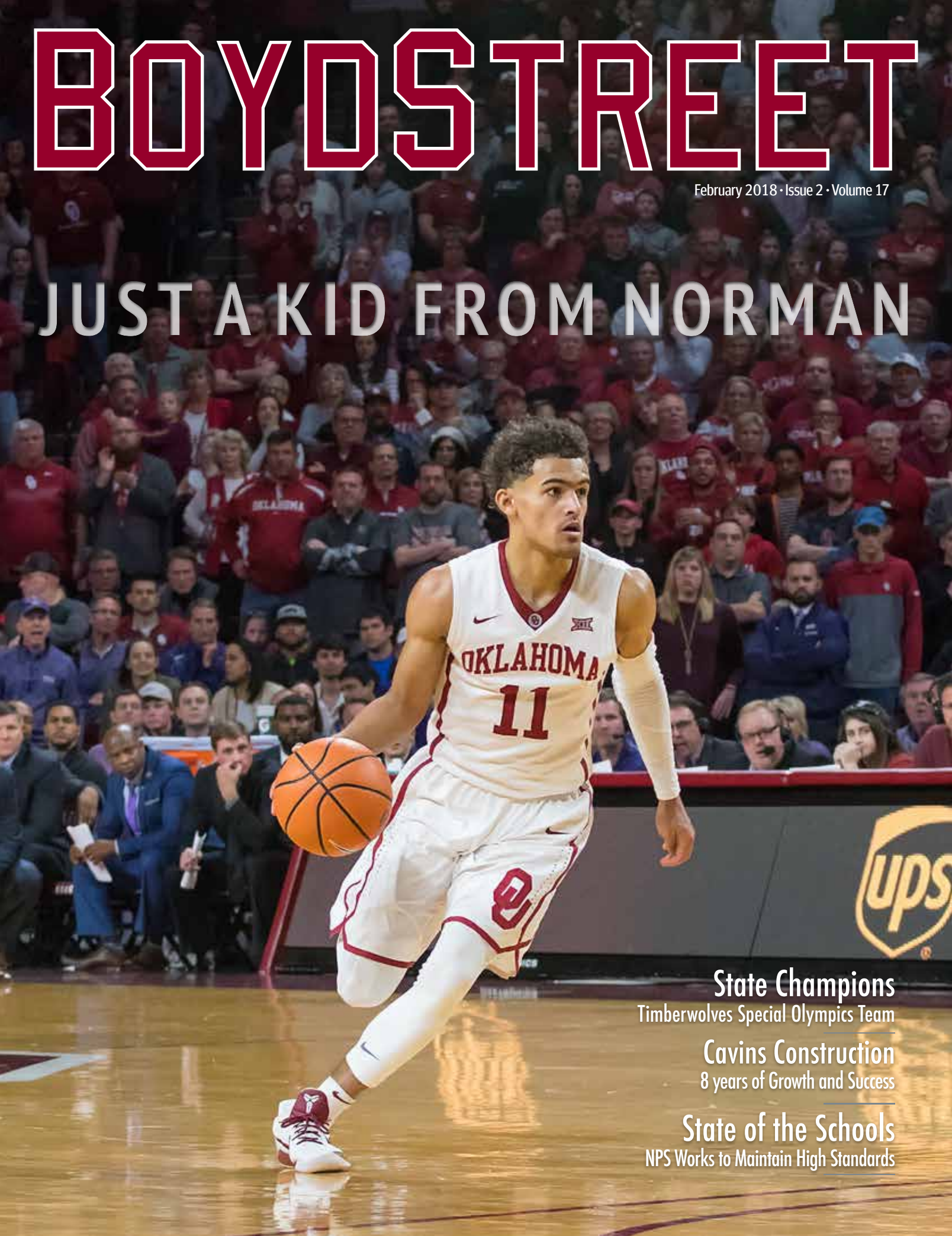


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BOYDSTREET
MAGAZINE



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IN FEBRUARY

6 things to do in Norman in February



2ND FRIDAY ART WALK
Downtown Main Street @ 6 p.m.
2nd Friday Art Walk is a monthly celebration of art taking place in Downtown Norman's Walker Arts District, presented by the Norman Arts Council that highlights artists, arts organizations and businesses.



CHOCOLATE FESTIVAL
Norman North High School
10 a.m.-2 p.m.
The Norman Chocolate Festival, raising funds for the Norman PTA Council, will feature four one-hour sessions to sample chocolate from participating Norman restaurants and businesses.



MARDI GRAS PARADE
Downtown Norman @ 7 p.m.
The annual Norman Mardi Gras Parade will travel through the Walker Arts District in Downtown Norman East on Main Street from Jones Ave. to Crawford Ave. then back to the starting point on Comanche Ave.



SOONER MEN'S BASKETBALL
Lloyd Noble Center
The Sooner men's basketball team will play a slate of Big 12 Conference games in Norman at the Lloyd Noble Center Feb. 5 vs. West Virginia, Feb. 17 against Texas and Feb. 24 vs. Kansas State.



WINTER WIND CONCERT SERIES
The Depot @ 7 p.m.
Don Conosenti will take the stage Feb. 25 and, in a special Wednesday Winter Wind Concert Series appearance, Caroline Cotter with Michael Howard will perform Feb. 28.



SOONER WOMEN'S BASKETBALL
Lloyd Noble Center
The Sherri Coale-coached Sooner women's basketball team will tip off against Big 12 Conference opponents including Feb. 3 vs. West Virginia, Feb. 21 against Iowa State and Feb. 24 vs. Texas Tech.



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2017 NPD Officer of the Year

Master Police Officer Christopher Allison

Less than six years after graduating from the police academy in 2012, Christopher Allison has been recognized as the Norman Police Department's 2017 Officer of the Year.

"MPO Chris Allison's selection as our department's Officer of the Year speaks volumes about his ongoing commitment to integrity, accountability, mutual respect and partnerships," said Chief Keith Humphrey. "His positive attitude is infectious to all he meets. Not only is he an amazing officer, he is an amazing husband and father."

This Tulsa native originally came to Norman to pursue a degree in film and media studies at the University of Oklahoma. Little did he know that he would fall in love with the Norman community, meet his future wife and end up becoming a Norman police officer.

What may have started as a four-year visit to Norman has turned into Allison building a family and finding a career in Norman.

After graduating from OU, Allison did not immediately become a police officer. Instead, it wasn't until two and a half years after college that Allison's friend, a Tulsa police officer, encouraged him to apply for the police academy.



Allison had thought about joining the police academy before, but the encouragement from his friend pushed him to finally take the leap.

Looking back on the last six years, Allison says that being involved in Norman, helping people and protecting the community have been his favorite part of the job.

"I love how being a police officer, you see so many different sides of the community, as far as working with the fire department, EMSTAT, the hospital and local businesses," said Allison.

"We work with so many different people, who all play a role in our community. That's always been so great to me. I've loved that."

Not only does Allison love the city he works for, he loves the people he gets to work with.

"I was raised as a single child and you really do feel like you have brothers and sisters when you're a police officer," he said. "It's such a family in

Norman. We all work together and try to make each other better."

Being a natural problem-solver and resolver of conflict, Allison enjoys working with other officers on his team to solve problems that may not have a straight-forward solution.

"We deal with so many different problems every day and everything is dynamic when you're dealing with human beings," he said. "I like being able to look at a problem and think about how are we going to solve this, what are our options here?"

Allison also loves showing members of the community what a police shift looks like, how the department operates and what a police officer's job entails. He encourages community members to consider the citizens police academy or at the very least, contact the police department to participate in a ride-along.

By going on a ride-along, people can talk one-on-one with police officers, ask questions and learn a lot about the department. – **BSM**

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State of the Schools

Norman Schools Weather Challenging Times, Work to Maintain High Standards

On the surface, the Norman Public Schools are a pillar of optimism and achievement.

Optimism is even listed among the district's values, along with integrity, inclusiveness and collaboration. Ask him, and district Superintendent Nick Migliorino will tell you that he would stack Norman schools up against any school system in the state, and that Norman would outshine them, hands down.

There is some justification for that. *U.S. News* and the *Washington Post* both rank Norman's two high schools among the best and most challenging in the nation. The district has a 94 percent graduation rate, college and entrance exam scores outrank the state and national averages and nearly 500 of the district's employees hold advanced degrees.

But, Migliorino will also acknowledge troubling developments within the Norman district. They are the same headwinds facing pretty much every other public-school system in Oklahoma, diminishing state funding, stagnant teacher pay and high attrition. The shortage of qualified replacements is so severe that it has forced an alarming number of emergency certifications. And, apparent-



ly, there is little hope on the horizon, as enrollment in teacher preparation programs continues to decline.

Those are sobering circumstances for Migliorino, who is still in his first year as Norman's superintendent.

Halfway through his first school year, Migliorino sat down with Boyd Street to reflect on the state of Norman's schools.

"We have a premiere education system here, and we are known nationally for high performance," he said.

"Academic performance scores meet or beat everybody. We are right there. I'll put us up against anybody. The excellence is there, but I always think about what we could be doing if we were allowed to plan," Migliorino said.

One of the biggest challenges the district faces, he said, is working in an environment of inconsistent and unreliable funding from the state. It's hard to hire teachers or make long-term budget plans when funding is regularly reduced half way through the school year.

Migliorino has been an educator for a lot of years, and he's seen it happen frequently. Every time the state leg-

islature goes into session, school districts are asked to rework their budgets, he said.

"It's like the movie 'Groundhog Day.' It happens every year," he said. "There's no planning in the public schools."

Many school districts in the nation enjoy adequate and consistent funding, and some can even plan as far as six years into the future. Unfortunately, that doesn't happen in Oklahoma, he said.

"We need some support. The legislature needs to stop kicking the can down the road," Migliorino said.

If schools had financial assurances that would allow them to follow a sustained plan, they could facilitate smaller student-teacher ratios and allow teachers to get to know their students better, he said. They could spend more time evaluating standardized test results and build off that to design individualized educational programs. They would also have more time to communicate with parents.

In addition to funding concerns, Migliorino said the district's enrollment has been relatively flat for several years, holding steady at around 16,000 students. Four or five years

ago, enrollment growth was solid, at about 400 students, but it has flattened considerably since then because fewer young families are moving to Norman and enrolling their children in school.

Norman's enrollment growth of 1.01 percent was outpaced this year by Edmond, 2 percent, and Moore, 1.36 percent. Edmond's enrollment is 24,892 and Moore's enrollment is 24,687.

Fortunately, Norman has an abundance of community support to offset sagging support from the state, Migliorino said. It comes in the form of partnerships with businesses and institutions, as well as through funding from bond issues that are supported by voters.

The City of Norman has helped the district ensure security by providing

police officers dedicate to the schools, and the University of Oklahoma enhances the district through seminars for students, concurrent enrollment for graduating seniors and professional development programs for teachers. Norman Regional has helped the district pay for nurses to be available at all 24 schools in the Norman district.

The district's partnerships extend beyond local government and institutional entities. Employees from many Norman businesses volunteer at schools through the Norman Chamber's Partners in Education program. The Norman Public Schools Foundation supports teacher-driven initiatives with grants.

Migliorino said he has completed the process of visiting with more than 1,000 teachers who serve in the dis-

trict's elementary schools, middle schools and high schools.

Shortly after starting his tenure, he began meeting with teachers to broaden his familiarity and to establish trust. He wanted teachers to meet him personally, so they could get to know him and feel confident that he would represent the district with integrity.

"The only way people know I have integrity is if they have a chance to meet me," he said.

Meeting with those teachers was a powerful experience, hearing their stories and seeing their emotions, having first-hand knowledge of their experiences in the classroom will make it easier to make good decisions as superintendent, Migliorino said. — **BSM**

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Service Spotlight: Captain Stephen Clymer

What child doesn't dream of growing up to be a firefighter? For Captain Stephen Clymer, that dream was a little more vivid than most, and he's thankful that he never outgrew it. His father was a fireman in Oklahoma City for 25 years, and some of his earliest childhood memories are of visiting his dad at the station. He recalls fondly how he grew up looking up to the people that donned their fire gear and went out every day to help people in need. There was never any question in his mind that he wanted to follow in their footsteps.

"I remember finishing up my last day of rookie school, and it dawning on me that all these years I've been looking up to these guys and seeing their names on the back of their helmets and coats, and realizing that tomorrow I would be one of them. It was a surreal moment."

Clymer is currently positioned at Norman's Station 8 and lives in Blanchard with his wife and two daughters. He joined the Norman Fire Department in January 2001 and became a captain in January 2016, and the captain's bars

that he proudly wears today are actually the bars that his father earned during his years of service. In his 17 years with the department, Clymer has been through more than most people would imagine and gained a second family in the process.

For the fire department to work, explains Clymer, it requires more than just teamwork.

"The guy next to you is your lifeline. You're literally putting your life in his hands. It's all about dependability and being able to rely on each other. That's why we call each other brothers."

Most people, if faced with a burning building, would instinctually run in the opposite direction. Firefighters have in common the opposite urge; a need to run towards danger, to save the people involved and get the situation under control.

"There isn't a person at this station that isn't driven by the will to help people," said Clymer, "and everyone wants to pull their own weight. That's what drives these people to do more than you think they can, and more than they think they can. When

your brother needs you, you don't want to let him down."

When the fire engine pulls up to a scene, firefighters are forced to make life-saving decisions in a matter of seconds. They focus on life safety, incident stabilization and property conservation. They know that they typically only see people on the worst days of their lives, and that it's important to help them through it in any way that they can.

So, yes, if they have the opportunity, they're going to try to save those irreplaceable things in your home, such as baby pictures hanging on the wall, or rosary beads sitting on the bedside table. "We're always keeping in mind how we'd want to be treated if it were our house on fire, or our family in trouble," said Clymer.

In his service as a firefighter, Clymer has seen his share of sorrow and loss, but he says that for every sad story, he's got a hundred happy ones. "I love coming to work," he said. "Honestly, if you want to help people, there isn't a better job in the world." — **BSM**

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Boyd Street Teacher Features

Susan Allgood

Susan Allgood, a coordinator for the gifted and talented program, has a knack for teaching students at any skill level. And, in her other role as a math specialist, she makes the subject accessible to all types of students. What's more? She does it all with a healthy dose of humor.

"My sense of humor and my stature lends itself to elementary," she said. "I'm 5'1". I'm really short. I decided I didn't want to teach anybody who was taller than me, so I taught elementary."

Allgood, named Jackson Elementary's Teacher of the Year for the 2017-2018 school year, earned her bachelor's degree in communications from the University of Oklahoma and began teaching others to use computers and software before realizing it was

the teaching aspect she enjoyed most. She went on to earn her master's in education from the University of Central Oklahoma.

In her 19 years of teaching, Allgood has witnessed struggling students completely change their outlook after identifying as gifted. Until then, they had no idea they could achieve anything, she said.

Allgood says it's her students' creativity that she enjoys most about her profession.

"They are creative, so that challenges me to look at the world a little differently and up my game with my level of creativity," she said. "And with my kids who struggle, I have to be able to pull things out of a hat or look at things a little differently to reach them."



Allgood recalls the best advice she's received, and she still calls upon those four words: "Find your inner authority."

"I think for women, especially now, finding and tapping into our inner authority is so important. Knowing who you are, what you want and what you want for your students will really give them the strength to take them where they need to be and also help you find where you need to go."

— BSM

Hadley Shepherd

Her path to a career in teaching wasn't a straight shot, but now Hadley Shepherd is entering her fifth year as an educator and couldn't have seen her future playing out any other way.

A fourth-grade teacher at Eisenhower Elementary, Shepherd has been a part of the education world her entire life — her mother, Beth Fritch, was her elementary school principal and her father, Steve Spears, her high school basketball coach and history teacher. Yet, teaching was the last thing she saw herself doing. She enrolled in college as a business major. After about a year, she decided it was not her true calling.

"That summer between my freshman and sophomore year, I changed my major two other times before I settled

on 'Maybe I'm put on this Earth to be a teacher; maybe that's what I'm supposed to do,'" she said.

"After my freshman year, my mom really helped me. She asked me, 'What do you love to do? What makes you happy? What do you see yourself doing?' And those questions always led me to something that had to do with children."

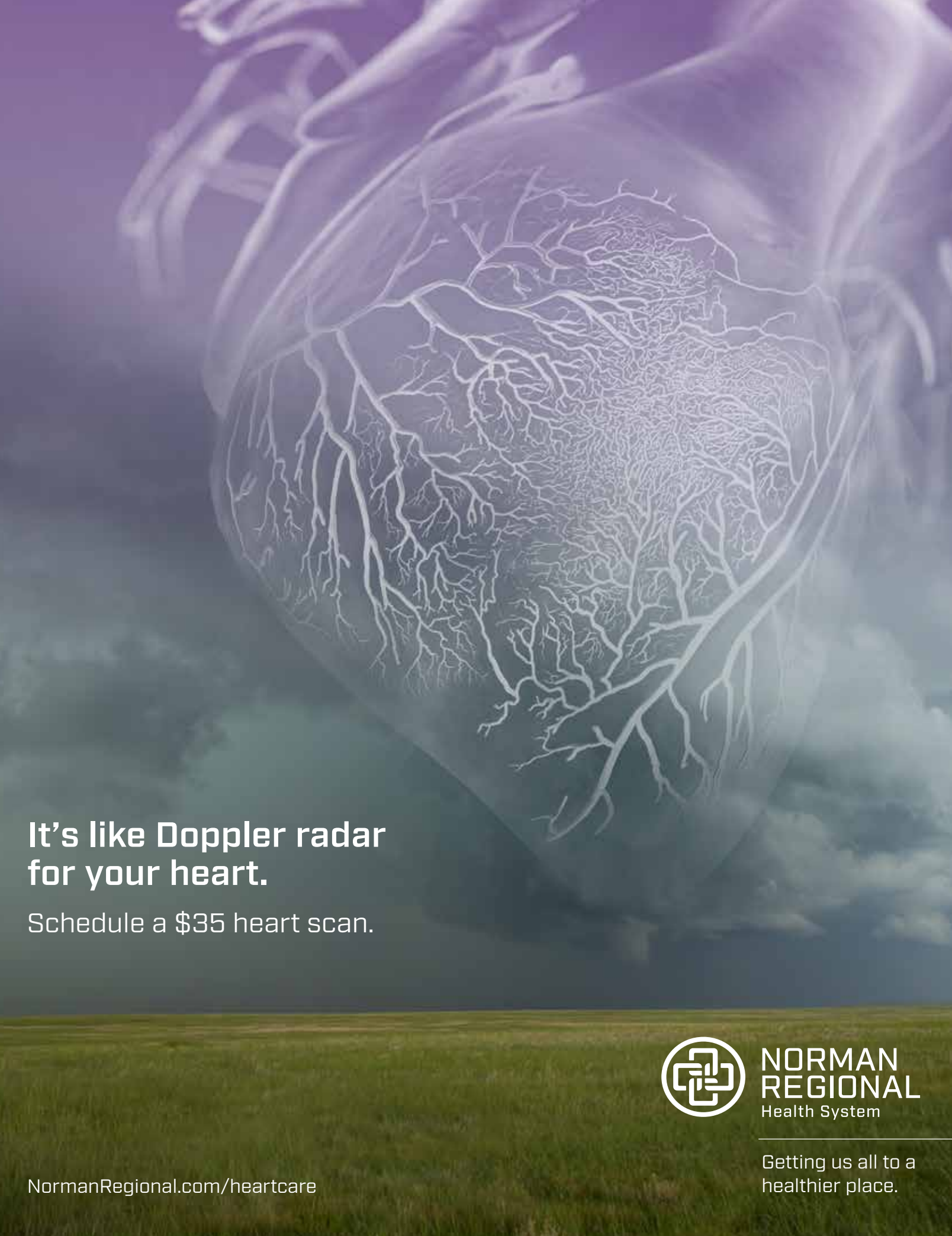
The young woman who once was unsure of her calling has been named Eisenhower Elementary School's Teacher of the Year for the 2017-2018 school year. Armed with a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Oklahoma State University, Shepherd says she adapts her teaching methods when students are struggling to grasp a concept, and she tries to be



the best example for her students in everything she does.

"I remind myself every day when I step into my room that my kids need me, and they need me to be happy and positive, and they need me to be their cheerleader and their supporter," she said.

"And I remind myself I have to give them my best to get their best. I have high expectations and I remind myself of that always, and I remind my kids of that as well." — BSM



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NORMANITE IN THE SPOTLIGHT Adrian Buendia

Left to right: Jenni, Elliot, Adrian and Adrian Buendia in front of Eskimo Sno in Robinson Crossing.

Adrian Buendia has held many titles over the years: business owner, board member, philanthropist, father and coach, to name a few. He is a man with many interests and passions, and he's always eager to see where they take him.

The one thing that you'll never see, is Buendia standing still. The Norman businessman, owner of Eskimo Sno and Nexus Productions, has taken to heart the importance of always moving forward, and he isn't planning on slowing down anytime soon.

Buendia is originally from Wewoka, but he happily claims Norman as his hometown and anyone that sees his passion for the community would have to agree. After graduating from the University of Oklahoma in the early 2000s, he and his wife, Jenni, settled in Norman with their two children, Adrian, 4, and Elliot, 1.

His entrepreneurial spirit was awakened as a student at OU. Actively involved in organizations across campus, it wasn't a huge leap for him and his friend, David Tran, to venture into the world of disc jockeying. Their first gig was the Soonerton, a dance marathon, and the pair had so

much fun that they branched out to other events, eventually buying their own equipment. Buendia kept getting asked to DJ events, and he kept saying yes, even after his college days were over.

Eventually, he created Nexus Productions, now home to multiple DJs, photo booth rentals, lighting and sound services.

"Being so involved on campus when I was in college helped the DJ business blossom because I was already involved in all of the events that needed DJs," said Buendia. "So the same events that I was doing in college, we're still a part of now, 20 years later."

Buendia still personally DJs more than 250 events each year, and the company has been asked to provide sound and music for everything from backyard barbecues to OU's commencement ceremony.

The connections and friendships that Buendia made during college have stuck with him. They have provided him with exciting opportunities to grow Nexus Productions in the Norman community.

Another one of Buendia's long-time enterprises is Eskimo Sno.

Buendia worked at the snow cone stand for the first time the summer after he graduated from OU. Eventually, he was presented with the opportunity to buy Eskimo Sno, and he jumped at the chance to be involved in a business that was so dear to people in Norman. As hundreds of people stopped by to grab their snow cones, Buendia got to know the community, and he didn't miss the chance to let them know about Nexus Productions.

Now, Eskimo Sno has spread across Norman and Oklahoma City. It has five outdoor stands, two indoor locations, two Eskimo Sno To Go trailers and an Eskimo SnoMobile. Buendia credits his wife for the successful expansion of that business. In fact, she now runs Eskimo Sno while Adrian focuses on Nexus Productions.

No matter which business venture he's got his eye on, one thing that's always on his mind is finding ways to give back to the Norman community. He donates snow cones and photo booths to events around town, including the Chocolate Festival,



Taste of Norman, the City of Norman Christmas Parade and Bridges Prom. He's involved with the Parks and Recreation department, and one of Buendia's favorite events to DJ is the annu-

al Daddy Daughter Dance in Norman, an event scheduled for Feb. 3 that usually brings in more than 4,500 people. He also donates sound and projectors to the summer outdoor movie series.

Nexus Productions provides DJs for several events for the Norman Public Schools and the University of Oklahoma, and Buendia has announced many different athletic events at the university.

"I love seeing everybody in Norman and making those connections," he said. "It's important to me to have a great relationship with the city of Norman and everybody here."

Buendia is on the board of directors for the Norman Chamber of Commerce and Visit Norman. He's also a member of the Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Lindsey Street Merchants Association, and is very excited about celebrating Eskimo Sno's 20th summer

at the Lindsey Street location this year.

As they celebrate years of success in the Norman community, Buendia and his wife are always looking toward the future and working at a pace that would both impress and exhaust other people. Adrian has just taken over the management of Events in Madison Square near 24th Avenue and Hemphill Drive, and his wife just opened H & J Organizing with her friend, Hallie Palmer.

"The only way to survive in business is to keep moving and doing new things. You have to stay relevant," said Buendia. "I always tell people that one thing that's made us successful is that we diversify. We never just do one thing."

No one knows exactly what the future holds, but it's safe to say that, for the Buendias, there will always be something new and exciting on the horizon.—BSM



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Norman PTA Council Takes Over Chocolate Festival

The Norman Chocolate Festival has been a community tradition for 35 years, receiving local and national acclaim. For the first time in its history, the festival is changing hands, and will return this month under new sponsorship and at a new venue.

The Norman PTA Council will host this year's festival from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 10 at Norman North High School.

The festival has been recognized nationally through the years, including placing third on the Food Network's Top 10 National Food Festival list, said Annette Price, Norman PTA Council president.

"The Firehouse Board of Trustees is glad to see the Chocolate Festival continue under the leadership of our friends at the Norman PTA Council," said Douglas Shaw Elder, Firehouse Art Center executive director. "Fundraising and community support are integral parts of both of our organizations, so we can fulfill our missions and continue to provide high quality resources for Norman school children."

In 2017, the Firehouse Art Center, which began the festival in 1982, announced plans to discontinue the festival to allow the center to focus on its primary mission of arts education.

"The Firehouse staff and its volunteers created a true legacy in Norman by treating us to chocolate artistry that has transcended generations. We didn't want this community event that generated sweet memories for so many of us to go away," Price said. "We are humbled to carry on this celebration and ecstatic that it will continue to benefit education."

Proceeds from the event will fund educational grants to benefit schools and projects across the district, supplying additional resources for students and teachers and helping to establish initiatives that increase family engagement.

Some of the delicacies to be featured at this year's festival include: Chocolate Apples from Apple Tree Chocolate; Heavenly Organics Chocolate Honey Patties from Sprouts Farmers Market; Chocolate Brownie Delight Sundae from Freddy's Frozen Cus-

tard & Steakburgers; and Chocolate Chili from The Diner. Other participants include EarthFruits Yogurt, The Baked Bear, Amy Cakes, Eskimo Sno, Abbey Road Catering and Fancy Cakes & Confections.

"It's been a lot of work, but it's going to be a great event for anyone in the Norman community. We couldn't have done it without Firehouse Art Center and our wonderful volunteers," Price said.

Tickets will be available in one-hour blocks, beginning at 10 a.m., 11 a.m., noon and 1 p.m. Premiere tickets, granting festival-goers 15 samples, will be \$50 and only available in the 10 a.m. hour. General tickets, which are good for 10 samples, will be \$30.

To purchase tickets online, visit www.normanptacouncil.org/news. To volunteer to help with the festival or to inquire about being a featured eatery, email normanptacouncil@gmail.com.
- BSM

A Triple-Win for Oklahoma

Local Veterinarian Works to Continue Life-Changing Program in Oklahoma



It's not often that a program has the potential to change three lives over the course of 11 weeks but Friends for Folks does just that.

Dr. John Otto, a Norman-based veterinarian who has worked with the inmate dog-training program for 22 years, calls the program a "triple-win."

"Everybody wins; the inmate, the animal and the recipient. How often do you get a triple-win?"

Friends for Folks was founded to rehabilitate unwanted dogs by training them to be a companion pet for somebody in the community. The added benefit is that the process also offers purpose and friendship to inmates in Oklahoma.

Over the course of 11 weeks, inmates train and care for abandoned dogs so they can go back out into the community to be adopted. Because of the training and work that the inmates put into these dogs, they can become

a companion for someone in need. Many times, these pets are adopted by senior citizens, widows or they go on to become certified service dogs for individuals who have anxiety, depression or special needs.

The first inmate dog training program was founded by Sister Pauline Quinn in 1981. She started the Prison Pet Partnership program at the Washington State Correctional Center for Women.

In 1990, Otto spearheaded Oklahoma's first inmate dog training program, the second program in America. Friends for Folks began at Lexington Assessment and Reception Center. This program was inspired by Sister Quinn and the program was modeled after hers.

Not only does this program work to eliminate the euthanasia of animals, but it also provides inmates the opportunity to develop new skills and give back to the community.

"They bond. Through that bonding and unconditional love, they both change," Otto says.

In the documentary, "The Dogs of Lexington," the inmates involved in the Friends for Folks program tell their stories and successes. The inmates shared about the purpose that comes from giving back to the community and about the impact these pets have on their new families.

Currently there are two prisons in the state of Oklahoma that have an inmate training program, Lexington Assessment and Reception Center and Mabel Bassett Correctional Center.

Friends for Folks is raising money to expand its program to every correctional center Oklahoma.

To learn more about the Friends for Folks program, visit friendsforfolks.org or watch "The Dogs of Lexington," produced by Otto and local film makers Greg Mellot and Sean Lynch. — **BSM**

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Norman Chamber Endorses University North Park Proposal

A proposed entertainment district, sports arena and housing development adjacent to Rock Creek Road and Interstate 35 could be the Lake Thunderbird of our generation, said Scott Martin, president of the Norman Chamber of Commerce.

The project and the subsequent annexation of more than 100 square miles of land did not come without considerable controversy, but leaders envisioned the lake as a transformative development for Norman's water supply and its economy.

Martin believes the University of Oklahoma Foundation's proposed University North Park development has the potential to be a similar economic driver that generates new jobs and millions of dollars in new revenue for local government and Norman schools.

In a recent letter posted on the chamber's website, Martin announced the business organization's support for the proposal, which is currently under consideration by the Norman

City Council. He called the proposal a unique opportunity to further elevate Norman as a regional leader in both business and culture.

The proposal comprises a new arena, restaurants, an expo center, housing, offices, high tech manufacturing and parks. It would complement the initial University North Park development, which has established major retail activity along 24th Ave. NW between Robinson Street and Rock Creek Road.

That development provided a much-needed increase in sales tax revenue for the city and job creation for the community, but the community should not rest on past successes, he said.

"We need to look for new opportunities to move Norman forward," he said. "These components are welcome additions to our community and ones that will set us apart from our regional neighbors."

There will always be naysayers, said Martin, a former state legislator. But, for the most part, people just have concerns

about how the development would turn out and how it would be paid for.

The chamber is full of business leaders with experience in financing and retail, and it can use those resources to help develop a sustainable plan and to help craft messaging to address community concerns.

"The chamber has 1,400 members," Martin said. "That's a lot of influence, and the chamber's support can help set the tone."

The chamber's endorsement was welcome news to the University of Oklahoma Foundation, which has been promoting the plan within the Norman community since it was announced last September.

"We could not move forward without the chamber's support. It's vitally important," said Guy Patton, foundation president and chief executive officer.

"We feel like our project will help Norman grow, and that's what the chamber supports."

The development is expected to grow the tax base, bring amenities to the community and grow the population.

Patton said he is starting to feel more grassroots support from businesses and from Norman citizens, who want more amenities and who welcome growth.

Norman City Councilman Kyle Allison has been following the proposal closely because his Ward 8 encompasses the University North Park development area.

The city would benefit from increased sales tax revenues to help fund municipal operations, he said.

Traditional retailers face challenges from online competition, and those challenges may be showing up in the city's declining sales tax collections.

The University North Park development would further diversify Norman's tax base with an entertainment district filled with restaurants and other sales-tax-generating businesses that cannot be replicated by online retailers.

The chamber is smart to support the proposal, Allison said, because Norman's entire business community could benefit.

Growth and development tends to support growth and development, he said.

Since University North Park's first phase was built in the late 2000s, Norman has seen its downtown grow and improve, and the same thing has happened on Campus Corner.

In Oklahoma City, the development of Bricktown led to development of Midtown and the downtown area.

Allison said the city council is likely to consider the proposal in March. – **BSM**

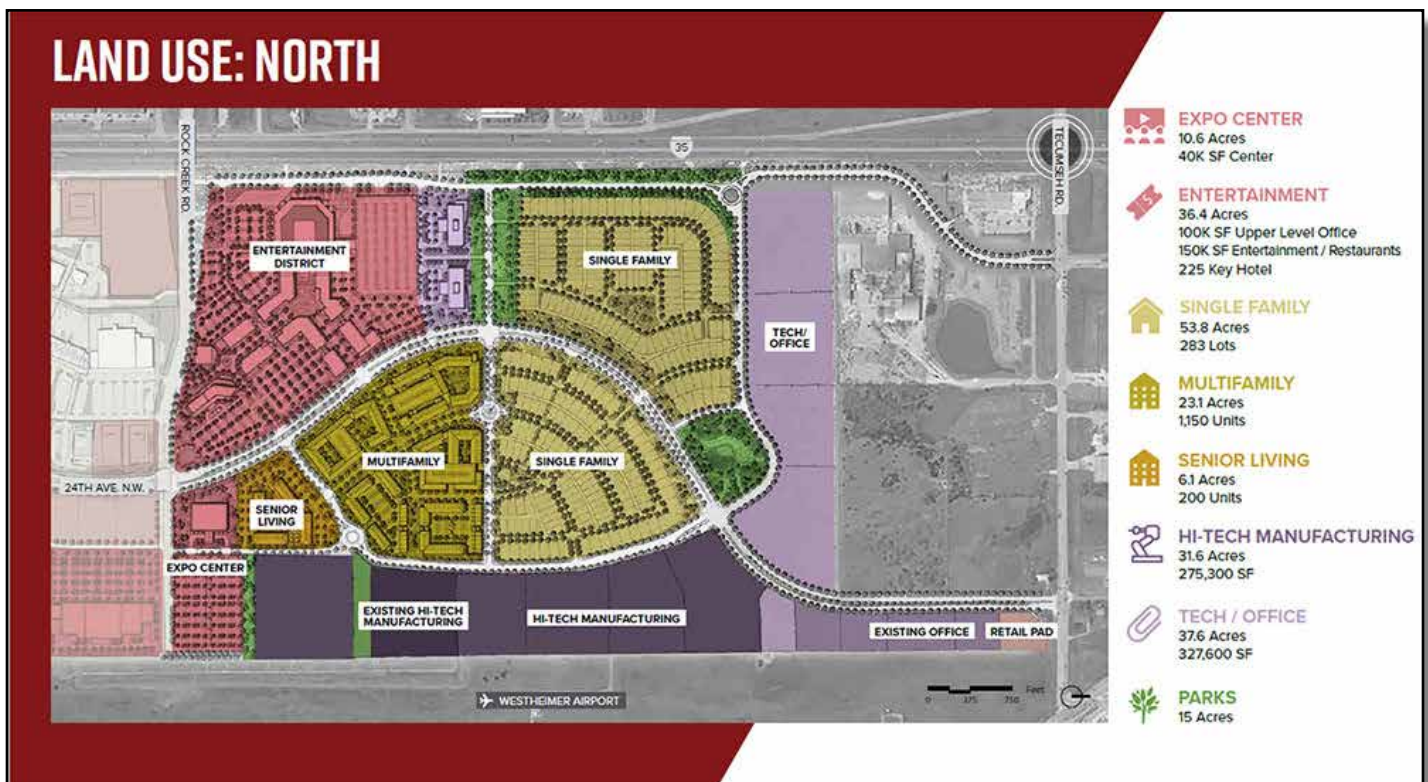
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JUST A KID FROM NORMAN



Trae Young is the talk of the college basketball world. But, at his core, he is just a boy from Norman who loves to hoop, a ball player who chose to stay close to home and showcase to the world what Normanites have known for years.

NBA players, college hoops experts and even opposing coaches are singing his praises. But while the world raves and the basketball community marvels, Young remains focused on his teammates and team goals.

With talk of being a top-5 pick in the

NBA draft, mock drafts have pushed Young into the one and done category. But you can't tell much difference from the Trae Young that committed to Oklahoma, the one who played for Norman North, to the Trae Young today that draws consistent comparisons to Steph Curry.

"He's unbelievable, just the confidence that he plays with," Curry said of Young earlier this season. "The comparisons are what they are and I know when I turn on to watch him play, that kind of magnetism is pretty special in the college game. He's fun to watch."

Even LeBron James has checked in on the Young madness. The four-time MVP and three-time NBA champion posted a picture of the two together on Instagram with the caption, "Keep going young King #StriveForGreatness."

But, for now, the Sooner freshman and Norman native is all about his team.

"I'm just having fun," Young said. "This is what you dream of when you're a kid, playing college basketball at a high level and winning. This is fun. I enjoy it. My teammates are my brothers."

But the hype is not likely to slow down, as conversations center on incredible performances by the starting point guard at Oklahoma.

Opposing coaches marvel. TCU head coach Jamie Dixon wondered if he was even human. Kentucky head coach John Calipari marveled at just how good he has become this early in his career.

"I didn't realize he'd be able to do what he's doing, 70 percent of their baskets he either scores or assists," Calipari said of the Sooner freshman. "I'm happy for Trae. Hope we don't ever have to play him, but happy for him."

The hype is justified. Young leads the nation in scoring and assists. He has scored 40-plus points on multiple occasions, including a breakout performance against Oregon when he finished with 43 points and 7 assists. For good measure, Young added a record-setting, 22-assist performance against Northwestern State.

Long-time NBA reporter and Fox Sports 1 personality Chris Broussard upped the ante.

"Trae Young is amazing! Considering what Steph has done in NBA, I'd have to consider drafting Trae at number one!"



But through it all, Young has remained calm and even keeled with an infectious "enjoy the moment" mindset. The basketball world explodes with praise but he continues to find ways to help make Oklahoma a better basketball team.

"Fortunately for us, he likes passing the ball," OU Head Coach Lon Kruger says. "He's not just a scorer. The other players know if they run the floor and make themselves available, Trae will give them the ball. That makes the chemistry a lot easier."

The ability of Young to score almost at will has caught most of the college basketball world by surprise. While there was an expectation of greatness from Young, how quickly it has occurred for

the true freshman has been a shock, but not for Young's high school coach Bryan Merritt.

"I'm not surprised," Merritt said of Young's early scoring. "It's been crazy and I've enjoy watching and being a fan and not worrying about if we're going to win or not. I've seen this stuff hundreds of times, the scoring doesn't surprise me. I honestly would've predicted that. The one thing he's done is be consistent. I knew he had games with 30 or 40 but he hasn't had those 9-point games."

The numbers that Young put up as a Timberwolf will help explain why Merritt is not shocked by what he has done at the next level. Young averaged 42 points as a senior in high school and

was named a McDonald's All-American. However, there is an area where Merritt has seen incredible improvement in a short amount of time.

"The assist is where he's made the biggest jump since high school. Coach Kruger has done a fantastic job with that. Trae could always pass but when he gets double or tripled and someone picks him up on a screen, he's finding the open guy," Merritt said. "He has really improved with getting everyone else involved. He's just playing within himself and trusting his teammates to make plays and that's probably been the best thing that I've seen in him."

While the rest of the nation just now becomes familiar with Young, the name Trae Young has been a household name in the Norman area and across the state of Oklahoma for years. The excitement and affection for his game is nothing new to us. When Trae Young made the decision to stay in Norman and play for the Sooners, the excitement was through the roof.

"Knowing what to expect coming in was huge," Young said of his decision

to stay in Oklahoma. "I love being able to have the opportunity to play for a coach like coach Kruger and have the teammates I have around me. It's an experience I couldn't pass up. Being able to stay home and rep my city and state of Oklahoma was something I loved."

But there was another piece of the puzzle that was just as important... family.

"That's the big thing. It's amazing that I can drive five minutes down the road and see my family or go watch my sisters (Caitlyn and Camryn) play volleyball or my little brother (Timothy) play his sports and do his thing. It's awesome that I get to experience those things and they get to be on this journey with me."

As Young continues to dazzle and Sports Center leads with his every move, the reaction could overwhelm a 19-year old. But the same family that is, in part, responsible for Young staying in Norman and attending Oklahoma, is also the reason for his humble nature. His father Rayford Young was a standout at Texas Tech and has pro-

vided a constant reminder to his son to not let any of the hype or talk get to his head.

"The biggest focus is knowing that nothing has been done yet," Rayford Young said during an interview on ESPN. "They've won some games. They're in the top 10. He has nice stats but that's not what he came here for. He came here to go to the tournament and get to the Final Four. He wants to achieve his dreams of going to the next level. That may happen in a few years, but that's how he stays level headed, taking it one game at a time, one day at a time."

The ability to stay grounded and focused is something Merritt noticed in the Young family from an early age. But the experience of being in the spotlight for the majority of his basketball career has helped prepare Young for this moment.

"Family for sure has helped keep him grounded. His mom (Candice) and dad are incredible," Merritt said. "I think also his experience helps him. After high school games, you had 200 people trying to talk to him."

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Advertisement for Oklahoma Sooners merchandise. The image displays a collection of items including a red jersey with the number 1, a red jersey with 'OKLAHOMA 1', a red t-shirt with 'SOONER' and 'FRESH OFF THE PLANE', a white long-sleeved shirt with a red 'OU' logo, a red t-shirt with 'OKLAHOMA BASKETBALL' and a red 'OU' logo, a red baseball cap with 'OKLAHOMA BASKETBALL', a red beanie with white polka dots, a grey hoodie with a red 'OU' logo, and an orange basketball with 'OKLAHOMA SOONERS' and a red 'OU' logo. The background is a blurred image of a basketball court.

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Being comfortable with his head coach is another reason for his smooth transition to the college game. Kruger has provided a blue print that allows him the freedom to make the most of the talent he possesses.

"He's been amazing for me," Young said of the influence of Kruger. "He's helped me through all of this. I was able to adjust to how he wanted his point guard to play and how he wanted me to play and get everyone involved. Not only on the court but off the court."

Trae Young is the talk of the entire sports world, but what truly makes Young great is his personality and demeanor. With a focus on family and being a good teammate, the true freshman has already etched a spot as one of the most exciting and popular players to ever step foot in the Lloyd Noble Center. – **BSM**



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State Champs



From left to right: Sara Newsome, Jacob Joyner, Erin Swiderski, Zach Bibles, Andrew Perez, Bailey Mayfield, Samantha Doshier, Wesley Hutchinson, Carl Schovanec, Kaleb McBride and Billy Graves

Special Olympics Victory for Norman North

Genuine joy and jubilation is a beautiful thing to witness in sports. Occasionally, the true value of sport gets lost in translation. But for a group of players, coaches and supporters, that proper value was on full display on Jan. 13, on the University of Oklahoma campus.

Norman North's Green Team won the basketball state championship at the 2018 Oklahoma Special Olympics 22nd annual Winter Games. Under the leadership of Norman North Special Olympics head coach Sara Newsome and assistant coach Billy Graves, the Timberwolves captured a championship. Winning was exhilarating, but seeing the kids beaming from ear to ear was the real reward.

"They were so pumped. They put a lot of work in," Newsome said. "They've improved so much since last year just with their confidence. Their smiles were priceless, though."

Newsome, a third-year special education teacher at North, noted the amount of preparation that went into competing in the Winter Games.

"We tried to practice once a week all of fall and winter leading up to this state tournament. The closer we got to the

tournament we try to practice twice a week. They would stop by my classroom and constantly ask, 'Are we practicing today? They've really worked hard,'" Newsome said.

Throughout practices, players worked on shooting drills and basic fundamentals of the game. It translated over on the biggest stage, too.

"They showed up just ready to win basketball games. We were able to knock down shots. That was really fun to see," Newsome said. "I think we were actually more worried than they were because we thought they might wear down, but they were really tough. It was fun to see them get out there and compete."

Graves said seeing the kids celebrate and win together was the most special part for him.

"They were excited. They didn't even want to listen to us talk to them afterwards. They were too busy trying to celebrate with each other and running up and down the court screaming. They did what they set out to do," Graves said.

The T-Wolves actually sent two separate teams to the Winter Games. North's Green Team competed and won the state championship and were gold medalists in level two. The White Team earned

bronze medals in level one. Special education teachers Sheryl Schmidt and William Redman coached the White Team.

This state championship and the White Team's performance meant a lot to North girls' basketball head coach Rory Hamilton and assistant coach Al Beal, too. Beal works as a teaching assistant in the special education department at North, so he works with these kids every day.

For Hamilton, it was even more meaningful because Kaleb McBride of the Green Team has also served as a manager for the varsity girl's squad for two years.

"The thing that just blew me away was just the joy and happiness that you could see from them playing on a team and being part of a team competing. You could just tell they all loved to be out there. It was inspirational," Hamilton said.

Hamilton brought his team along to watch and support their fellow Timberwolves as well as McBride at the Winter Games.

"We felt like it was our duty to go out there and give Kaleb one hundred percent support, because he's always there for us. He's a big part of who we are. He goes on every road trip, every away game. He does a little bit of everything and he does it with a smile. The girls

absolutely love him," Hamilton said. "It just felt good to support him and all of our kids that are Special Olympians because they practice, they work hard and come to a lot of our games. We like to reciprocate and do the same."

For Newsome, seeing her kids win the state championship and bronze medals in basketball meant the program has come full-circle, in a sense. When she got to North, the T-Wolves were no longer competing in basketball in the Winter Games.

With the help of district athletic director T.D. O'Hara, North site athletic director Courtney Norton and their booster club, Newsome was able to bring the Special Olympics basketball program back.

"I had a vision of what I wanted Special Olympics to look like. It's really a group effort. We have a booster club to support our special athletes. Their parents are committed to giving their kids every opportunity in the world. The overall support at Norman North has been great. They've all been behind us," Newsome said.

Championships and medals aside, the acknowledgment gained from the Norman North family and memories created is what will last.

"Win or lose, they're all there to have a good time. We really just want them all to have fun and that's the beauty of Special Olympics. Winning this state championship will bring a lot of recognition and our kids deserve it. I know it means the world to these kids' parents just to see them interact with their peers," Newsome said. – **BSM**

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Baseball's New Skipper

When Skip Johnson was hired as the head baseball coach at the University of Oklahoma, it was a move that was universally applauded. The path to becoming the head coach at OU, however, has by no means been traditional for the long-time Texas pitching coach.

"I got 700 texts," Johnson said at the June 19, 2017 news conference introducing him as the new head coach.

"It is the craziest thing I've ever seen in my life. In Omaha, when you win a game, you have 150 texts saying, 'That was awesome,' or 'You were horrible.' This is a totally different animal. They were all saying this was deserved. You've done something in their lives that matters. It's gratify and humbling."

In an odd twist, it was one of his Big 12 rivals that helped land Johnson in Oklahoma. After Texas moved on from Augie Garrido as its head coach, Johnson found himself without a job, prior to the start of last season. That's when Texas Tech head coach and Oklahoma alum Tim Tadlock stepped in to help his life-long friend.

Tadlock, who played youth league baseball with Johnson, encouraged his buddy to look at Oklahoma. Even though the two now head rival programs, Tadlock sounded like a proud brother when Johnson took over as the boss.

"He's a true baseball guy who has earned the right to lead a program like OU," Tadlock said of Johnson's hiring. "It's neat to see that Joe Castiglione recognized almost 30 years of commitment to the game of college baseball. Skip is baseball all day, every day. Our league just got better."

The 27-year journey for Skip Johnson to finally land a major college head coaching gig had its challenges well before Johnson found himself heading to Oklahoma. In fact, he learned early in his baseball career about overcoming adversity. At every turn during his playing career, it seemed as if there was another pitfall he was challenged to navigate through.

"I got a chance to go to Ranger Junior College on a \$250 scholarship. It was kinda funny. We had 133 guys out there," Johnson said, recalling the tryout. "You sit there



and you're like wow, how can you get noticed? Then you run 60-60s, you run 4 miles and the next day its 90 guys. We had a 5-team league, and I made the club."

But for Johnson, adversity hit, leading him back home to Denton, Texas.

"My mom lost her job at Safeway and then my Dad lost his at Bell helicopter. We didn't have a lot of money, but I got a full scholarship to go to North Texas."

While his family was happy he was able to stay home and help, the excitement was relatively short lived. North Texas dropped its baseball program after Johnson was there for only one season.

Finally, Johnson ended up at Texas Pan-American in South Texas, and learned what baseball was all about. He got to play for some of the greatest men he had ever met, Al Ogletree and Reggie Treadaway were his mentors, and they taught him how to teach the game.

After his playing days were over, he landed a job as head coach at Navarro Junior College in East Texas. The incredible run for Johnson at Navarro included 450 wins and

an opportunity from Augie Garrido to become the pitching coach at Texas. If Tim Tadlock sounded like a proud brother, Augie Garrido was like a proud father when hearing the news of Johnson being named the Sooners skipper.

"I think the fans are going to enjoy the authenticity of his core values system," Garrido said. "How he relates to the players, the academic demands he'll put on them and the results he'll get both academically and athletically as he provides championship leadership for the University of Oklahoma."



As Johnson climbed the coaching ladder, he has taken lessons from every stop along the way, helping develop into the coach he is today.

“Look at the pride and history of this program, it’s great. Getting an opportunity to carry the torch at OU, it’s just a blessing,” Johnson said.

Johnson inherits a team that has 10 players that made the All-Big 12 team and advanced to an appearance in the NCAA Tournament.

“We have nine junior pitchers coming back. That’s a lot of pitchers and it’s a good thing,” Johnson said of his roster.

“But, in baseball, everyone wants to play. We’re all good friends and everyone is fired up for the team until you make the line-up. Then you must understand your role. That’s the thing we talk about. Commitment to team, work ethic and attitude, those things will be very important in our program.”

There is no question that Skip Johnson has paid his dues and put in a ton of hard work to reach this point in his career. The people who may end up benefiting the most from his personality and work ethic might be the fans. With a strong roster, a deep pitching staff and a personality like Skip Johnson running the show, the fun is just getting started for Oklahoma Sooner Baseball. – **BSM**

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PROSPERITY POINTS FOR VALENTINE'S DAY



Valentine's Day brings thoughts of flowers, chocolate hearts, and candlelit dinners. However, money issues are a leading cause of divorce. Here are some tips for couples to use when talking about their money.

- Talk about your financial goals and dreams. The more you can see the future with specific details, the easier it is to save money for it.
- Provide a consistent message to your children about your finances. Kids shouldn't stress about family cash flow, but they also can understand that money isn't limitless.
- Maintain a little spending money for each partner that can be used freely. This avoids stress around explaining shopping trips or eating out at work.
- Make financial decisions together. Not only will it keep your relationship close, it will keep one partner from being lost if he or she is suddenly in the position of needing to handle everything.
- Don't use money as a weapon. If you are disagreeing about something else, don't bring up finances as another topic for argument. Talk about money when you are both calm.

Finally, remember that opposites attract. If one of you is a spender and one of you is a saver, appreciate your differences. You really wouldn't change your partner, even if you could!

Be Prosperous!
Peggy

The Fine Print: This article is educational, not investment advice. Investing is risky, and you can lose money. Talk to your financial team about any strategies before you implement them.

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Building Momentum

Cavins Construction Follows Eight-Year Path of Growth, Success

In early 2010, Gary and Jessica Cavins used their tax return to buy a lawn mower, edger and weed-eater to open Cavins Landscaping. Starting the business with “absolutely nothing,” as Gary says, those early years were a lot of hard work and required some sacrifices.

“We lived off Jessica’s teacher’s salary from Longfellow Middle School for three years and put every cent back into the company.”

Working sunup to sundown, the Cavins were committed to building their business.

“We would dream about it and talk about it and pray about it,” Gary said. “We bounced ideas off each other and although we don’t always agree, we stand by each other, no matter what.”

Two years later, with Gary’s background in electrical, general maintenance and roofing, the mowing stopped, and they transitioned the company into residential and commercial remodeling. Gary took on the role of president and CEO and Jessica as the executive vice president.

“My dad was in the roofing industry and my grandpa was in the construction industry. My mom has a degree in construction science and a masters in human relations, so I grew up around all that,” Gary said.

Jessica said working together is fun. “We’re together all the time, probably 20 hours a day. Our offices are next to each other, and we have lunch together every day.”

With a large investment in equipment such as tractors, scissor lifts, light towers, assorted trailers and trucks, Gary said they have the tools and capabilities to do just about everything. They made the decision in 2016 to invest money into a large building on Atchison Drive, off of U.S. 77.

Surrounded by a core group of sub-contractors, including electricians, plumbers and heating and air specialists, the company is ready for any type of call, day or night, Gary said.

Sooner Bowling Center manager Mandy Haws remembers when a truck crashed into their building last April.

“I called Gary about 11 p.m. because there was some urgency to getting the building secure,” she said.

Gary and his team came out, assessed the situation and stayed until the building was secure. The next morning, they discovered serious structural issues that turned out to require seven months to repair.

“I would not have wanted to work with anyone else,” Haws said. “They are diligent, great communicators and went on daily walks around the property with me. I am grateful for their relationship and patience.”

In August, the company marked its eighth anniversary, and the Cavins decided to discontinue residential work and focus on commercial remodels full time.

“It seemed like the right step in the evolution of what we were doing, and we wanted our business to continue to grow,” Jessica said.

Apparently, they made the right decision as the company experienced its best quarter ever at the end of 2017.

“The construction industry is booming right now, and it’s hard to find great people, so we are lucky,” Gary said.

“We have the best team,” Gary said. “We’ve had great people along the way, but our team now is the greatest team we’ve ever had. They are very educated in construction technology and are hands-on and incredibly smart, high-powered individuals.”

All managers go through extensive training and certification to assure job sites are safe and meet important standards.

“A lot of learning is on-the-job, but additional training helps keep the team current on new products,” Gary said.

Current projects include jobs at Norman Regional Health System Internal Medicine, Wesley Church, the OU College of Dentistry, the Veterans Center, Gordon Cooper Technology Centers, Comanche County Memorial Hospital and Bridges of Norman.

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Cavins Construction does a lot of work on Campus Corner too, turning old buildings into something new. Gary said he has garnered a lot of education in those older buildings.

"You have to learn to fix things a different way. You have to figure out how to fix what was built 80 years ago and bring it up to code and make sure everyone is happy."

Jessica's favorite project was Get Air, a trampoline park inside Sooner Mall. Gary says his favorite was work they did on some loft apartments. That building is one of the oldest on Main Street, and Gary says the project taught him about his strengths and weaknesses.

"I could write a book about that job," Gary laughs.

"It's been a journey since day one, and it's always changing. We don't settle, and we are always improving," Jessica said.

"It's been an adventure because every day can change with just one phone call," Gary said. "I was at my desk at 6:30 this morning and received a call from one of the sororities on campus letting me know their sprinkler lines burst and the entire first floor was flooded. That changed my plans for the day," he laughed.

Despite all the changes for the company, one thing has remained consistent.

"We love Norman and wouldn't call any other place home," Jessica said.

"Norman has shaped our business, and we are now blessed to be able to give back to the community that's given so much to us," Gary said. - **BSM**



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In the Details

Norman Business Seeks to De-stress Wedding Day

February is the month of love, and proposals and engagements abound. As couples start planning for their upcoming nuptials, it is common for them to feel overwhelmed by the task of planning the big day.

With the popularity of social media platforms like Pinterest and Instagram, the measuring stick for an ideal wedding can be formidable. Inspiration is handy, but narrowing down choices can be a daunting task.

One local business is dedicated to help ease the burden with one-on-one customer service.

"We want to make it as easy as possible for brides," said Susan Austin, one of the owners of Occasions, a fine stationary, gift and gourmet shop at 2001 W Main St.

Since purchasing Occasions, Susan Austin and her business partners, Debbie Laffoon and Jennifer Austin, have worked to personalize every detail of their customer's shopping experience.

Brides can browse a large selection of invitations, as well as gifts, paper

products and favors. If they want, they can even do it with a glass of champagne in hand.

"When shopping on the internet, it can be hard to get a real feel for what you are buying," Susan Austin said. "Seeing and touching things like quality of paper, colors and fonts in person means you know exactly what you're buying."

The shop's staff takes the time to sit down with each bride to discuss their style and budget, and they print in house to be sure every detail is perfect, from save the date cards and wedding party gifts, right down to personalized napkins and favors.

"We have a variety of price points to match any budget," Jennifer Austin said. "And, we can even address your invitations for you!"

Brides can take care of their gift registry in store, too.

Occasions is one of only three businesses in the state to sell the popular MacKenzie-Childs line of ceramics and dinnerware. They offer elegant

pieces like Beatriz Ball Melamine tableware, versatile pieces such as Coton Colors dinnerware and festive serving sets like Nora Fleming platters. They also carry candles, tea towels and more. With that type of selection, brides have much to choose from in their search for unique gift ideas to add to their wish list.

"We set up a special table to make it easy for your guests to shop from," said Laffoon.

For those who have a registry, Occasions will even deliver the gifts right to the bridal shower location, and, as always, Occasions offers free gift wrapping. All guests will have to do is show up and celebrate.

"We do it all," said Jennifer Austin.

Occasions is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. on Saturdays. Brides are welcome to make an appointment or to simply drop in at their convenience. To learn more about the offerings at Occasions, visit www.occasionspaper.com – **BSM**

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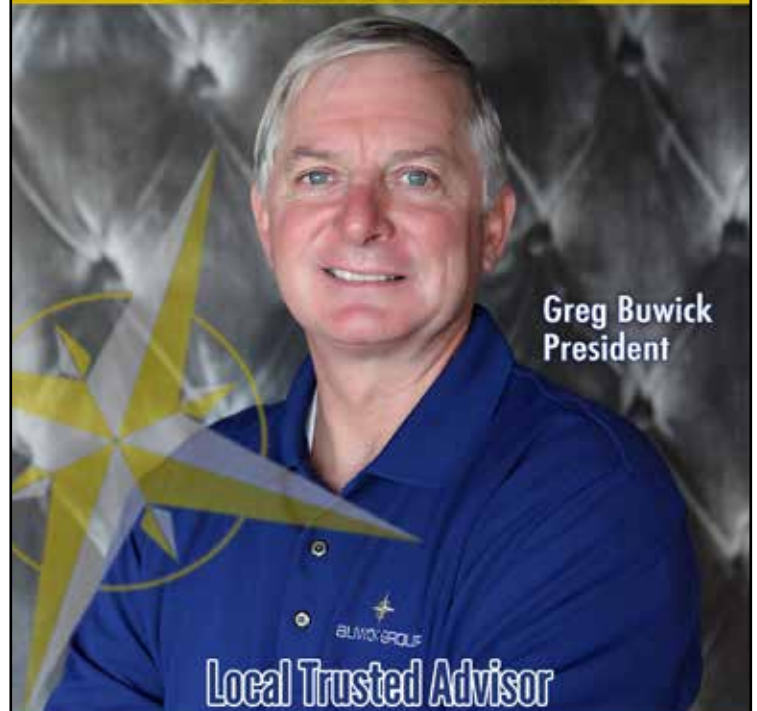
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Energy Saving Tips

What To Look For When Buying New Appliances

There's no getting away from the fact that our dependence on energy increases daily. With energy-dependent technology driving our lives, ecologists continue to search for ways to save our environment. Focusing on energy-efficient appliances is one way to do that.

Your monthly electric bill may not itemize the specific usage of each appliance in your home. If you are interested in a breakdown, though, you can ask your local electric company for a listing. But about 30% of the charges on your statement stem from your electrical appliances. That's why the government, as well as the majority of appliance manufacturers, encourage consumers to replace standard devices with new energy-saving ones.

So, if your dishes aren't coming out clean after a run in the dishwasher, or if the ring around your shirt collar has not disappeared after a hot laundry wash, you may be in the market for a new appliance.

There could be some good years left in that 10-year-old refrigerator or oven. But, generally speaking, prices for electrical appliances have come down across the board over the years. And once you consider the cost of a new part for your old apparatus, plus the charge for the visit, it just might be worthwhile to chuck the old and buy new.

It's also worth keeping in mind that the new energy-efficient appliances save you money on a monthly basis because they use far less electricity. They also help the environment by cutting down on greenhouse gases emitted into the air.

What is Energy-Efficient?

So what does it really mean if an appliance is energy-efficient? In simple terms, it means the process used to make the appliance function – spin, clean, cool, heat, etc. is using less energy. This can be achieved in a number of ways, and manufacturers are always adapting new techniques, such as using renewable sources of energy like water or sunlight.

Now that you have decided that a modern and energy-efficient refrigerator is what you need, how can you be sure you're choosing the best product at the most reasonable price?

Here are some tips to guide you in your search:

- Determine the total cost. Since the purpose of your new purchase is to save on monthly energy costs, the first thing to consider is the operating costs. That, along with the actual purchase price, should give you the real cost of the appliance.
- Look for the energy rating. There are several reliable rating services that provide information about appliance energy consumption. The federal government uses the yellow and black Energy Star Standard sticker to inform consumers about operating costs and annual energy consumption. This helps buyers compare one clothes dryer to another. Energy Star tests each item independently.
- Select the right size appliance. Running a large machine – even the most energy-efficient one – uses more electricity than a compact one, so don't buy something bigger than what you need.
- Look for economy choices. Many dishwashers and washing machines offer a variety of different cycles. If you find one with an economy cycle, that will save you money when you need to wash only a small load of clothes or dishes.
- Stay Simple. When it comes to choosing a refrigerator, go easy on the add-ons. According to one independent rating service, a water dispenser or ice maker uses a lot of extra electricity. Also, top-to-bottom fridge/freezer models are more energy-efficient than side by sides. The auto-defrost feature uses heat to speed up defrosting and makes running the refrigerator less efficient.
- This holds true for self-cleaning ovens as well, so consider the value in this upgrade.
- Contact your utility supplier for the latest ways to save on utility charges. With today's smart devices, appliances can be programmed to use less energy at certain times of the day.
- Check out your home. If you have the time and the extra cash, it may be worthwhile to call in a home assessor to help identify ways you can save on your overall energy and water costs. He or she may be able to tell you how to use your appliances at the most energy-efficient times of day.
- Comparison shop. Never buy the first model you see. Household appliances are not cheap, and to find the most energy efficient one at the best price, shop around. Well-known name brands are always more expensive than lesser-known companies. However, they don't always offer a better product. If you check carefully, you may find that heating element in the name-brand laundry dryer is exactly the same as the one in a model selling for hundreds of dollars less. Compare the details. You might be surprised.



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Couple Supports Community Through Christian Auto Franchise

Christian Brothers Automotive doesn't just repair cars. They ease the fear people have with getting their vehicle fixed.

Perhaps that's why they have been selected the last two years as the Reader's Choice Award winner for Best Automotive Repairs by the Norman Transcript. The community has taken notice of the level of service they provide, and, in turn, Curtis and Becky Henning are giving back to the community.

"At the end of every quarter, we give five percent back to the school of choice for our customers," Curtis Henning said.

Customers can choose from any of the 24 schools in the Norman Public School district and two private schools in the Norman area. The process is easy. When customers come in, they let a team member know where they would like their donations to go, and the proceeds go to help teachers pay for school supplies, Curtis said.

Although the program is just kicking off for the public schools, Community Christian School and All Saints have been a part of the program for a year, receiving about \$2,500 to date, they say.

Curtis always wanted to own a business, and after coming up with some crazy ideas, Becky suggested he find something he was passionate about, so two years ago, they purchased their Christian Brothers Automotive franchise at 3050 Yarbrough Way in Norman.

After semi-retiring from a wholesale distribution company in Oklahoma City, Curtis was sitting in a Christian Brothers repair shop, having his car worked on, and he noticed the Christian radio station KLOVE was playing in the waiting room. It made him wonder if the name "Christian" signified the religion or someone's last name.

After researching on the internet, he realized this was a faith-based company and he felt led by God to be a part of it. "The company wants owners to live their faith through this business, and we are doing that," Curtis said.

Fortunately for Curtis and Becky, the company had a franchise for sale in Norman.

"We were invited to the corporate office in Houston to be interviewed and while there we were offered the franchise," he said.

Curtis began the training process on Jan. 1, 2016, and by the end of the month, he was working in his own business.

"We try to do things the right way by making sure we take care of your car, and we do that with honesty and integrity," Curtis said. "Our responsibility lies in making sure we do a thorough evaluation of our customers' vehicles and to make sure our customers understand all aspects of how to maintain their vehicle to ensure they obtain the longest life of their vehicle."

All the technicians at Christian Brothers are highly qualified and fully equipped. The ASE master technician certification

is the highest achievement a person can have in the automotive repair business and Curtis has two on his staff.

ASE, is short for the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence. Since 1972, the independent non-profit organization has worked to improve the quality of vehicle repair and service by testing and certifying automotive professionals.



Curtis & Becky Henning

"We have all the same diagnostic equipment as the dealerships," Curtis said. "We like to think of ourselves as the dealership alternative."

Many may not realize that Christian Brothers can take care of repairs covered by third-party warranties.

"If a customer bought a third-party warranty from a dealership, we can work with most third-party warranties," Curtis said.

For more information about Christian Brothers' give-back program, contact Curtis Henning at 701-1811 or curtis.henning@cbauto.net or visit their shop at 3050 Yarbrough Way near I-35 and Rock Creek Road. – **BSM**

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In the Pink

Like everything else in this world, wine is subject to fads. In the 1990s, it was merlot. In the early 2000s, it was chardonnay, and, more recently, white zinfandel, followed by moscato.

Now, the trend is pink and bubbly. Vintners Korbel and Moët & Chandon have made semi-dry rosé for many years, but they are now joined by many others producing sweet and dry options. Sofia, available for several years in a semi-sweet bubbly, is now available in brut.

Most retailers are stocking a broad range of rosé wines, varying from semi-sweet to very dry. Rosé is available from every country, making it a good choice for a themed dinner, or simply something new to try. In both categories, there is something for everybody; sweet, dry, effervescent or not. Varietal rosé will have the characteristics of the grape, but will be much less pronounced.

Pink moscato is sweet, while rosé of pinot noir or cabernet franc will be dry. Cabernet Franc, which is usually blended with red wine, produces a flavorful rosé. Rosé from the Languedoc region of France, has always been a favorite in its country of origin and has been gaining in popularity here, with its light and fruit forward flavor, without being too sweet.

Rosé wines are a perfect complement to cheese and veggie snacks.

Rosé seems to be the standout in the canned wine category. Canned wines come in several sizes including 187ml, 200ml and



even the traditional 12-ounce can. This is a convenient and cost effective way to try a rosé.

Rosé should be served chilled, but not as cold as beer, so be sure to take the bottle out of the fridge about twenty minutes before serving.

Have fun exploring this adventurous new trend.

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Dr. Rohitha Inturi
Family Medicine Physician
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Norman Doctor Highlights the Dangers of Influenza and the Importance of Prevention

Cold and flu season typically stretches from October to March, but sometimes can extend all the way up to mid-May. February sits right in the heart of the season. Oklahoma communities have been hit hard this year. Since Sept. 1, well over 1,000 people have been hospitalized due to complications from the flu, more than seventy in Cleveland County alone.

“The frequency in which we are seeing patients diagnosed with the flu is high this year,” confirmed Dr. Rohitha Inturi, a family medicine physician with the Norman Regional Health System. “We were hit hard around the holidays and are still seeing a high frequency.”

But, have we reached the peak? Inturi says that is hard to tell.

“Since the first of the year, I have seen at least one flu case every day.”

The dreaded fever-induced body aches paired with congestion, a sore throat and cough are all hallmark signs you may have the flu. The influenza virus attacks the delicate respiratory system making it particularly dangerous for those with compromised immune systems.

“The risk of hospitalization from the flu is high among young babies, elderly and others with immunity-compromising health conditions,” explained Inturi.

The Oklahoma State Department of Health reports that there have been

more than twenty influenza-associated deaths in our state so far this season. This increase makes doing what we can to keep those vulnerable, and ourselves, healthy very important. To do so, proactive prevention and virus quarantine are vital to stopping the spread of the flu and protecting our community.

“Good hand hygiene and immunity-boosting foods rich in Vitamin C can help you stay healthy,” offered Inturi. “But the bottom line is that everyone needs to get vaccinated to protect those who are the most vulnerable.”

Even if you have been vaccinated, or even if everyone around you has been vaccinated you still need to take precautions.

“An annual vaccination will protect you as the vaccine helps you build up your immunity levels to the most common strands of the flu,” explained Inturi. “But, there are new emerging viruses all the time. Cover your cough, wash your hands and stay home if you are sick so you don’t spread your germs.”

The flu may not be instantly recognizable since symptoms are often mistaken for a common cold. There are several strands of the influenza virus and each presents themselves differently during the stages of the illness.

“It is important to be knowledgeable about the symptoms of the flu versus the common cold like cough and congestion, plus fever and body headaches,

and additionally any gut symptoms. Influenza B presents mostly in the gut,” Inturi added.

If you do find yourself with the flu, Inturi says time is of the essence. To be effective in reducing the severity and longevity of the virus, you must start taking the medicine within two days of when your symptoms begin.

Hydration is also extremely important to help your body fight the flu. Over-the-counter medicines can help to elevate some of your discomfort and your doctor can help determine which would be best for you and your symptoms.

“Over-the-counter medications are best determined on a case-by-case basis so it is best to see your doctor for help with relief,” Inturi said.

As the number of flu cases rise, doctor appointments tend to fill up as well. In order to accommodate that need, Inturi’s office offers walk-in hours during their regular business hours from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Dr. Christina Highley, a family medicine physician, also sees patients at the clinic, which is called Norman Regional Primary Care – NW Norman.

For more information about Dr. Inturi or Norman Regional Primary Care’s NW Norman office, call 515-0800 or visit 3201 W Tecumseh Rd, Ste 230 in Norman. – **BSM**

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Nerds Are People Too



Eric and Karena Crawford celebrate together during Norman's annual Christmas parade.

Hard work, integrity and love for people have powered computer business to long-term success

Eric and Karena Crawford never intended to start a successful business. All they were trying to do was put food on the table and keep the lights on while Eric looked for a job and while Karena awaited the arrival of their first born.

As it turned out, Eric never found that job, and by the time Karena delivered their baby girl, Norman Nerds was a full-blown home computer repair and service company. The phone was ringing so frequently, Eric hardly had time to work, let alone send out resumes.

So, not too long after they brought their new daughter home from the hospital, Karena saw the writing on the wall. She was going to have to quit her job and help Eric answer the phone and schedule service visits.

It wasn't exactly the future they had envisioned, Karena said, but it seemed like maybe Norman Nerds was what they were supposed to be doing.

It all started 13 years ago when they were laid off from their jobs, just as Karena learned that she was pregnant. Karena eventually found another job, but the search was more challenging for Eric, a computer science graduate with experience in interactive multimedia web development and streaming media. The problem was that he was over qual-

ified for most positions, and the market was still saturated with refugees from the dot com crash of the early 2000s.

"Jobless, child on the way, no insurance. That was brutal," he said. "I was out of money. We had no money. We were broke. I remember thinking, 'I don't want to stand on the street corner and beg for food and money,' but what could I do? Gambling was not an option."

That's when he had a brainstorming session with a friend and remembered a business he noticed while going to school at the University of Texas – Dallas. It was called Nerds on Call, and they would drive to people's homes and repair their computers.

So, that was it, Eric said. He made a flier, printed several dozen copies and headed out to neighborhoods to start his door-to-door marketing campaign. Meanwhile, he had a homemade sign in the front yard of his small home on Flood Avenue.

Two weeks after his marketing campaign began, he got his first customer, a home-based travel agent whose computer had crashed. Stuck, with no way of serving her customers, she called Eric, who came to her home and fixed her computer on the spot.

"She said, 'you saved my life today,' and she gave me a hug," Eric said. "Sometimes, hugs are as good as pay."

After that call, Norman Nerds began growing steadily through word of mouth and referrals. Today, Karena and Eric work long hours, side by side.

Karena earned her degree in marketing from the University of Oklahoma, and had no computer experience when Eric established Norman Nerds. But, through the years, she has pitched in to help with repairs Eric brought home and has developed her skills.

Now, she's driving to calls about as much as Eric, helping with problems that range from the most complicated malfunctions and the nastiest computer viruses to teaching customers basic skills, like how to turn on their computers.

Through the years, the company has diversified, Eric said. In addition to residential computer repairs and service, Norman Nerds has expanded to helping commercial customers with services that include server installations, internet-based phone systems, credit card processing security, wiring for automation and home theater installation.

Somewhere in the early stages of his business, Eric said he discovered that his job had changed from working on computers to helping people. He still works on computers, but, while he's doing that, he's talking with customers and developing relationships.

Those connections have led both of them to community involvement in the Norman Chamber of Commerce, Leadership Norman, the United Way, the Norman Rotary Club and Journey Church.

“Norman is a big, small town,” Eric said. “If you do good work, and you do it with integrity, word will spread.”

For Eric and Karena, Norman Nerds was a surprising success, but as it turned out, the two Norman High graduates were fulfilling a need in their community.

Generally, computer science majors think about landing good jobs, working in the IT departments of large companies and corporations. They don’t think about working on home computers or for small businesses, Eric said.

But, individuals and small businesses don’t have the financial resources for IT departments, and sometimes it’s harder to find service when their systems go down. That’s why Norman Nerds has been so successful, fulfilling a demand for timely service. There are no contracts, just a flat, hourly rate, Eric said.

Computers can be complicated, and most people don’t understand how they work, Karena said.

“You have to have patience and empathy,” she said. “The biggest compliment we get is that we talk to people like they’re humans, not like they’re computer nerds.”

You wouldn’t speak to someone in Chinese if they didn’t know Chinese, Eric said. Only a nerd would do that.

Norman nerds can be reached by calling 405-203-9358. Their web address is: normannerds.com.— **BSM**



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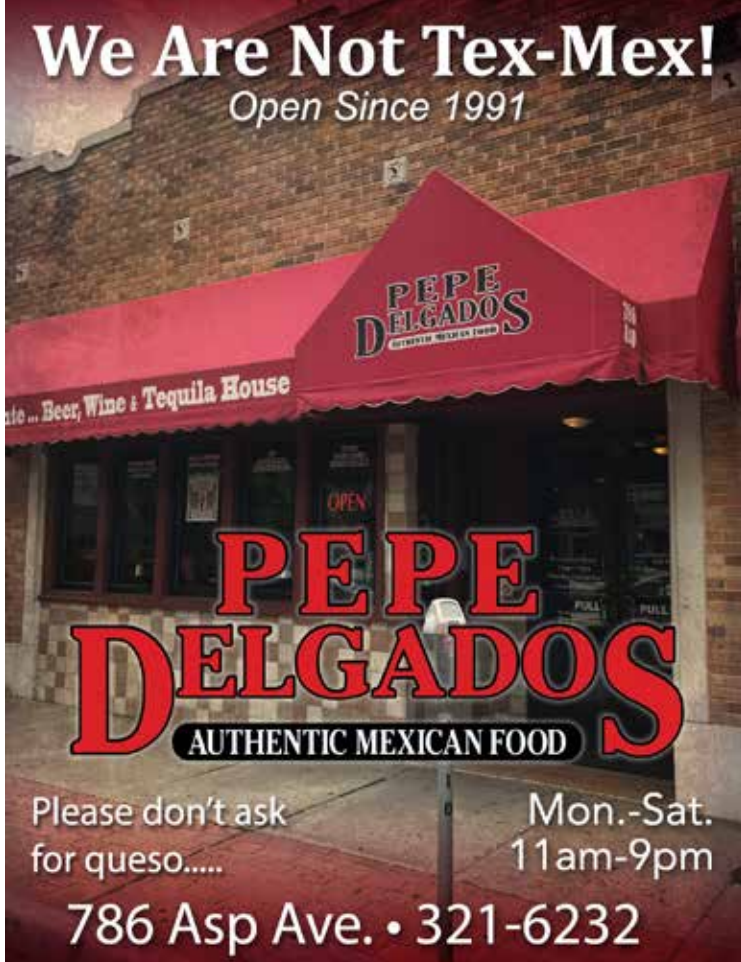


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A Legacy of Luxury



Artesian Hotel Celebrates Fifth Anniversary of Rebirth in Sulphur

Tucked in the lush Arbuckle Mountains of Chickasaw Country lies an Oklahoma icon. The historic Artesian Hotel, known for elegance and luxury, is celebrating the fifth anniversary of its rebirth.

“The hotel was originally built in 1906,” said Justin Williams, the area general manager for both the Artesian Hotel and the Chickasaw Retreat and Conference Center in Sulphur. “In the early 1900s, there were lots of tourists in the area and a great need for lodging. It originally opened as the New Winston Hotel, then became The Artesian because of the springs.”

According to Williams, the hotel hosted many celebrities including Dale Evans, John Wayne and Roy Rogers.

But in 1962, the hotel that had helped put Sulphur on the map, burned to the ground.

“The locals say it smoldered for weeks,” Williams said.

Rebirth of an Icon

After the loss of the original hotel, it was rebuilt and refurbished, first as the Artesian Motor Hotel, then as the Chickasaw Motor Inn. Neither had the grandeur of the original.

Then in 2013, the Chickasaw Nation reopened the landmark hotel as part of their Phoenix Project – a project to

revitalize the town of Sulphur - modeling it after the original Artesian.

“Architecturally, it’s a mirror image,” Williams said. “Most people think it was just refurbished. Many of the details inside the hotel are reminiscent of the original as well, from the wood details to the tile choices, and there are many artifacts located throughout the hotel that were once in the original, like the old record-player.”

The revitalized hotel boasts 81 rooms, four suites, a casino, restaurants, several shops, a spa, a pool and a gym.

“The Chickasaw Nation had a vision to commemorate the original glory of the hotel. The original was synonymous with luxury,” Williams said. “We are trying to capture that.”

Legacy of Luxury

The hotel prides itself on the luxury it provides its guests – from the ambiance and small details in the architecture to their friendly customer service and welcoming gestures that make guests feel appreciated. For example, this upcoming Valentine’s Day weekend, every room will receive a complimentary basket with a bottle of wine and Bedre chocolates.

“We want our guests to get a smile on their face, and then go home and tell their friends about us,” Williams said.



Adding to the hotel's legacy of luxury are the award-winning Sole'renity Spa and Little Soles Children's Spa. These two spas see roughly 5,000 visitors per year from all over the country.

"Our guests get a great spa experience," said Rhonda Pitmon, owner and operator of the two spas. "We provide our guests a holistic treatment, promoting tranquility and relaxation. Guests say there is a tangible sense of peace in our spas, which sets us apart."

Pitmon, who started Sole'renity Spa in Gainesville, Texas, was recruited by the Chickasaw Nation to be part of the hotel because of her years of experience and unique approach to wellness.

"We promote self-image while promoting well-being," she said. "And we love to incorporate the healing mineral waters from the sulphur springs here."

The spas have numerous services to choose from. At Sole'renity, there are salt and sugar scrubs, mud wraps, several types of massage, manicures and pedicures, oxygen treatment and medical spa services. At Little Soles, kids get to experience mini spa services including chocolate frosting facials, and they can create their own sugar scrubs and mud scrubs. The spa also hosts spa parties, or "sparties", for kids' birthdays or other special events.

"This is a perfect 'spa-cation' for an overall fun family experience," Pitmon said. "Guests get away from stress, stay in this beautiful hotel, experience the fine food and our spa services. It's an amazing place to get away."



Planning Your Stay

For Norman residents, the Artesian's proximity makes this hotel an ideal spot for either a quick romantic getaway or a fun weekend with the family. Just an hour away, visitors can experience all the hotel has to offer, as well as numerous outdoor adventures like the Chickasaw National Recreation Area and Turner Falls.

"The Chickasaw Recreation Area is just across the street, and then there are the Arbuckle Mountains with horseback riding and hiking," Williams said. "There's also the ARTesian Art Gallery and the Cultural Center where you can spend a half to a full day and hear the stories of the Chickasaw tribe."

The hotel is part of Sulphur's historic downtown, and is just down the street from the Plaza, which hosts movies and events, including the upcoming Artesian Arts Festival on Memorial Day weekend.

The hotel also hosts numerous events of its own throughout the year, including their upcoming Spring Fling, their Fourth of July celebration and their fifth anniversary celebration in August.

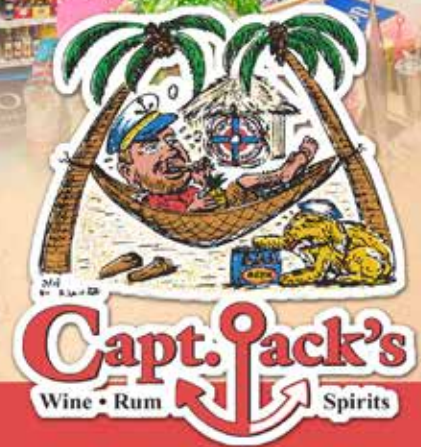
To book a stay or to learn more about the hotel's history, amenities and events, visit www.artesianhotel.com or call 1-855-455-5255. To learn more about Sole'renity and Little Soles spas, visit www.solerenityspa.com. – **BSM**



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Are You Prepared?

Local roofing business helps Normanites prepare for spring storm season.

With severe weather season quickly approaching, now is the time for Norman residents to prepare. A roof inspection is one of those preventative maintenance jobs that's easy to overlook.

A roof inspection should be done semi-annually as well as after every major storm. Most people do not worry about their roof until there is a major problem. The old adage, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" is certainly true, said Daryl Deaton, owner of Norman-based Roof Medic & Construction LLC.

Purchasing a new roof is one of the biggest decisions a homeowner will make for their home. It's important for it be done right and by a company that will still be doing business in the community years later, he said.

Roof Medic & Construction, LLC is a locally owned, full-service roofing, remodeling and general construction company serving Norman and surrounding communities. While selecting a roofing company can be confusing and frustrating, consultations and evaluations with Roof Medic & Construction are free with no obligation.

"We are not selling a customer a new roof and then moving on," Deaton said. "We want to earn life-time customers who consider us friends when we complete their job. Because we are locally owned, and family operated, our speed of service is outstanding, the money is kept in the community and our work speaks for itself through referrals and potential customers being able to inspect work we have done for other people."



Roof Medic & Construction offers these tips for homeowners who want to do their own inspection:

1. Be alert to early signs of a roof leaks including:

- Dark areas on ceilings
- Peeling paint on the underside of roof overhangs
- Damp spots along fireplaces
- Water stains on pipes venting, the water heater or furnace

2. Signs your roof may need to be replaced:

- Buckled, cracked or curled shingles
- Roof looks old and worn
- Neighbors are getting new roofs. Homes built around the same time experience same weather conditions.
- Roof is 20 years old or more.

3. Also look for:

- Cracked caulk or rust spots on flashing
- Damage on gutters, downspouts, siding, doors or windows
- Missing or broken shingles
- Impact "dings"
- Moss and lichen
- Excessive granule loss at the base of downspouts and in gutter

If homeowners have trees close to their houses, they should trim them back, so they are not rubbing against the roof and cause premature aging. Also, keep gutters clean so rainwater flows freely and debris won't promote growth of algae.

Getting up on the roof is no easy feat, and it requires a tall ladder, good balance and agility. Falling can cause serious injury or death. Many people are not comfortable climbing on their roofs and that's where Roof Medic & Construction comes in.

Roof Medic has an annual maintenance program with pricing dependent on the type of roof and the pitch. The program includes inspections in the spring, prior to storm season and again in the fall, before the rain and snow seasons.

If a determination is made that a claim needs to be filed, Roof Medic helps with that too. Insurance policies are complex and can be difficult to understand. Roof Medic has experience with a variety of insurance companies and policies and helps ensure that customers are properly reimbursed within their insurance policy limits. Using the same software as major insurance companies, Roof Medic can accurately assess a customer's claim.

"Not all insurance carriers are alike," Deaton said. "We take our customers through how to file a claim, how the insurance process works and show how insurance providers are not always there for their best interest. We document, write our own estimates and present our estimate to the insurance company and come to an agreement prior to commencing work. We make sure our customers get what they're entitled to."

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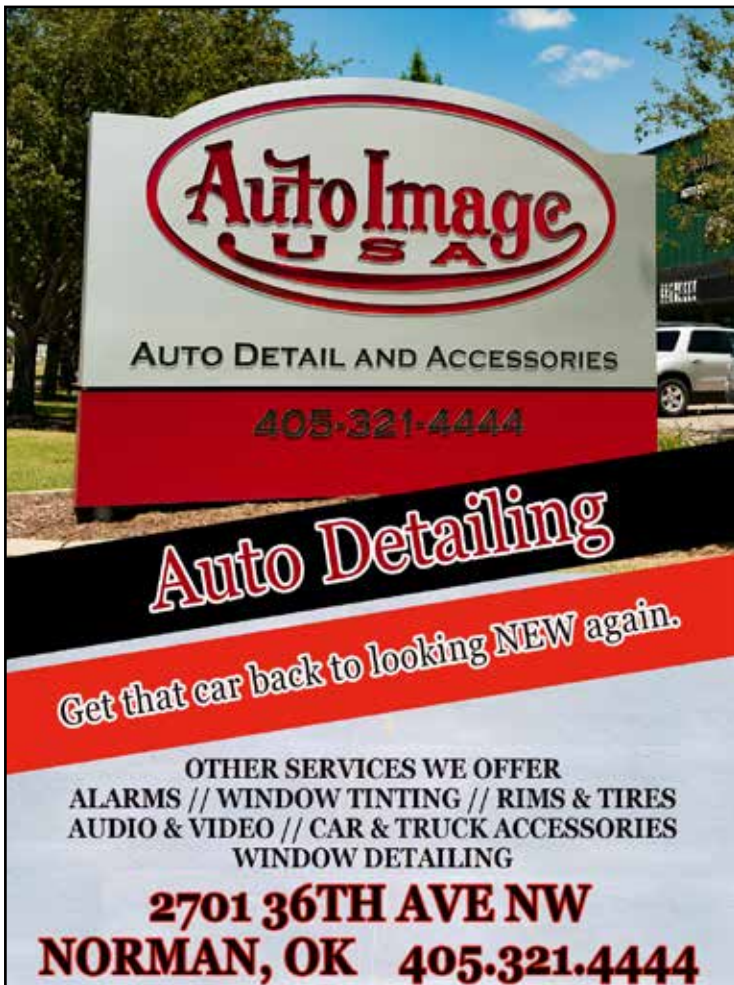
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Twenty-Four Years in the Making

Local Hotel Staff Receives State Industry Honors

The food industry is known for being a tough place to work. With long hours and lengthy lines of hungry customers, one might assume that call-ins might be a regular occurrence, but not for Lolita Hewlett, the recipient of the 2017 Oklahoma Hotel & Lodging Association (OH&LA) Stars of the Industry Food and Beverage Employee of the Year. Hewlett has worked at the Marriott Conference Center at the National Center for Employee Development since 1993, just one year after the property open, and she has never missed a day of work.

But, her coworkers and customers might have a few other reasons why they say she is worthy of this honor.

Roy Erwin, executive chef at the conference center, has worked with Hewlett for over twelve years and can attest to her dedication.

“She consistently extends a personal touch. Our frequent and long term guests ask for her by name,” Erwin said.

Bernadette Wognakou-Mitchell has worked with Hewlett for most of their careers and warmly shares of her knowledge and leadership.

“What sets her apart is her personal work ethic and character. Lolita is a natural leader,” Wognakou-Mitchell said. “She is always on the ball and ready to work. She trains our new hires because she knows every aspect of the eatery.”



Food & Beverage Employee of the Year Lolita Hewlett poses with (left to right): Regina Fort from Clearwater Enterprises LLC, Charles DiClemente, NCED GM and Brian Davis from Courtyard by Marriott.

Hewlett will now be considered for the national award with the American Hotel and Lodging Association to be named in September.

Hewlett wasn't the only member of the conference center's staff to be honored. The center was nominated for an Innovation Award and three other employees received nomination for the OH&LA's Stars of the Industry Awards. — **BSM**



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What's in a Name? McCasland Field House

When people think about gathering for events on campus, minds are quick to picture the Gaylord Family Oklahoma Memorial Stadium with its crowds of tens of thousands, the Union with its Meacham Auditorium or the theaters and concert halls of fine arts on the northwest end of campus.

Each of these has its place, but none of them match the variety of activities like the University of Oklahoma's McCasland Field House, now 90 years old. Situated just north of the football stadium, the Field House was part of the building boom on campus of the late 1920s.

William Bizzell began his term as president over a rapidly growing university, and he worked to ensure the facilities could keep up with a new library and a hospital on site. The evolving student body also required a student union, and the athletics department built a football stadium and a Field House for an indoor basketball court. Physical education had long been a requirement to graduate, and one of the first buildings on campus was a wooden gymnasium. The Field House would dwarf it with three stories and room for 5,500 fans.

The Field House opened just in time for a basketball game against Kansas on Jan. 13, 1928. Perhaps pride in their new facility boosted the Sooners' play as they trounced the Jayhawks 45-19 before a sold-out crowd, part of an undefeated season. The first-ever basket in the building was landed by team captain Bruce Drake, who would return to OU to coach the Sooners from 1939 to 1955.

The December 1929 Sooner Magazine described the facility as "a giant comfortable basketball court with a seating capacity of 7,000," giving a few more than it held in reality, but within 20 years, students were already speaking out that it was too small.

The February 1948 Sooner Magazine cited a study by then-sports publicity director Harold Keith that Colorado, Kansas State and Iowa were looking to seat 15,000 in their new field houses, while Oklahoma A&M (later to become OSU) wanted to seat 20,000.

Senior Wayne Holmes debated the administration, asking how OU could continue with a field house of only one-third that size.

OU President George Lynn Cross was slow to act, however, as he stated, "I will not recommend that a student fee be pledged for a new field house unless I am shown that the students want it."

As it turned out, a proposed \$48 student fee needed to help pay the cost was unpopular among students, so the university continued using the Field House until 1975, when the Lloyd Noble Center opened south of campus with a capacity of more than 10,000 after All American center Alvan Adams generated renewed interest in OU's basketball program.

Basketball may have moved, but that is just one of many sports the Field House has accommodated through the years. In 1937, even a swimming pool was added through the Works Projects Administration.

Today, the Field House hosts gymnastics, volleyball and most famously wrestling, with Port Robertson as its most famous wrestler. An All American, Robertson won Big Six Conference titles in 1935 and 1937 as a student, and then he returned to coach the team from 1947 to 1959 and in 1962.



Photo by: Mark Doescher

OU won three national titles under his tenure as well as a host of conference wins. In 1960, Robertson coached the U.S. Olympic team in Rome, where they won three gold medals in eight weight classes. Today the area of the Field House dedicated to wrestling is named in his honor.

Sports may have been the main reason for building the Field House, but its large space has also served as entertainment for students and Norman residents alike.

Oklahoma's favorite son, Will Rogers, was one of the first speakers to come to the Field House, touring the country in 1931 to raise money for drought-stricken farmers. One of the more interesting performances came in 1946 when the Hollywood Skating Revels presented a ballet on roller skates.

Since then, concerts by the likes of Duke Ellington, Nat King Cole, Henry Mancini and Sonny and Cher have enlivened the arena. One of the last concerts ever held by Jimi Hendrix took place in the Field House in 1970, just months before his death in London.

The Field House has hosted more serious events as well. On Dec. 8, 1941, three thousand curious students came to the Field House to listen to the radio broadcast of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's speech to Congress following the attack on Pearl Harbor. Classes had been canceled that morning, so students could listen.

By 1998, the Field House was showing its years, and the Boren administration launched renovation projects that were completed in 2012. Brick was restored on the exterior, windows and doors replaced, the roof remodeled and the interior redesigned with a new lobby, restrooms, offices, locker rooms and courts. The electrical system, which had never been updated, was completely replaced to support new lighting and, for the first time ever, air conditioning for the building.

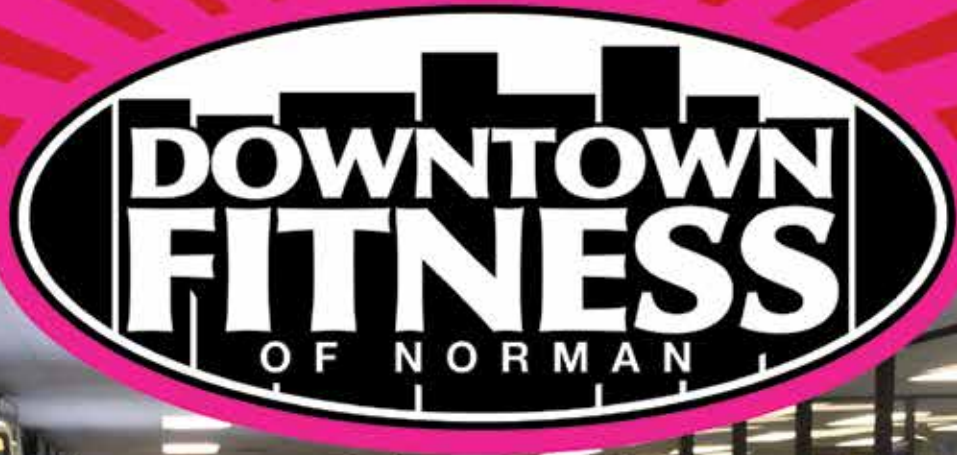
Along with its renovations, the Field House gained a new name: McCasland, lent by T. Howard McCasland, an Oklahoma oilman, who prior to his graduation in 1916, had been a Sooner athlete in football and basketball.

As the first Sooner from Duncan, Oklahoma, according to his family, to attend OU, education was very important to McCasland. At the University of Oklahoma, McCasland continued with the academic and athletic success he had showed at Duncan High School. On the court McCasland was a team captain and record breaking scorer, while, in the classroom, he was a recipient of the Letzeiser Medal for his achievements as a scholar. McCasland's family takes great pride in his legacy and his ties to OU.

"My grandfather was always very generous to the university," Barbara Braught said. "He gave money and time to OU. He was very involved with the OU Foundation. We were able to honor him in a place he played and it fit perfectly with the McCasland Family Foundation's mission to support education." – **BSM**

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NORMAN'S NEW BREW

Stella Nova Coffee Shop
Opens on Main Street



Ila Fillmore, an employee at Stella Nova coffee shop, cleans the counter after a rush of orders during an open house for the shop. Fillmore said she's excited about working at the new store. "This is a really good environment, so happy and upbeat."

The team behind the new Stella Nova coffee shop aspires to provide quality drinks and treats in a space that is eye-catching, comfortable and convenient.

And customers are taking notice. More than 500 people visited the business during its Jan. 8 opening, said John Kennedy, one of Stella Nova's business partners.

Stella Nova features coffee drinks, teas and baked goods, including breakfast items, cookies and cake.

The store is located at 1415 W Main St. in the building that was the former site of the Cube convenience store. The Norman location is the first of three Stella Nova shops to open in the metro area. Plans are in the works to open two in Oklahoma City later this year, said Kennedy, an Oklahoma City resident.

Kennedy said he's excited about the interest for the shop from the Norman community. He said his love for coffee and local coffee shops are some of the reasons he became interested in the venture. He and his business partners also wanted to give customers another option for coffee consumption.

"We believe that there needed to be an alternative for convenient, drive-through coffee shops but ones that would offer local products and small-batch coffee," he said.

"It's locally owned, the beans are locally roasted and the baked goods are fresh, not frozen."

Kennedy and his partners saw that the former Cube building was available and believed it would be a great site for Stella Nova.

"We like being right in the middle of Norman, so that's why we selected that location," he said.

He also is impressed with the store's aesthetic features. "I just really love the architecture of that building."

Kennedy said the shop has an inviting décor with local art, "comfortable furnishings and great hospitality." He also believes the business will create employment opportunities for residents.

Kennedy's business experience in Norman also includes his company's development of the Carriage Plaza shopping center on West Main. He is the president of Irish Realty, which completed the property in 1982 and operated the shopping center for 18 years.

"I really enjoyed operating Carriage Plaza," Kennedy said. "I love Main Street. I love Norman."

Kennedy and his business partners gave the community a preview of Stella Nova a few days before the opening in January. Guests said they loved the comfy setting, as well as the delicious coffee drinks.

Jenna Swanson, of Edmond, said one of her favorite drinks is the white mocha and "it was the best white mocha I've ever had."

She also said she enjoys the store's atmosphere and sees it as a great place to study. "It's super cozy."

Kennedy said he and the Stella Nova team have been pleased with the feedback they received from customers about the menu and their experiences at the store.

Jake Swanson, vice president of store development, said the responses offer insight to the team on how they can grow and improve services for the customers. He said the Stella Nova team also is committed to creating a space that is friendly and hospitable for visitors.

"I think they'll be pleasantly surprised about how comfortable and welcomed they feel," he said.

For more information about Stella Nova, visit www.stellanova.com. — **BSM**

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