

AGRILEADER

Texas A&M College of Agriculture and Life Sciences



Volume 17 | Issue 1 | Fall 2018



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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS



Each year during the fall and spring semesters, students in Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communications are provided the opportunity to register for a course called “Agricultural Publication Production.” Students who take this class know by the end of the semester a final product is due—the new edition of the *AgriLeader* magazine.

With this issue of the *AgriLeader*, our staff worked diligently and tirelessly to produce a quality magazine that explored and showcased the communication skill sets taught to students in the ALEC department. We wanted to highlight these skills and pursue a publication that is both well written and visually intriguing. We wanted to explore design layouts with the use of shapes and sharp images, providing our audience with a unique experience. We wanted to build off the previous successes of the *AgriLeader* publication, but also create an experience that was original and different from previous editions.

We would like to thank the professors, instructors and teaching assistants of the agricultural communications and journalism program at Texas A&M University. Without their guidance, we would not have the necessary skills to produce this magazine. We extend a special thanks to our instructor, Tracy Rutherford, Ph.D., and teaching assistant, Shannon Norris, for their leadership and guidance throughout this semester.

On behalf of the *AgriLeader* staff, it is our hope that you, the reader, enjoy this experience with the Fall 2018 edition of the *AgriLeader*.

Jessica Spence *Keifer Patterson*

Jessica Spence '18 and Keefer Patterson '18

On the Cover: AGLS alumna, Melanee Thomas, sets the stage for storytelling through photography.

*Photograph courtesy of
Jessica Rae Spence Photography*

CONT



06 **YELL LEADER
LEGACY**
A Yell Leader and His Mission
to Serve

07 **MAKING AN
IMPACT**
ANRP Internship Program

10 **"HERE."**
One Man's Tribute to
Aggie Tradition



11 **LEATHER WORKS**
A Woman and Her Passion to
Build a Brand

15 **AN EYE FOR
RESEARCH**
Eye-Tracking Research in the
College of Agriculture
and Life Sciences

21 **SUCCESS BEYOND
HER DEGREE**
AGLS Alumna Starts
Southern Jewlz

EVENTS



25 TAKING THE SHOT

A Professional Photographer and Her Niche

30 DR. KARLY'S GOT YOUR BACK

A Human and Animal Chiropractor Making a Difference

33 SADDLE SLIDE

An Aggie Whose Invention is Changing the Horse Trailer Industry



36 HOW TO H-E-BE THE BEST

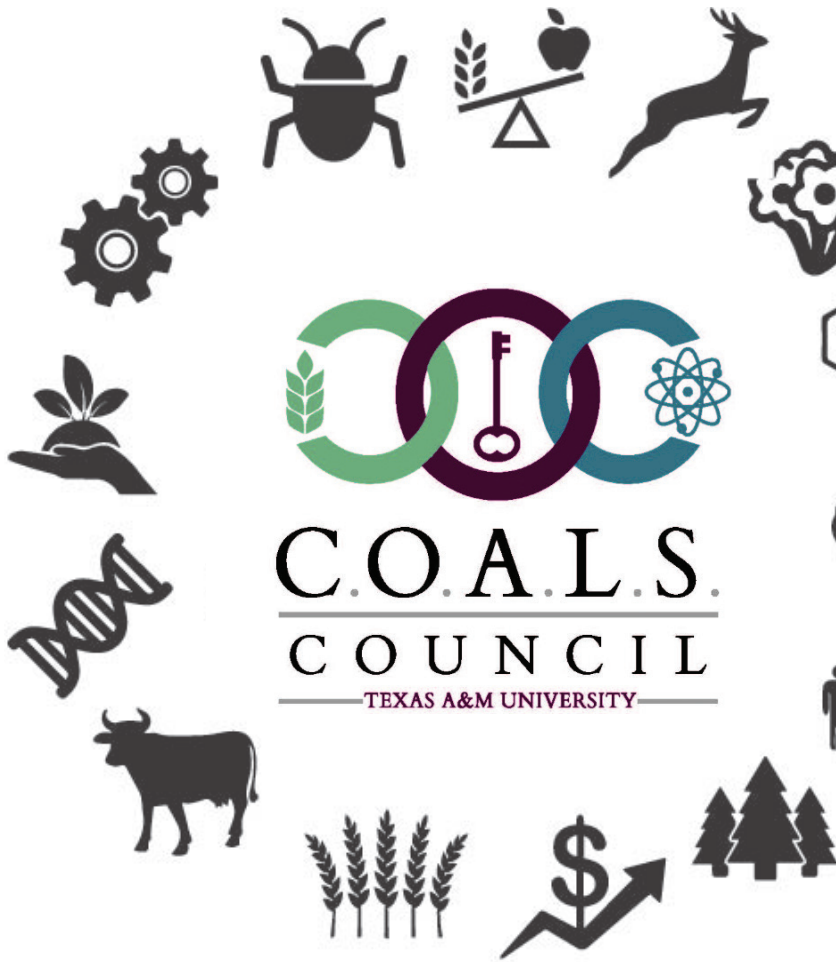
Get Ready for Tailgate Season

39 GET LOST IN THE AGGIE CORN MAZE

Agronomy Society's Fall Attraction

43 HIGH FLYIN' DEATH DEFYN'

Aggie Wranglers Get a New Home for their Organization



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YELL LEADER LEGACY

GENERATIONS OF AGGIE TRADITION

When Connor Joseph '19 puts on his white uniform and ties his maroon Adidas shoes, he remembers the men in his family who did the same before him. Connor follows in the footsteps of his great-uncle Don Joseph '51, uncle Tom Joseph '83, and his great-uncle's son Kelly '85. Connor is a third generation Yell Leader and the 19th Joseph to attend Texas A&M University.

Ironically, becoming a Yell Leader was not always an aspiration of Connor's. Instead, he wanted people to know him as a man of character, who is known for loving people—two qualities a Yell Leader should possess.

"Those are the principles I wanted to pursue, not the position of Yell Leader," Connor said. "I want to actively love people, encourage people and bring them into the Aggie family—that was my mission."

Spending three semesters in construction science, Connor eventually transferred to agricultural economics in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

"When I transferred to the College of Ag, it was the first time in my life that I was excited about getting an education," Connor said. "I was excited about what I was learning."

Connor said the professors are his favorite part about the "College of Ag."

"They are entertaining and relatable," Connor said. "You cannot go a day without hearing stories about old students they have kept up with. They care about launching our careers, not just getting a job."

Because being a Yell Leader is time-consuming, academic advisors have played a huge role in Connor's success.

"Having the job of Yell Leader is hard on your schedule," Connor said. "The advisors have been incredible in helping me figure out when to take the best classes and who to take them with."

Keeping busy, Connor serves as the public relations sergeant for Squadron 17 in the Corps of Cadets. Additionally, he is the traditions chair for Brotherhood of Christian Aggies and is an ambassador for Texas A&M Foundation through Maroon Coats.

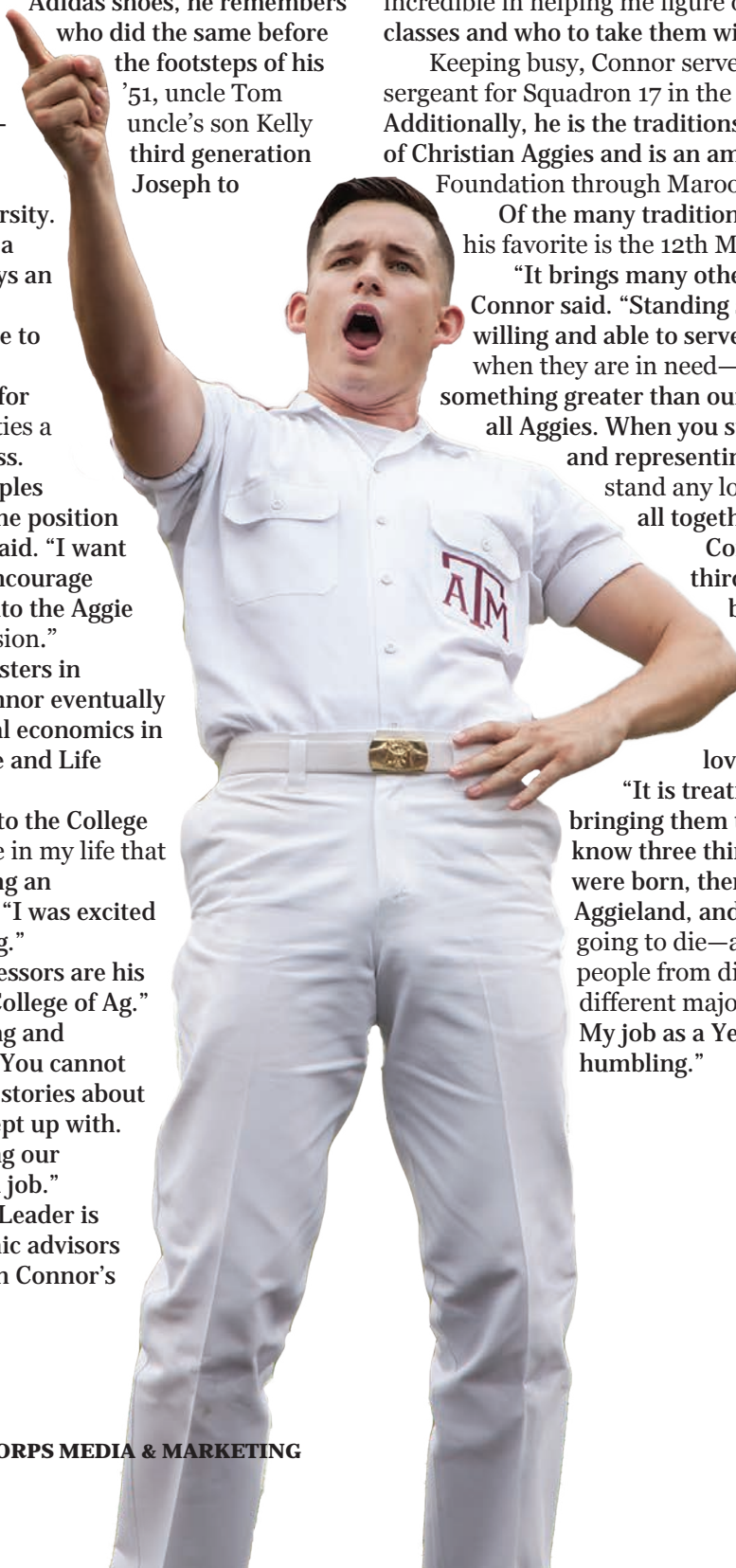
Of the many traditions Connor appreciates, his favorite is the 12th Man.

"It brings many other traditions together," Connor said. "Standing symbolizes that we are willing and able to serve and help other Aggies when they are in need—we are standing for something greater than ourselves and representing all Aggies. When you stand, you are honoring and representing those who cannot stand any longer—it is what brings all together."

Connor said he loves being third generation Yell Leader because he truly cares about people.

"It is a beautiful thing to hold a position where your sole job is to love people," Connor said.

"It is treating people fairly and bringing them together. As Aggies, we know three things: there is a day we were born, there is our time in Aggieland, and there is a day we're going to die—aside from that, you have people from different countries and different majors, but we are all here. My job as a Yell Leader is incredibly humbling."



Addie Seale '19

MAKE AN IMPACT



WHERE AGGIES INFLUENCE POLICY

In the fall of 2016, I took a chance by getting on a plane and embarking on a once-in-a-lifetime adventure in Washington, D.C., interning in the office of Rep. Kevin Brady.

When I first applied for Texas A&M University's Agricultural and Natural Resources Policy Internship Program (ANRP), I had no idea how much I would grow personally and professionally. As someone who did not previously consider a career in policy, I was amazed to learn how public policy impacts nearly every aspect of our lives.

A PROGRAM THAT SHAPES LIVES

Aggies are known for impacting and catalyzing positive change in all corners of the world.

Texas A&M gives students numerous local and international opportunities to make an impact. The ANRP Internship Program is no exception as it places Aggies in Washington, D.C., Austin and Rome—hubs of policy making.

Stephanie McMillen '07, director of policy internship programs for Texas A&M College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, said, "Our mission is to provide opportunities for students in agriculture and life sciences to participate in the policy process at the state, national and international levels."

"I ACTUALLY GOT TO SEE MY STUDIES IN ACTION AND AT PLAY IN THE REAL WORLD."

McMillen, a graduate of Texas A&M, double majored in animal science and agricultural communications and journalism.

A two-time alumna in the ANRP Internship Program, McMillen initially did not consider herself qualified to apply until she was encouraged by a professor.

McMillen said she fell in love with policy and ended up interning with ANRP in both Washington, D.C., and Austin. After graduating and expanding her horizons, McMillen was asked to return to run the ANRP Internship Program.

"It has been nice to get back to the programs that really shaped my life," McMillen said.

As someone who did not have any professional experience before going to Washington, D.C., McMillen encourages students to take a risk.

McMillen said she is convinced once a student experiences public policy, they can do anything.

"Learning about our government process is beneficial to the students' personal and professional lives no matter what they go on to do," McMillen said. "Once students get to D.C., many fall in love with policy."

A SMALL-TOWN GIRL GOES TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

Krystyn Krafka '16 graduated from Texas A&M with a double major in ecological restoration and wildlife and fishery sciences. She now works as a mitigation banking



project manager with the Harris County Flood Control District.

As someone who is passionate about fieldwork, Krafka was skeptical of how the policy focus of ANRP would help her in future career endeavors.

On a whim, in the spring of 2015, Krafka applied for the ANRP Internship Program and was selected to intern in Rep. Filemon Vela's office, who happened to be her hometown congressman.

The internship ended up being a turning point for her career as she got to see the intersection between science and policy, Krafka said.

In fact, Krafka was given the opportunity to work on water policy that affected her home district.

"I actually got to see my studies in action and at play in the real world," Krafka said. "It set me up knowing I wanted to somehow be an influence in the environmental world whether it was water resources or animal ecology."

The internship ended up being full of surprises for Krafka.

Although she could count on her routine duties, anything could happen on Capitol Hill, Krafka said.

"There was one time when Congressman Vela forgot his voter's card," Krafka said. "I found it, took my heels off, and I ran. I bolted down the hallway to the Capitol to give him the voter's card."

Krafka said she loved the spontaneity and opportunities offered on Capitol Hill.

The office was invested in making sure she got the most out of the ANRP experience.

"I was surprised how easy it was to interact with the congressman on a day-to-day basis," Krafka said. "I saw him every single day."

ANRP was a life-changing experience, and she encourages other Aggies to take the same risk, Krafka said.

"It is so important to know and realize that even if you don't think what you are studying in college relates to policy. It does," Krafka said.

SECOND TIME'S THE CHARM: AUSTIN, TEXAS

Jordan Buish '18, senior in agricultural economics with a focus in finance and real estate, came to Texas A&M wanting to start his own cattle herding business. On his second day, McMillen spoke to his class about the ANRP Internship Program—Buish was hooked.

"I went to all of the informational meetings," Buish said.

After not being selected for an internship in Washington, D.C., the first time, Buish was motivated to apply a second time for the ANRP program.

In the spring of 2017, the effort paid off for Buish when he was selected for the office of former ANRP intern and Texas State Rep., Trent Ashby '96, in Austin.

Buish said he loved working in Ashby's office.

"It was really great how the program [ANRP] placed me with someone who fits my values," Buish said.

After interning for a short time, Buish was selected to be the legislative assistant for Ashby's office, which taught him to find the positive in negative situations.

"It made me get out of my comfort zone and really learn to deal with difficult situations," Buish said. "Now, I look at difficult situations specifically as a way to build myself."

As a result, Buish said the internship with ANRP has drastically changed the way he views his career.

"I can honestly say getting the experience in the capital definitely makes me want to have policy as an aspect of my life in some way, shape or form,"

Buish said.

Buish said every student should apply for the ANRP Internship Program because it is truly life-changing.

"Even if you don't particularly enjoy what you do or where you are, having that [ANRP Internship Program] on your resume will benefit you in every single career path," Buish said.

Who knows? An intern may end up at Gov. Abbott's Christmas party like Buish did.

**"NOW I LOOK AT
DIFFICULT SITUATIONS
SPECIFICALLY AS A
WAY TO BUILD
MYSELF."**

WHEN IN ROME

Moving overseas alone to Rome to do an internship for the U.N. General Assembly may sound terrifying to some—but not to Rebecca Kirkpatrick '16, a master's student in animal science.

In the spring of 2016, Kirkpatrick worked for Sarah Cahill, the food safety officer and secretary for the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meetings on Microbiological Risk Assessment (JEMRA) within the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO).

As someone who is passionate about food safety, Kirkpatrick said it was great to work on projects that fueled her interests.

"A lot of my work entailed working with her [Cahill] on antimicrobial resistance and trying to understand how much resistance is out there and what to do to combat that, especially in developing countries," Kirkpatrick said.

Kirkpatrick said living in Rome was scary at first, but she was able to explore and travel with interns from different countries.

"Don't be scared to go to a foreign country by yourself," Kirkpatrick said. "I think that is what holds a lot of students back."

In fact, Kirkpatrick said she loved being forced to come out of her shell.

"I liked being abroad, and I enjoyed working in the environment I was in," Kirkpatrick said. "I had never worked in an environment where there were that many types of people and ideas."

Kirkpatrick said Cahill took the time to help her learn the skills needed to be the best intern possible, which was especially helpful in stressful and confusing situations. The learning experience helped Kirkpatrick further solidify her hopes for a career in food safety.

"Knowing that I liked policy and food safety really helped me going into my master's program to know it was going to be worthwhile," Kirkpatrick said.

Kirkpatrick said she wants to encourage other students to do an ANRP internship and work with FAO in Rome because of the unique experience.

"In a lot of internships you're doing more of making coffee, getting coffee and making copies, but that is definitely not FAO," Kirkpatrick said. "You have a project and that is what you work on."

JUST DO IT

All students in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences are eligible to apply for the ANRP Internship Program in Washington, D.C., Austin or Rome.

Ultimately, ANRP internships provide students with a network and skill set that will continue past their internship experience.

Take the leap and take the risk—apply for an ANRP internship today.

For application and deadline information, visit anrp.tamu.edu.

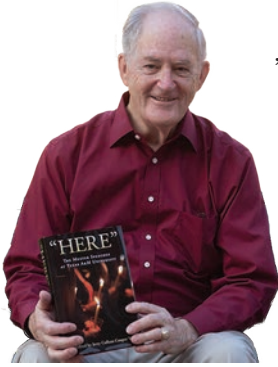


Katie Hohne '18

Main page and top left photographs:
courtesy of Kelly Smith Photography
Bottom photographs:
courtesy of Augusta Thomason



"HERE."



A PASSION FOR LEGACY
Texas City native, Jerry Cooper '63, has collected each Muster address given over the past 45 years to create a collective book of speeches to honor fallen Aggies.

Cooper enrolled at Texas A&M University in the fall of 1959 and actively served the Corps of Cadets as a member of Company A-2. Cooper took two years off to work in Houston, but boldly returned as a staff member of *The Battalion* and *The*

Aggie Hour radio show.

Cooper graduated with a degree in journalism in 1966. Upon graduation, Cooper spent three years in the U.S. Army, including one year as a civil affairs officer in Vietnam.

After returning to the U.S., Cooper got a job working for the *Galveston News* as a reporter and photographer. He moved on from the *Galveston News* after two years and made his career as the editor of the *Texas Aggie*.

Cooper has continuously promoted 'Good Bull' in all facets. His dedication to his alma mater is clear in his compilation of 68 speech manuscripts with a total of 563 pages. One powerful word titles the book and is also recited on April 21 across the country each year: "Here."

WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO WRITE A BOOK ABOUT MUSTER?

"Reading the speeches convinced me that these treasures needed to be available to every Aggie. Muster is at the top of the list of great Aggie traditions. I sat on the lawn of the Memorial Student Center at Musters in 1960 and '61. During my first year as *Texas Aggie* Editor, I attended the campus Muster in 1972 and haven't missed one since.

"I've been collecting campus Muster addresses from each speaker for 45 years. I began approaching the A&M Press about doing the book about 10 years ago. Finally got a note in December 2016 from Jay Dew, A&M Press editor-in-chief, that the Press's Faculty Committee gave the book a 'Thumbs up. Gig 'em.' That was when the job of editing, collecting speakers' photos and organizing the book began in earnest."

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART OF YOUR BOOK?

"The varying discussion of historical moments, such as Sam Houston's order to destroy Vince's Bridge, which determined that the battle for Texas independence at San

Jacinto would be an all-or-nothing affair. The first-person account of the Dixie Classic by the original Twelfth Man E. King Gill '24 and the true story of the legendary 1942 Corregidor Muster report told by Col. Tom Dooley '35 are a few of the Muster highlights.

"I was fortunate to get permission to include ten poems in Appendix II that can help readers understand the emotion and dedication that is Muster."

WHAT IS SOMETHING UNIQUE ABOUT MUSTER OR THE UNIVERSITY THAT YOU UNCOVERED WHILE WRITING YOUR BOOK THAT MOST AGS DON'T KNOW?

"While searching for the locations of campus Musters, I discovered that the 1962 address by Medal of Honor recipient Eli L. Whiteley '41 was delivered in the MSC Ballroom to a small crowd, since Muster was held on Easter Sunday. Because of this circumstance, Whiteley's entire speech was printed in the student newspaper where it was likely seen by President Earl Rudder '32.

Whiteley spoke of the need to support change. The next year, the school name was changed to Texas A&M University and enrollment was opened to women."



Mayzie Purviance '19



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**LEATHER
WORKS**



FROM SCHOOL TO CRAFT, THIS AGGIE
ENTREPRENEUR STRIVES
FOR EXCELLENCE IN ALL SHE DOES

By day, she lives as a regular college student, going from class-to-class and submitting assignments. She sits in lecture, takes notes and studies for exams. She does not differ much from her peers, but there is a whole other life she lives outside of the classroom.

By night, you'll find her in the small shop on the side of her house, pounding her craft on a workbench, stitching a tooled product or painting the finishing touches on a piece with the fresh smell of fine leather permanently embedded in her clothing.

Sara McManus, a junior agricultural science major from Lexington, Texas, seems to live a normal college life. But after class, she morphs into a leather craftswoman.

What started as a hobby in high school quickly turned into a full-fledged, leatherworking business called Lady Loca Leather.

"I always had an interest in leatherwork, and I thought it was a really fascinating art form," McManus said. "I got my first toolkit as a Christmas present in 2014, and the first thing I ever made was a wallet. It is crazy thinking how much my business has grown since then."

A PASSION FOR AGRICULTURE

McManus grew up in rural, central Texas and comes from a strong agricultural background. She was heavily involved in the local 4-H and FFA chapters.

"Growing up, I was a barrel racer and showed pigs," McManus said. "My grandparents raised cattle, and I spent a lot of time on their farm. Agriculture is a big part of my life."

Despite her agricultural background, McManus originally thought she wanted to be a doctor. However, she eventually found her way back to her roots.

"I always thought I wanted to go into the medical field," McManus said. "But I always kept agricultural education in the back of my mind."

McManus changed her major to agricultural science with the intention of becoming an agriculture teacher. Texas A&M was an easy choice for McManus, as she comes from a family of Aggies.

"If you are in my family, and you're in my generation of cousins, you basically have to go to Texas A&M," McManus said. "It's the only school I applied to, and I've loved it, especially being in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. I feel like I know almost everyone on West Campus. It feels a lot smaller than I expected, in a good way."

LOCO FOR LEATHER

From wallets to wrist cuffs, Lady Loca Leather specializes in classic and western designs. All of the designs are original, and McManus is the only individual who handles each product from beginning to end.

McManus said her business functions mainly on custom orders.

"Ninety-five percent of what I do is custom orders," McManus said. "I like it when customers give me some direction, but I like when I can be creative, have fun and take my own design and run with it."

McManus said her business has experienced exponential growth just within the last year. She advertises her products on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, but she said word-of-mouth goes a long way.

McManus thinks her business has been so successful

because she continues to improve at the craft. She said the leatherworking learning curve is evident in her designs.

"I'll make something one week and then by the next week I had improved already, so I think it's not good anymore," McManus said. "It's a really cool thing to see how I've grown and improved. I improve every time I make something."

For inspiration, McManus said she turns to the work of master craftsmen, like Don Gonzales and Britt Nance.

"Don Gonzalez is probably one of my biggest role models for leatherwork," McManus said. "He has all of his skills down to a science, and he's been doing it so long, it is like second nature to him. He's also a really good teacher. Britt Nance is who I look to for insights on small tooling techniques. Both of those men have incredible talents."

With the recent growth of her business, McManus has extended her reach far beyond just family, friends and mutual relationships.

"This year, I started getting some out-of-state clients, some from Kansas, Nevada and Ohio," McManus said. "It's cool when I get orders from other places because then I know I'm reaching even further. It started just with people I knew, and now I'm making things for customers across the country."

STRETCHED TO THE LIMIT

When business is booming and schoolwork begins to pile up, McManus said the balancing act is tough to manage.

"It's not easy balancing school and my business," McManus said. "Yes, I have my own hours, but I still work extremely late. I schedule my classes in the morning so I have all afternoon and evening to get products done. Even then, sometimes I stay up too late in my shop working."

"I'VE NEVER SHIED AWAY FROM TRYING NEW THINGS, LIKE NEW DESIGNS OR CRAFTING NEW PRODUCTS. THE SAME GOES FOR GROWING MY BUSINESS. I'M UP FOR THE CHALLENGE."

Some seasons are less busy than others, but McManus said Christmas is difficult to manage.

“Christmas is absolutely insane,” McManus said. “Finals make the season so much busier. That’s the hardest time to balance work and school.”

Since McManus runs the show on her own, she said it is a challenge to stay organized and maintain sound business practices.

“If I’m not actually in my shop then I’m doing invoices, budgeting for supplies, ordering supplies, messaging someone back on social media or making a social media post,” McManus said. “There’s so much more that goes into it than just tooling leather, and I do all of it myself.”

Julia Hay, junior agricultural communications and journalism major, is in the Sigma Alpha professional sorority with McManus.

Hay said McManus’ work ethic is something she admires.

“Sara’s dedication and drive are definitely what make her successful,” Hay said. “She manages her time between work and school more efficiently than anyone else I know. The amount of dedication she gives to all she does says a lot about her.”

Hay is also a past customer of Lady Loca Leather, and hopes to do business with McManus in the future.

“I have a cactus cuff that Sara made, and I am looking to add a custom camera strap and a handmade purse to my Lady Loca Leatherwork collection soon,” Hay said. “I love knowing when I buy from Lady Loca Leather I am getting an original piece that no one else has.”

PURSUING HER PASSION

Although running a business and going to school is challenging, McManus said she loves what she does, and it rewards her well.

“The coolest thing ever is to just be out and about and I see something I’ve made on somebody I don’t know,” McManus said. “I was walking around at the Austin County Fair one time, and I saw a guy wearing a belt I made. He said it was his favorite belt, and even went as far as to say he sleeps in it. That’s extremely rewarding for me.”

Moving forward, McManus is optimistic about where her business is going.

McManus said she wants to commit herself fully to her agricultural education career and students, but is also considering growing her leatherworking business later on.

“Hopefully, one day, I will want to do leatherworking full-time,” McManus said. “I know I won’t be able to juggle leatherworking and teaching because I want to fully commit to the classroom.”

McManus has big goals for her business in the future, and she is confident in her ability to make them happen.

“I would love to have a storefront at some point,” McManus said. “It’s always been at the back of my mind. I have also dreamed of participating in well-known antique shows, similar to the one in Round Top, Texas.”

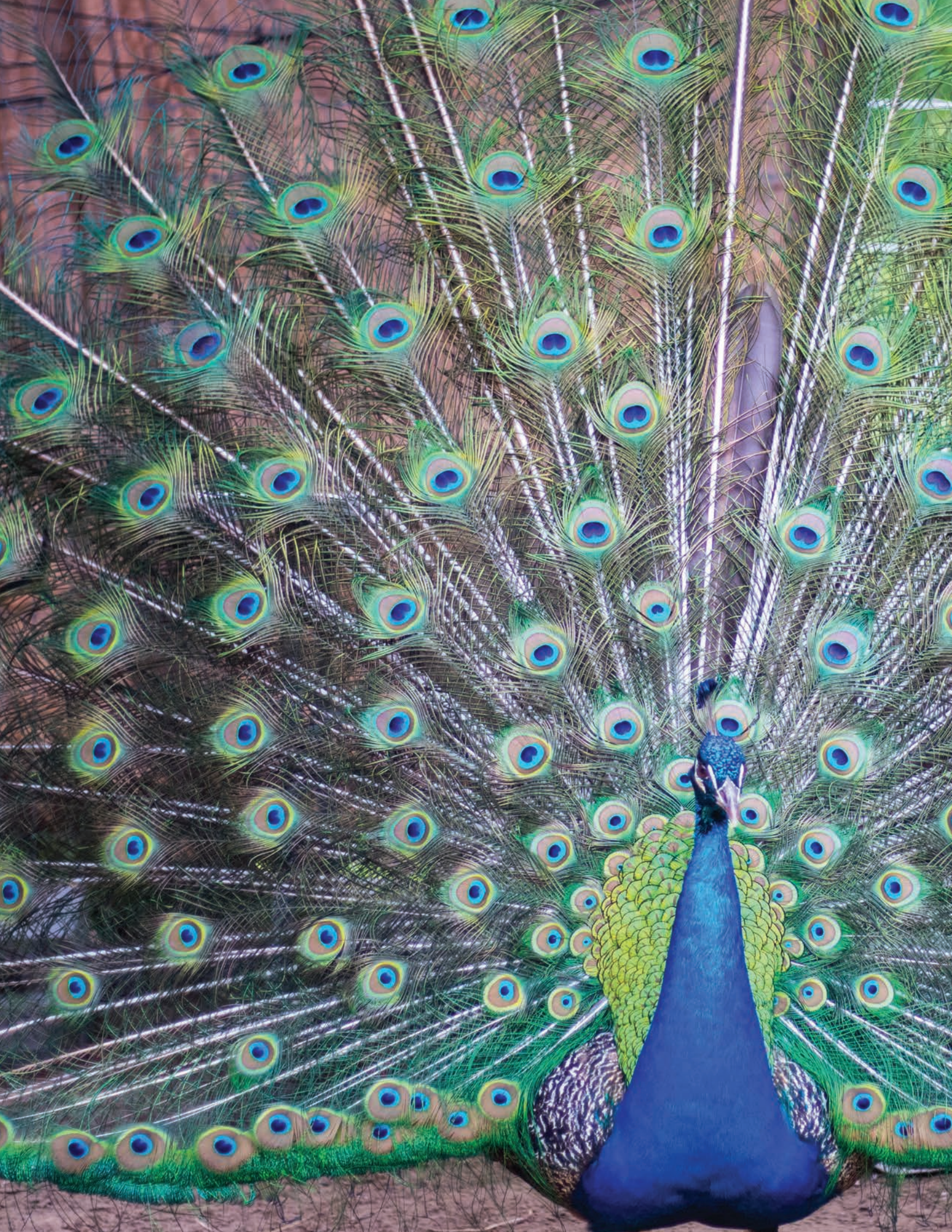
Never shying away from trying new things, McManus looks forward to growing her business.

“I’m up for the challenge,” McManus said.



Kasey Heath '18







AN EYE FOR RESEARCH

PEACOCKS | HUMAN BEHAVIOR | PHOTOGRAPHY

**WHAT DO PROFESSORS
JESSICA YORZINSKI,
MARCO PALMA AND
TOBIN REDWINE HAVE IN
COMMON?**

**ALL CONDUCT
EYE-TRACKING RESEARCH
IN THE COLLEGE OF
AGRICULTURE AND
LIFE SCIENCES.**

A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

How does attention influence behavior?

Jessica Yorzinski, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences, set out to answer this question when she began her research in 2007.

Yorzinski currently conducts eye-tracking research on a 40-bird flock of peafowl to study mating and dominance behaviors. Peacocks, originally native to India, were introduced to different countries in the 1930s. Yorzinski's flock includes 15 males and 25 females she trapped in Florida and California.

"THESE DEVICES ARE ABLE TO TRANSMIT DATA TELEMETRICALLY SO THE BIRDS HAVE THE ABILITY TO WALK FREELY AND ENGAGE IN NATURAL BEHAVIORS."

During an eye-tracking session, Yorzinski places devices on the birds' heads in one-hour increments to evaluate their behaviors.

"These devices are able to transmit data telemetrically so the birds have the ability to walk freely and engage in natural behaviors," Yorzinski said.

The eye-tracking devices capture two different videos: The first records the actual movement of the eye while the other records the scene in front of the bird. These two views are synced together with an overlaid dot to show where the bird is directing his or her attention.

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY **KARA HITT**

When the eye-tracking device is placed on a peahen, Yorzinski can study which traits a female looks at when evaluating a male as a potential partner.

In this study, females were given a free choice of mating partners. However, when the eye-trackers were placed on the peacocks, they were able to study how a male evaluated rival males in their competition for access to females—as well as how they established territories and "sized-up" the competition.

"My results, whether male or female, were fairly similar," Yorzinski said.

Yorzinski found the females' gazes were directed toward the lower portions of the males' five-foot train of feathers.

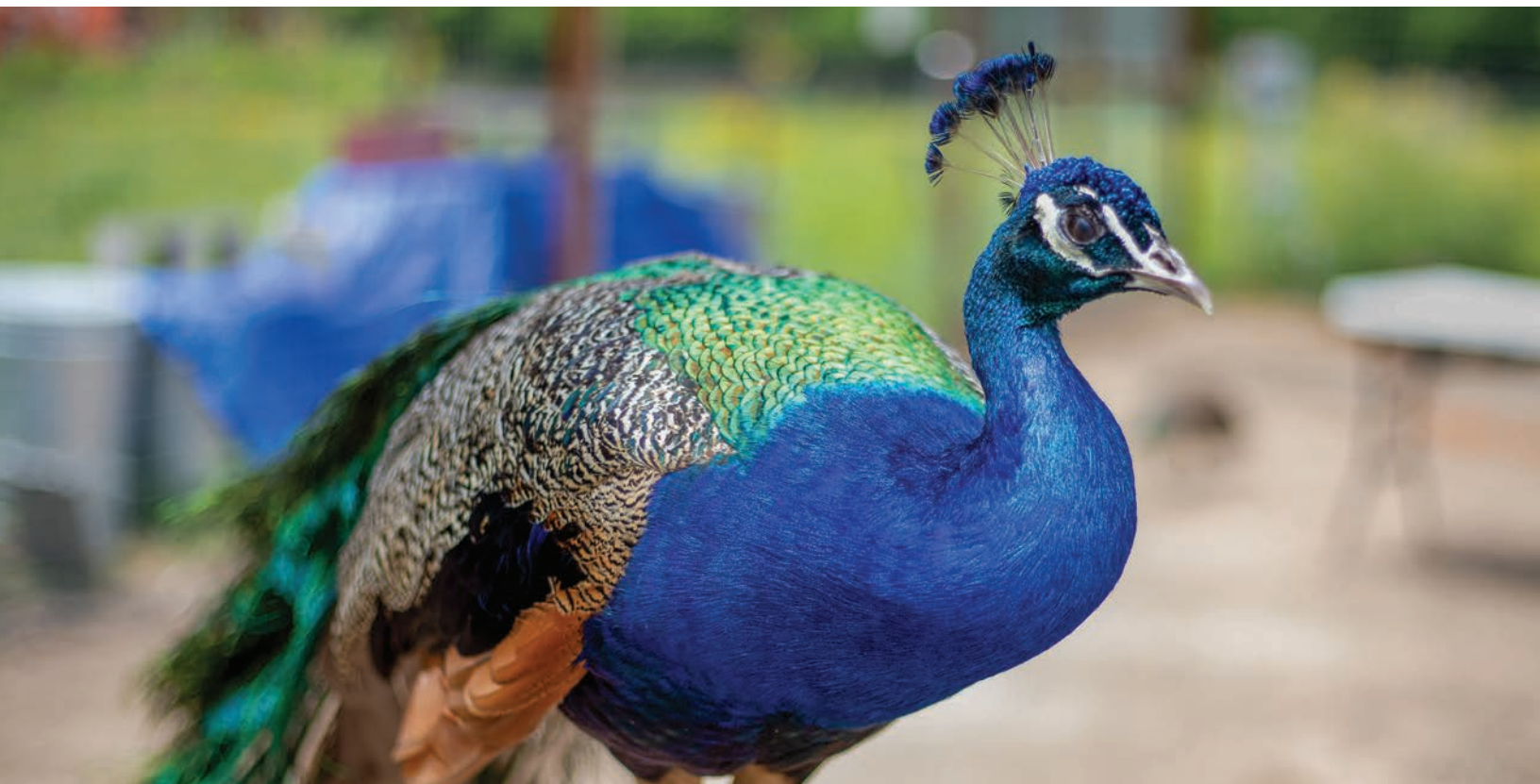
"I believe the reason for this is because in India, the vegetation is really high. From a distance, the only thing you can see is the waving part of the upper train of the male," Yorzinski said. "It is possible the females are using the upper portion of the train to initially find the male. Once they get up close, they shift their gaze down to the lower portion of the male's body."

Most peacocks looked at other males in a similar fashion to the way peahens viewed males, Yorzinski said.

This discovery suggests males assess dominant traits similar to the way females assess mating traits.

"A strong male is a good male for both a mating partner, and as a male you might want to avoid competition with," Yorzinski said.

Yorzinski plans to continue her eye-tracking research, but change the context from studying mating and dominance to investigating foraging and navigation.



BEHAVIORAL STIMUL-EYE



Marco Palma, Ph.D., associate professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics, began using eye-tracking software in 2013 to study human behavior. Shortly after, Palma started studying brain waves to aid his research.

Human behavioral responses to stimuli can be viewed in different ways. Palma is trying to combine all biometrics to obtain a composite picture of decision making.

“WHEN WE MAKE DECISIONS, WE ARE HEAVILY INFLUENCED BY THE ENVIRONMENT, AS WELL AS MANY FACTORS THAT ARE SO SUBTLE AND WE MAY NOT REALLY PAY MUCH ATTENTION TO THEM. HOWEVER, THEY HAVE A PROFOUND EFFECT IN THE WAY WE MAKE CHOICES.”

“When we make decisions, we are heavily influenced by the environment, as well as many factors that are so subtle, we may not really pay much attention to them,” Palma said. “However, they have a profound effect in the way we make choices.”

The eye-tracking and encephalography equipment helps Palma understand why people make decisions.

In one of his examples, Palma talked about two theories of self-control with contradictory predictions.

In the first theory, if a person exercises self-control by waking up early in the morning, then they can continue feeling good and building motivation throughout the day.

In the second theory, self-control is like a battery. You start fully-charged, assuming a person slept well. As the day goes on, the battery begins to drain.

“There is evidence of both theories in the real world,” Palma said.

Palma took the challenge of discovering which theory was correct by using eye tracking to monitor self-control compliance and activity in the brain to measure the neurobiological roots toward exercising self-control.

Palma discovered a variable influencing the difference in the theories—compliance. When they used the compliance measure, they discovered both theories were correct.

The first part of the experiment consisted of a task where participants had to exercise self-control by keeping their gaze inside a bull’s-eye and refraining from looking elsewhere.

“We were able to use the eye-tracking devices to monitor how well they complied with that task,” Palma said.

For the second task, Palma conducted an experiment to observe how exercising the self-control task from the first part affected subsequent self-control.

“We set up an experiment where participants were exposed to an online environment for buying groceries using real money,” Palma said.

The results showed when a person lacked self-control, the individual made purchases they were not originally looking to make.

The Human Behavior Lab, directed by Palma, is now open in Research Park. The goal for the lab is to serve as a platform to connect scholars and interdisciplinary teams interested in human behavior.

“I believe by communicating and working with others in their expertise, the possibilities are endless,” Palma said.

Palma hopes this lab will enhance and improve the research output for Texas A&M University.



AN EYE ON VISUAL LITERACY

Three years ago, Tobin Redwine, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communications, began investigating a foundational idea rooted in visual literacy.

In photography and photojournalism, people communicate stories visually, Redwine said.

Redwine, along with Associate Professor Billy McKim, Ph.D., studies how people make meaning of visual messages. This study—along with others being conducted in the ALEC Digital Media Research and Development Lab—has the potential to inform practitioners about how to measure and enhance visual literacy.

“When most people think of literacy, they think of learning to read,” Redwine said. “That is a skill set you can be better or worse at. It is a teachable skill set. The more you read, the more literate you become.”

“WHEN MOST PEOPLE THINK OF LITERACY, THEY THINK OF LEARNING TO READ.”

Redwine uses this concept in visual communication.

People have the ability to learn to ‘read’ a visual message more effectively or efficiently, Redwine said.

If people can learn to communicate visually, educators have an opportunity and obligation to teach learners to improve that skill set.

“Visual literacy first involves identifying and recognizing there are messages in images and visual communication,” Redwine said. “The second level is to make meaning of those messages. The highest level is to create messages other people can recognize and make meaning of.”

Eye tracking is one way to see how people are interacting with visual communication.

Observing where someone looks at an image, how long they view it, and the frequency of places they fixate may be indicators of visual literacy, Redwine said.

Redwine, McKim and their research team showed participants five-to-six international, award-winning images because of the strong, visual storytelling elements. These images were shown in four sessions over the course of 15 weeks.

By looking at a person’s tracking patterns, Redwine and McKim are able to compare a person’s first session to their fourth session.

In addition to studying an individual’s viewing patterns, the team can compare how different groups view images at the beginning to the end of the semester to see if any trends emerge in how participants make meaning of the photos.

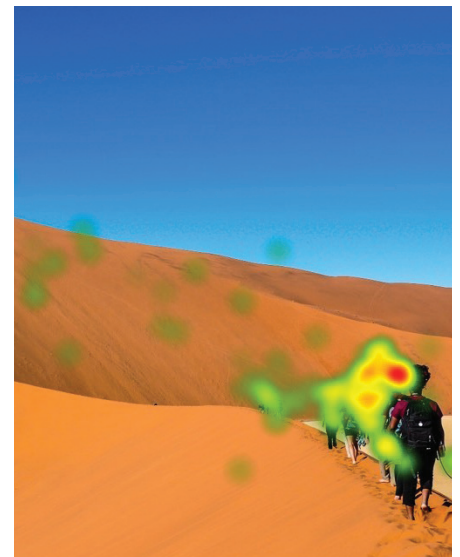
The next step is to pinpoint statistical differences within each group to see if the differences are real, how different they are, and which groups and populations vary from each other.

Redwine said he hopes to identify whether certain elements influence those potential differences.

Each eye-tracking session brings Redwine and McKim closer to understanding how people make meaning of certain images and what stories those images convey—answering the age-old question of if a picture paints a thousand words.



Kara Hitt '19



Heat maps show results of eye-tracking data.

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY TOBIN REDWINE

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**SUCCESS
BEYOND
HER
DEGREE**



A JEWELZ JOURNEY

College students face many uncertainties, but the biggest one of all is what to do after crossing the stage at Reed Arena—diploma in hand.

Randa ‘Yezak’ Carrabba ’09 had a goal that changed drastically throughout her college career. Carrabba holds a Bachelor of Science in animal science. Instead of taking that route, Carrabba decided to open a boutique in College Station, Texas.

Growing up in Bremond, Texas, Carrabba was heavily involved in FFA and 4-H. These activities and organizations laid the foundation for what Carrabba considered to be a future career.

As a college student, Carrabba was an All-American on the Texas A&M University Livestock Judging Team, interned with the American Angus Association, and worked under Chris Skaggs, Ph.D., associate dean for student development for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

“I wanted to be on the livestock judging team,” Carrabba said. “I made the team and made All-American—it was unreal.”

While attending and working stock shows and rodeos, Carrabba developed an eye for fashion accessory pieces. Inspired and determined, Carrabba created an original jewelry line. The small jewelry business started on Facebook and grew into the nationally-known boutique, Southern Jewlz.

“HER WHOLE BRAND IS BASED ON WOMEN EMPOWERING EACH OTHER AND TRULY BEING ‘JEWELZ’.”

As the company gained recognition, Carrabba’s inbox filled with requests for necklaces. The business took off so fast that Carrabba had to create an e-commerce website to allow for high expenses.

“I literally started with \$500, and I would just make jewelry constantly,” Carrabba said. “I would go to all the stock shows and rodeos, and I would do great, but the expenses were so much.”

Following graduation from Texas A&M, Carrabba decided to pursue Southern Jewlz as a career. This came as a shock to her family and many of those who knew her, but she was motivated to make a name for herself and her brand.

Despite the poor housing market, Carrabba began looking for storefronts to grow the business. She found the perfect location to launch Southern Jewlz off Texas State Highway 30 in College Station.

“I really think timing was on my side,” Carrabba said. “They told me

I could even paint it pink.”

A year later, Southern Jewlz moved to the Harvey Road location where the business took off.

Texas A&M’s switch to the Southeastern Conference (SEC) and signing Johnny Manziel opened a huge market for Southern Jewlz. In addition, Carrabba’s agricultural background extended Southern Jewlz’s network. All the connections and friendships Carrabba made through FFA, 4-H and the livestock judging team built the customer base

that flooded the store. Although she is not using her degree directly, the network Carrabba built pursuing an animal science degree at Texas A&M benefitted the success of Southern Jewlz.

“Those two football seasons are what truly put me on the map, but my agriculture background was the basis for my business,” Carrabba said.

Carrabba has since taken a step back from having a physical location for Southern Jewlz and moved to an online-only store. While the storefront is now closed, the business still flows in. Beyond the boutique’s website, Carrabba launched a personal blog allowing customers and followers to get an inside-look on the woman behind it all.

“It came to a point that I could only continue to grow and do really well at one rather than trying to do both,” Carrabba said. “Online just allowed more ways to grow.”

Carrabba set new goals for the company after shifting to an online business. She wanted to cater to various customer ages and styles. Carrabba chose to pursue more staple and timeless pieces, rather than seasonal and trendy fashion statements.

Even though the company’s target age is shifting, Carrabba will always cater to college girls—the fresh new faces of the Southern Jewlz brand.

Chloe Turner, an intern at Southern Jewlz, said Carrabba is a truly genuine person and goes above and beyond for her customers, inspiring them to be the best versions of themselves.

“You will never hear a negative word come out of her mouth,” Turner said. “You can’t help but get positive energy when you are around her. I love the foundation Randa and her store stand for. Her whole brand is based on women empowering each other and truly being ‘Jewlz.’”

Bre Skrhak, former Southern Jewlz model and longtime friend, said Carrabba is hardworking, but does not boast.

“She is a big believer in bringing up everyone around her with affirmation and positive thinking,” Skrhak said. “My favorite thing about her is the positivity and energy she brings to every single task no matter how big or significant.”

Carrabba took the necessary steps to move Southern Jewlz forward and put forth full effort toward growing the business. She remains thankful for the education she received from Texas A&M because it led to experiences that got her to where she is today. She is also thankful for the Aggie Network, which has been a huge part of Carrabba’s brand and gives Southern Jewlz a solid group of loyal followers.

“Whatever your degree is in and whatever field you go into, I don’t think they have to necessarily go hand-in-hand,” Carrabba said. “They can, but I think Texas A&M is all about experiences and opportunities, more than just being in the classroom.”

For more information about Randa Carrabba or Southern Jewlz, visit www.randacarrabba.com or southern-jewlz-online-store.myshopify.com.



Amanda Mink '19



TAKING THE SHOT



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY JESSICA RAE SPENCE PHOTOGRAPHY

A CHILD PHOTOGRAPHER'S JOURNEY TO SUCCESS

A young girl sits in a window seat with a book, her dainty fingers holding its yellow pages. The girl's face has a glow to it and every curl of her hazelnut hair is placed just where it ought to be. Her white, floral dress looks like it was sourced from a different era. In her secluded, peaceful corner, it appears that she is lost in a fictional world, far away from any other being.

But 20 feet in front of her stands a curious assembly. Next to a pile of outfits sits her mother, who drove her here. Nearby stands the makeup artist who highlighted the girl's lovely face and brought order to her curls. To her left, a man attends to the lighting.

Connecting the efforts of the busy world behind her to the beauty of the peaceful one in front is Melanee Thomas, a child photographer.



THE BACKDROP

Melanee Thomas '18 has taken pictures of children across the world. From China to France to New York City, her travels illustrate her high level of skill as a professional photographer. The best part—Thomas is only 21 years old.

Thomas, a recent graduate from Texas A&M University, majored in university studies—leadership housed in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. While in Aggieland, Thomas took advantage of photography opportunities provided by Texas A&M. She took an on-campus photography class and then an agricultural photojournalism class while she studied abroad in the southern African country of Namibia.

Thomas does editorial shots, professional headshots for models and actors, and commercial shots. In every shot, children are the main characters.

Growing up in a U.S. Air Force family, travel has been an important part of Thomas' life. These experiences helped her expand her current photography business to New York City, Houston, Washington, D.C., and London.

Thomas' older sister, Caroline Hurdt, is also a photographer and has been instrumental in Thomas' professional journey.

Thomas said she has always been passionate about children and art. After realizing her sister made as much money conducting a one-hour photo shoot as she made babysitting for 30 hours, Thomas became interested in photography. As a result, Thomas started her photography business, M'Kate Photography, at age 15.



FINDING FOCUS

For college students interested in beginning professional photography, Thomas said it is important to enroll in a major that allows you the flexibility to invest time into your business.

Thomas ran her business while balancing the demands of college, stressing the importance of patience and planning.

"Plan for the long term—not short term," Thomas said.

Thomas also pointed out the value of laying a solid foundation prior to beginning a business and the credibility it provides.

"If you launch with a website, a portfolio and quality images, people will say 'Oh, they're a legit photographer,'" Thomas said.

Thomas said she believes uniqueness is a selling point for a photographer.

"From a business aspect, find a way to be different," Thomas said.

"Most successful people have something they're known for."

Clients enjoy interacting with Thomas, which is a factor that has contributed to her success.

Bari Corbin, the mother of one of Thomas' clients, said, "Melanee is simply great with people. She knows how to deal with difficult personalities, and she does so with finesse and ease. To get anywhere nowadays, you need to be somewhat aggressive, but with Melanee, it doesn't seem that way. When she reaches out, it's always warm, open and professional."

"I LIKE CAPTURING
THE SENSE OF JOY
AND INNOCENCE."



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Mikate
photography



However, the business aspect is not the only important thing for a photography business. The photographer's skill set is crucial.

Corbin said Thomas' skill set is exceptional.

"I see elegance and grace in her photos that is so visually appealing," Corbin said. "It makes the impact of the images a bit ethereal and lasting."

Thomas said something she continuously tries to improve is attention to detail and refining her personal editing style, which consists of developing images with high contrast.

Out of all photography skills, the one Thomas stresses the most is being comfortable working with light.

**"FROM A BUSINESS ASPECT,
FIND A WAY TO BE DIFFERENT."**

"Absolutely learn light," Thomas said. "Light makes or breaks a photo—one hundred percent. Lighting can make an image flat or dull, or make it really gorgeous."

Photographing children is a unique niche of photography that requires particular personal elements.

Thomas said children have a tendency to wiggle, and this requires the photographer to increase shutter speed, which ensures a crisp image. Perspective is important since children are at a different height level than she is, Thomas said.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY **CELESTE TAMEZ**

"People sometimes forget you have to scoot down," Thomas said. "I get a lot of my portraits sitting or leaning."

CREATIVE INSPIRATION

Thomas draws her inspiration from various sources. One of which is the ability to spark emotion and feeling in her viewers.

"My goal is to make people stop and wonder what the story is," Thomas said. "I like telling stories."

Personal interaction and people are the main things that remind Thomas how worthwhile her job is.

Thomas said, "I love the art, but I usually leave the studio calling my mom saying, 'You'll never guess this hysterical thing this one child said.'"

Fascinated by children's stories, Thomas remains motivated as a photographer.

"I like capturing the sense of joy and innocence," Thomas said. "I'm also a very creative person. I have a pretty vivid imagination, and I think I link that to children."

SNAPSHOT OF THE FUTURE

After graduation, Thomas moved back to Washington, D.C., where her family is currently stationed. She plans to live there for one year, continuing her business and teaching online photography classes. Thomas hopes to move to New York City to further expand her photography business.

To see more of Thomas' photos, visit www.mkatphotos.com.



Audrey Pearson '18



DR. KARLY'S GOT YOUR BACK

HEALING HANDS FOR HUMANS AND HORSES

After being injured in a car accident at the age of 15, Karly Newbern '03, D.C., chiropractor and owner of Aggieland Chiropractic and Wellness Center, developed a passion for chiropractic medicine—a passion that eventually grew into a career and business.

Newbern studied animal science at Texas A&M University. Upon graduation, she continued her education at Parker College of Chiropractic in Dallas, completing her degree in 2007. Five years following graduation, Newbern opened her own business—Aggieland Chiropractic and Wellness Center.

Unlike some professionals, Newbern treats the source of patients' pain and discomfort rather than just the symptoms.

"I believe the human body is designed for perfection," Newbern said. "It should give its owner a century of trouble-free performance. Spinal subluxations are a major source of interference, and this practice exists to eliminate them."

Newbern's patients consistently compliment her abilities and commend her healing processes.

However, Newbern's helping hands do not stop at humans. Newbern also does chiropractic work on animals, primarily focusing on equine.

"I don't care how big you are, you can't man-handle a horse's joints," Newbern said. "It's all down to physics."

Growing up between ranches and rodeos, Newbern has always had a passion for horses. This passion has led her to a horse chiropractic position for the Texas A&M Equestrian Team.

The Texas A&M Equestrian Team welcomed Newbern with open arms, and since then, their horses have been performing at a higher level, helping bring home the 2017 National Collegiate Equestrian Association Championship.

Newbern's peers lovingly call her the "yellow-headed horse whisperer" because of her passion and understanding for these animals.

Whether treating a human or a performance horse, Newbern listens to the body and believes in its' healing power.



Amanda Mink '19

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY **KEEFER PATTERSON**





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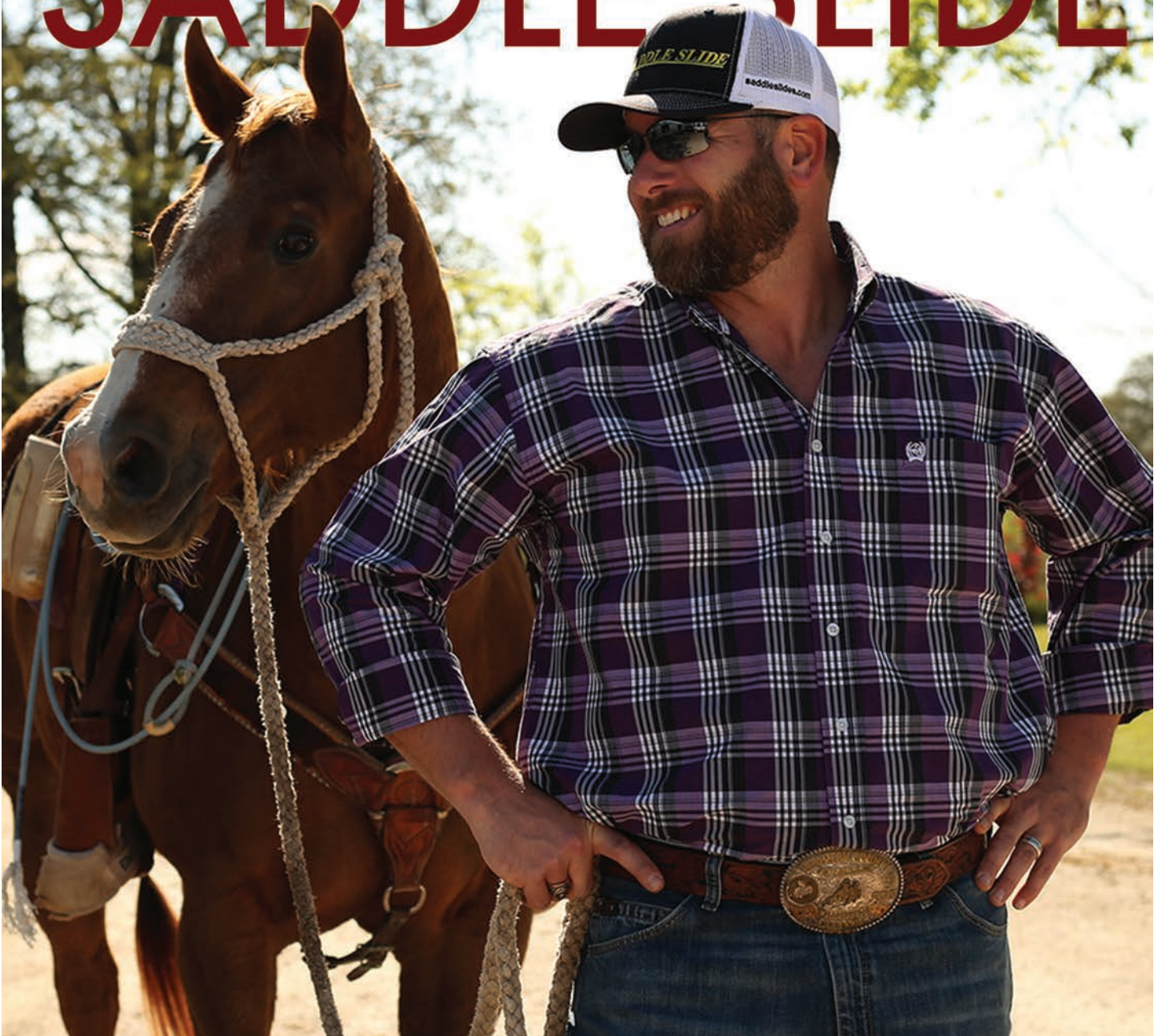


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SADDLE SLIDE



"I THINK AS WE GET MORE SADDLE SLIDES OUT THERE, AND AS THE DESIGN CONTINUES TO PROVE ITSELF, THE DEMAND WILL CONTINUE TO GROW."

A PRODUCT THAT'S SLIDING ITS WAY TO THE TOP

After battling sprained ankles and sore backs from loading and unloading horse saddles for more than 20 years, Lee DeWitt '03 knew there had to be a more efficient and effective way to get saddles in and out of trailer tack rooms, providing a solution to an age-old problem among horse riders.

BUILDING A FOUNDATION THROUGH TEXAS A&M

DeWitt, a graduate from the agricultural leadership and development program at Texas A&M University, always wanted to follow in his family's footsteps and attend Texas A&M.

"I grew up in an Aggie family," DeWitt said. "My sisters and dad attended school there—it was the only place I ever wanted to go."

While at Texas A&M, DeWitt spent most of his free time at rodeos roping and riding.

"I always wanted to be a rodeo cowboy, but I realized I needed to have a more realistic career after graduation," DeWitt said.

DeWitt's dedication and hard work at Texas A&M helped him land an engineering position at Halliburton, where his job roles included design, quality control, process improvement and safety. These notable skills and experiences gave DeWitt the tools necessary to create a product that would eventually change the horse trailer industry—the Saddle Slide.

AN IDEA THAT GREW INTO SOMETHING MORE

While looking into the front tack room of a trailer with his longtime friend, Quinn Hansen, DeWitt said, "I wonder if I could make a saddle rack that could roll to the door, instead of having to crawl in and out of there."

Hansen agreed and said, "I don't know, but if you could, I bet everybody would want one."

DeWitt spent the following years planning, designing and redesigning to ensure his Saddle Slide idea would become a reality.

DeWitt came up with what he deemed to be the right design—a saddle rack with a track and latch system. With just the pull of a handle, the saddle rack slides all the way to the door, and with the pull of another, the rack is sent back to its storage position. Thus, eliminating the need to step in and out of a trailer, making the process quicker, safer and easier.

DeWitt also developed a push-button, strut-assisted, lift system to lower the saddle racks for easier access. The racks can be made to fit a large variety of trailers, front or rear tack-room, and typically take one to four hours to install.

"Most people want the Saddle Slide with the lift system," DeWitt said. "If they don't originally purchase one with it, they will have me add it later on."

The product comes with step-by-step instructions and pictures to make installation as easy as possible for the customer.

After completing the design for the Saddle Slide, DeWitt began to think of ways to advertise and grow his business.

GROWING A BUSINESS

Hart Trailers LLC, a family-owned company established in 1968, offers DeWitt's Saddle Slide racks in their trailers from the factory. Teaming up with a brand, like Hart, has proved to be a huge benefit to the growth of the Saddle Slide.

"Hart Trailers has been building trailers for decades, and they're known for building the best trailers with unmatched quality and workmanship," DeWitt said. "Having them think enough of my products to offer them in their trailers was very flattering and uplifting."

Randy Stamper, Hart Trailers' director of sales and marketing, embraces the high-quality culture of Hart Trailers and does not accept anything less than the best for his company's brand.

Stamper said he saw a similar quality with DeWitt's Saddle Slide product.

"Safety, reliability, convenience, eye appeal and excellence are engineered into every feature of a Hart Trailer," Stamper said. "The Saddle Slide was something we would like to promote, and I feel like it's a great product, with certainly a good guy behind it."

A CUSTOMER'S VIEW

Cody Frey, a Saddle Slide customer, said the Saddle Slide is a great invention for a stock combo trailer, which is a horse trailer with the tack room in the front.

"I would not own a stock combo without one," Frey said. "That's how much I believe in them."

When talking about the benefits of the Saddle Slide, Frey said it is as easy as pushing a button.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY KEEFER PATTERSON





PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY **JESSICA RAE SPENCE PHOTOGRAPHY**

“The Saddle Slide, being able to lower at the touch of a button, makes it so much easier for my wife to load and unload her saddle on the top rack,” Frey said.

Customers are interested to see what the future holds for the Saddle Slide.

BUILDING A FUTURE

DeWitt said he is encouraged by the future of the Saddle Slide business.

“I think as we get more Saddle Slides out there, and as the design continues to prove itself, the demand will continue to grow,” DeWitt said. “I hope to have more trailer manufacturers using it.”

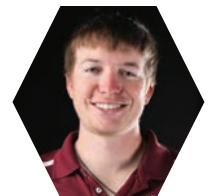
Saddle Slides are also available for purchase and installation through a network of authorized dealers, including Stephenville Trailers, Trailers Unlimited, P&P Trailers and The Trailer Store. They can also be purchased and shipped directly to customers anywhere in the United States.

“We are working on growing our network of authorized dealers, and would like to eventually have a dealer location in most states,” DeWitt said.

Currently, all Saddle Slides are manufactured at DeWitt’s shop in Bryan, Texas, but his goal is to have numerous trailer manufacturers leasing the design. Eventually, DeWitt hopes trailer manufacturers will be able to mold the design specifically to fit their trailers, optimizing the rest of the tack room and storage space to go along with it.

DeWitt’s Saddle Slide product is quickly making its way to the top of customer’s wish lists.

For more information about Saddle Slide, check out www.saddleslides.com.



Taylor Mayo '18

How To H-E-Be the Best

TIPS TO MAKE YOUR TAILGATE NO. 1

TAILPIPE RECIPE

INGREDIENTS

- 1 Whole Onion
- 2 Cups of Cheese
- 8 Tortillas
- 8 Jalapeño Sausages
- Barbecue Sauce

PREP

- Cook sausage until warm to the touch.
- Caramelize or sauté onion.

DIRECTIONS

- Place handful of cheese onto the tortilla.
- Add the sausage and onions topped with your choice of barbecue sauce.
- Roll the tortilla tight around the sausage and stick a toothpick through to hold everything together.
- Place the rolled tortilla into the deep fryer for 5-7 minutes or until golden brown.
- Remove and let cool.

Texas is known for a lot of things—bluebonnets, the Lone Star State flag and the Alamo. However, College Station, Texas, is known for its Fightin' Texas Aggie Football and Aggie traditions.

Football tailgating season can always be recognized by the smell of barbecue, the sound of music and the sight of tents going up around campus.

H-E-B acknowledges the great amount of Aggie hospitality during tailgating season each fall, whether inviting fans from the opposing team to join their tailgate or talking to people passing by—Aggies often greet with a 'Howdy' and a smile.

Because of this, H-E-B partnered with Texas A&M University, and is now the Official Texas A&M Tailgating Headquarters.

Texas A&M prides itself on the loyalty of its students and alumni. During home games, there are hundreds of thousands of Texas A&M fans on campus. No matter the outcome of the game or season, Aggies will be there honoring the 12th Man.

Diane Besosa, H-E-B area community coordinator of the Bryan-College Station area, said, "Win or lose, we are still a big Aggie family, and H-E-B is glad to be a part of that."

For every home football game, H-E-B has a competition for the "H-E-B Tailgater-of-the-Game." A team of judges walks around to see who has the best overall tailgate that game.

Some things they look for in a good tailgate are good food, family tradition and history, and of course, Aggie themes.

When judging tailgates, judges search for an inviting feeling, as if they are walking into a viewing party at someone's home, Besosa said.

Games, such as cornhole and washers, give a tailgate a great atmosphere.

One of the most important things at the tailgate is the food.

Having something to eat while getting ready for the game is key to a great time. Some go as big as smoking brisket and ribs, or as simple as throwing hot dogs on the grill. No matter what food is on the table, just remember to have something to eat.

Helpful hint: If you use H-E-B products, it might give you the upper hand in the H-E-B tailgate competition.

For each game, H-E-B awards the first place tailgate with \$200 and their picture displayed during a mid-game announcement. Second place is awarded \$100.

At the end of the season, an overall "tailgater-of-the-year" is awarded with a \$1,000 gift card to H-E-B.

Always have a checklist done the night before, and do not forget to put a penny on Sully for extra luck.

May the best tailgater win!



Josh Zapletal '18



AGGIES

FOR
Fresh

From communications to accounting and agricultural science, the fresh produce industry has many rewarding career opportunities for talented, confident and unique people like you. Connect with our team at aggiesforfresh.com or on social media — we'd love to talk!

Are you looking for a purposeful career?

Aggies for Fresh is a campaign created to recruit students from Texas A&M University to the industry that grows, ships, markets and sells fresh fruits and vegetables around the world on a daily basis. Industry champion Dan'l Mackey Almy '94 and her husband Andrew Almy '94 founded Aggies for Fresh in 2014 to inspire fellow Aggies to pursue a career in the fresh produce industry, and it's been growing ever since. "I believe Texas A&M has a wealth of premier talent that our industry needs to feed the world. We strive to position fresh produce at A&M as a purposeful and valuable career option," says Dan'l.

So, how are we helping you?

Aggies for Fresh is a huge supporter of student organizations in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences like the Howdy Farm, COALS Council, AggiesMove and the Sigma Alpha sorority, and we're proud to sponsor graduate student research in fresh produce. Also, Aggies for Fresh offers an experiential scholarship that brings Aggie students to a fresh produce industry event where they receive hands-on experience and are able network with industry leaders. The scholarship has been awarded to more than 16 students and has led to internships and full-time positions following at the event. Here's what the students who attended last year's event had to say about Aggies For Fresh:

Testimonials from your fellow students:

"Dan'l attended one of my classes at Texas A&M as a guest speaker to talk about the fresh produce industry. I didn't know then, but that would change my life. During her lecture she talked about her journey to founding DMA Solutions and Aggies for Fresh. However, what really caught my attention was when she called fresh produce "sexy." I would have never described the industry as that on my own, but I'm glad she did because it fits perfectly."

- Anna Dement '17

"I fell in love with the industry on the first day of the Viva Fresh Expo. I could not get over what a sexy industry the fresh produce industry is and how passionate everyone is about it. My entire life I have dreamed of finding a job that I am truly passionate about, and now I know this is where I need to be."

- Ashley Seidenberger '17

"It was easy to see that everyone was passionate about fresh produce, but it was especially encouraging to hear the producers speak about their operations and really swell with pride while sharing their farm and business adventure and experience. Since the expo, I have had great fun doing research on the companies I made contact with and keeping contact with many that share mutual interest."

- Jonathan Prieto '17

"Attending the Viva Fresh Expo has, without a doubt, been one of the most amazing opportunities I have been granted as a student. The expo allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of how the fresh produce industry works and I feel very fortunate to have been chosen to attend this year's tradeshow."

- Victoria de Leon '17



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GET



LOST

IN THE AGGIE
CORN MAZE

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY KASEY HEATH



FOURTH ANNUAL AGGIE CORN MAZE KICK OFF

Texas A&M University's Agronomy Society is hosting its fourth annual Aggie Corn Maze in fall 2018.

Brayden Stockton '18, former president of the Texas A&M Agronomy Society, said the corn maze fundraiser is a way the organization can raise money while reinforcing concepts taught in agronomy education.

"Agronomy is the study of crops, soils and their interactions," Stockton said. "So, we decided to incorporate our major into our fundraiser."

Savanna Shelnutt '18, former vice president of the Texas A&M Agronomy Society, said the corn maze helps raise funds to send members of the agronomy society to national conferences in both the fall and spring. At the conferences, students tour different agricultural facilities, wineries and a variety of other agriculture-related locations. Agronomy society members can listen to speeches from industry professionals and meet potential employers, said Shelnutt.

"Some people have gone to these conferences and received job offers," Shelnutt said. "They are great conferences, and our members love attending them because they offer great opportunities."

Caitlin Lakey '18, former secretary of the Texas A&M Agronomy Society, said the maze is also meant to educate people about agronomy.

"The corn maze helps educate people who do not know what agronomy is or what we do in the agronomy society," Lakey said. "Someone who has never seen a field before has the opportunity to go out and touch the crops. They can see what the corn feels like and learn what goes into growing and maintaining our crops."

Shelnutt said the corn maze helps students and guests gain a better understanding and respect for agriculture.

"We want people to be able to feel a deeper connection to the food they eat and the clothes they wear," Shelnutt said. "This way, they can feel more invested in agriculture and grow more passionate about it."

According to the Texas A&M Agronomy Society's Facebook page, society members grow the corn themselves.

"We start growing the corn usually by the end of the school year, and members who stay over the summer help with irrigation and maintaining the field," Lakey said. "When school starts back up, we get the corn ready to plant and maintain it until we finally cut the paths that make up the maze."

Selecting the correct variety of corn for the maze is a crucial step.

"This past year, we used a Winfield variety," Stockton said. "It is a taller growing crop which is what we want so no one can see over the maze. It has not been released for food consumption yet because it is still in its trial phase."

After planting, agronomy society members design the maze and cut the corn. The design is different every year, but one thing remains the same—a Texas A&M logo is cut in the center.

"WE WANT PEOPLE TO BE ABLE TO FEEL A DEEPER CONNECTION TO THE FOOD THEY EAT AND THE CLOTHES THEY WEAR."

Stockton said the corn maze chair chooses the design of the maze while still incorporating the Texas A&M logo.

"Last year, we designed a maze with 'WHOO!' in it, and the year before we wrote 'FEARLESS' to go with the 'Fearless on Every Front' theme," Stockton said.

While the maze is the main focus for the fundraiser, the agronomy society also has other activities for customers to participate in.

Shelnutt said in addition to the corn maze, the agronomy society hosts a pumpkin and cotton patch, children's activity booth and several other activities on the same site.

"We have booths from other organizations, as well," Shelnutt said. "They are free to come in and set up activities



and sell items if they like. Last year, we had the Aggie Wranglers come to entertain people.”

As the corn maze grows in popularity, the agronomy society sets greater goals each year—their goal is to raise more than \$16,000 in 2018.

The Aggie Corn Maze typically runs from mid-October to early-November.

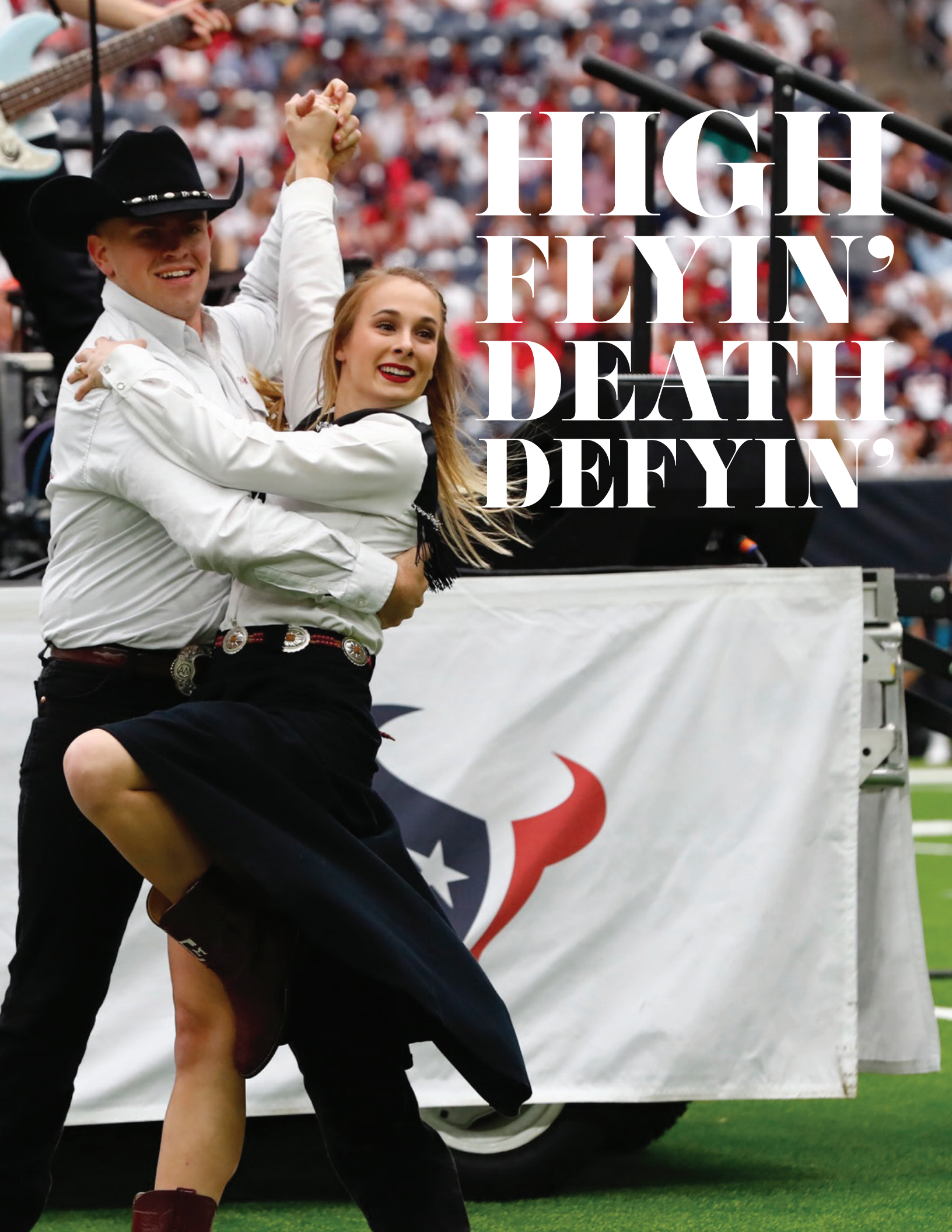
For more information, visit the Texas A&M Agronomy Society Facebook page at www.facebook.com/AggieCornMaze/.



Charles Orrico '18

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY TEXAS A&M AGRONOMY SOCIETY





HIGH FLYIN', DEATH DEFYIN'

BRINGING OLD BOOTS TO NEW DANCE FLOORS

Aggie Wranglers, a well-known Texas A&M University country-western dance organization, and CARPOOL, a Texas A&M student transportation organization, are set to have a new home in August 2018. A new building off Texas State Highway 60 going toward Snook will house the two student organizations' operations.

THE AGGIE WRANGLERS TWO-STEP THEIR WAY INTO A NEW HOME

The new building will provide the Aggie Wranglers with a practice location to hone their routines for performances and teach dance lessons.

Prior to the new building, Kyle Chism '17, Texas A&M agricultural systems management senior and Aggie Wranglers president, said the Aggie Wranglers taught lessons at three other locations and paid rent at two of them.

"The dance lessons have been a major part of the way the Aggie Wranglers have raised money for the new building," Chism said.

"Having our own building will benefit the team by taking away rent costs."

Lilly Sharp '19, psychology senior and CARPOOL member, said both organizations plan to benefit from the building by splitting costs and gaining more space to run their respective organizations.

"This new building is a great fit for both organizations," Sharp said. "We designed our own portions of the building, and it will give us both more space. It was a mutually-beneficial decision."

Addie Seale '19, agricultural communications and journalism and agricultural leadership and development double major and member of the Aggie Wranglers, said the CARPOOL leadership approached the Aggie Wranglers to partner with them in this endeavor. This move will help both organizations establish their own unique brands, Seale said.

"We hope the new building will help more people on campus recognize who we are and get them to learn our dances," Seale said. "We want to be able to reach more members of the community. Both Aggie Wranglers and CARPOOL want to help get each others' name out there."

Once a year, former Aggie Wranglers return to College Station to dance their routines. Seale said the new building also provides a permanent place for Aggie Wrangler alumni to gather each year.

"We have been using other locations for our reunions every year," Seale said. "The new building will help us maintain the legacy of the Aggie Wranglers."

Chism said the new building is essential to securing a stable future for the Aggie Wranglers.

"This building is not just about right now—it is for the teams' future stability," Chism said. "It will be a place we can all return to and call home."

LEARN TO DANCE LIKE A WRANGLER

For more than 20 years, the same four dance routines have been passed down as Aggie traditions. Typical Aggie Wranglers' performances consist of two routines and a jitterbug song, dancers are able to show off their tricks, stunts and flips. In addition to the original performances, a new routine was added in 2017.

The 13 members of the Aggie Wranglers host several free performances each semester, but when received, donations are appreciated. These performances include the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, Houston Texan games, and most recently, a video for the country music band, Midland. Aggie Wranglers perform nearly 100 times a year.

Performing is not the only thing the Aggie Wranglers are known for. Established in 1984, the Aggie Wranglers

also provide dance lessons to students, faculty, staff and community members. Two dance-lesson sessions are offered per semester, each lasting four weeks. Each session costs \$60 per couple, and participants are asked to bring their own dance partners.

The Aggie Wranglers teach four different classes that are an hour and half long.

Chism said participants should take the dance classes in order, but if someone is up for the challenge, they can take the classes in any order they prefer.

The four classes consist of Country and Western I, Country and Western II, Jitterbug I and Jitterbug II. The Country and Western I class teaches the basics of two-step, polka and waltz, focusing on floor dancing, turns and simple transitions. Country and Western II includes spinning, hand tricks and moderate transitions. In the jitterbug classes, flips and stunts are introduced, with Jitterbug II being the most advanced class taught.

Aggie Wranglers have a passion for dancing, and anyone can share that passion with them.

Taking a dance class with this talented group will not only benefit a person's dance skills, but will also benefit the Texas A&M Aggie Wranglers and their new building.

For more information, visit aggiewranglers.tamu.edu.

"THIS BUILDING IS NOT ABOUT JUST RIGHT NOW—IT IS FOR THE TEAMS' FUTURE STABILITY."



Tori Townley '18

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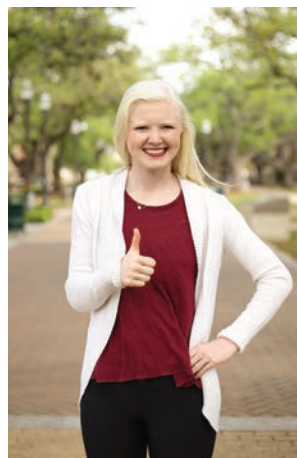
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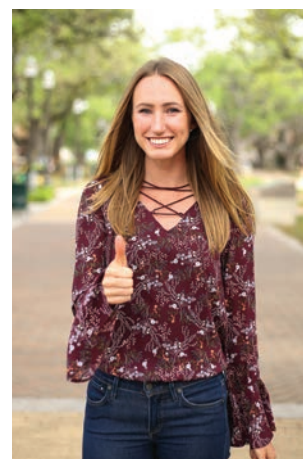


PHOTO EDITOR
Augusta Thomason

MEET OUR TEAM



From left to right, fourth row: Latham Ligget, Charles Orrico, Jacob Smith, Joshua Zapletal, Elroy Kersh, Taylor Mayo, Keefer Patterson. Third row: Jessica Spence, Katie Hohne, Rebecca Small, Tori Townley, Addie Seale, Kaitlyn Harkin, Courtney Teplicek, Amanda Mink, Tracy Rutherford. Second Row: Augusta Thomason, Rebekah Lane, Daniella Gutierrez, Audrey Pearson, Mayzie Purviance, Tommy Vu, Brooklyn Morrow. First Row: Kasey Heath, Kara Hitt, Jimmie Smith, Whitney Thurmond.

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AGGIE WRANGLERS

The Aggie Wranglers travel all across Texas, the United States and the world performing choreographed high-speed polka routines and their internationally famous Aggie-style jitterbug.

At home, the Aggie Wranglers teach approximately 2,000 students, faculty, staff and community members how to polka, two-step, waltz and jitterbug through dance lessons that are offered in the spring, summer and fall semesters.

VISIT AGGIEWRANGLERS.TAMU.EDU