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Citizen

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“Living things tend to
CHANGE
UNRECOGNIZABLY
as they GROW. Who
would deduce the
dragonfly from the larva,
the iris from the bud, the
lawyer from the infant?
Flora or fauna, we are
all SHAPESHIFTERS
and MAGICAL
REINVENTORS. Life
is really a plural noun, a
caravan of selves.”

Diane Ackerman – *Cultivating Delight*



ASHTON GUSTAFSON
& ASSOCIATES REAL ESTATE

Fellow Citizen,

AS WE USHER IN A NEW YEAR and a fresh start with the winter edition of *The Citizen*, I am reminded of the profound beauty in new beginnings. In a world filled with constant change and evolution, the art of starting anew is a skill worth cultivating.

The start of a year is like the opening chapter of a compelling novel, brimming with the promise of unwritten adventures, unexplored possibilities, and untapped potential. It's a time when we reflect on the past, draw lessons from our experiences, and dare to dream of a brighter future.

Each new beginning carries with it the opportunity to reinvent ourselves, to set new goals, and to embrace change. Whether it's a personal resolution, a career aspiration, or a community endeavor, the act of starting is where transformation begins.

In this edition of *The Citizen* we celebrate the art of “starting” in all its forms. From the stories of individuals who have embarked on remarkable journeys of self-discovery to insights from experts on navigating change, we aim to inspire and guide you through the exciting process of forging a path toward new horizons.

In these pages, you will find tales of resilience and courage, as well as, practical advice on setting and achieving your goals. We invite you to explore the beauty of taking that first step, in daring to dream, and in believing that every dawn brings a fresh canvas on which to paint your aspirations.

As we embrace the year ahead, let us remember that each day is an opportunity for a new beginning. Together, let's unlock the potential that lies within us and create a better tomorrow.

Thank you for being a part of *The Citizen* community. May this New Year's edition inspire you to start again, chase your dreams, and craft your own unique story of new beginnings.

Wishing you a year filled with hope, resilience, and the joy of starting afresh.

Warm regards,

Ashton Gustafson

Owner/Broker
Ashton Gustafson & Associates Real Estate



DANIELLE YOUNG AND HER HUSBAND, TRAVIS, HAVE THREE PASSIONS: COFFEE, SWEETS, AND DOGS – *not necessarily in that order.*



AFTER YEARS OF KEEPING a watchful eye on one of Waco's beloved local spots, Lula Janes, Danielle and Travis Young seized the opportunity to start a new venture and in September 2023 opened their second venture: a bakery named Street Dog Bakery. Their vision was to establish a warm and inviting space where patrons could come together to savor freshly baked treats, indulge in a comprehensive espresso bar, and enjoy a dog-friendly patio. The business's overarching goal is to raise awareness for helping dogs find foster placements or loving forever homes, inspiring the bakery's name – Street Dog Cafe. Collaborating with local agencies, the Youngs are committed to sponsoring a dog every week. And, in case you're wondering, adorable dog photos are posted on their Instagram page and displayed inside of the restaurant.

Q: How did you come up with the name Street Dog?

A: At first I wanted to go with the name Flourish. Being that the word 'flour' is hidden in flourish, it felt right for a bakery. But my husband and I couldn't agree on that, so I thought - let's just go with Street Dog. That seems to be something consistent that East Waco has given us! And one of our street dogs became the logo!

Q: What's it like to be the next concept to happen in this space after Lula Jane's?

A: We don't want to be Lula Jane. We love Lula Jane's and what Nancy did for Elm Street, but we want this to be something original that we created. There's always some crossover with bakeries. You'll have standard banana bread and a chocolate cookie, but you will always find something interesting here. Like our baked oatmeal that's vegan, gluten, and dairy-free!

Q: You had a dream for a long time to be in this space, right?

A: I wrote my dissertation here when it was Lula Jane's. I was here so much that if things started to look busy, I would get up and help the staff...So - yes, there was a deep connection I had here and feel honored to be a part of its transition.

Q: Do you have a favorite dish?

A: We call it breakfast pizza! We make our own brioche dough, which is a super versatile dough. We make it in a round shape and carve out the middle. There we'll add ingredients like bacon and caramelized onions and then we finish it on top with a fried egg and cheese. It's delightful.

Q: Any weekly specials?

A: We do a daily special that is a tribute to Nancy from Lula Jane's. Even though our menu isn't as broad as our other restaurant - Revival Eatery - we wanted to do the daily special to give our consistent guests some variety.

Q: Can you tell me about your mission with the Waco Humane Society?

A: We partner with them and help them find homes for their homeless dogs. We share a particular dog story on our Instagram page each week and try to play a little role in helping them find a loving home. So far we've helped eight homeless dogs find homes!

Q: What do you wish more people knew about Street Dog Bakery?

A: We have awesome coffee and source it from Merit Coffee, which is

based out of San Antonio. Our coffee and espresso really are terrific – and smooth! And we make biscotti! They are Italian almond biscuits that are twice-baked, oblong-shaped, dry, crunchy, and can be dipped in a drink like coffee or espresso. Ours are amazing!

Q: What days and times is Street Dog open?

A: Monday through Friday from 7:30 am to 2:00 pm and Saturday from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm. We are closed on Sundays.

Q: Best place for people to learn more and see what you're up to at Street Dog?

A: Our Instagram handle is [@streetdogcafe](https://www.instagram.com/streetdogcafe) and you can find us and our menu online at [streetdogcafe.com](https://www.streetdogcafe.com)



Brushstrokes of Life

AN ARTISTIC ODYSSEY FROM OHIO TO WACO

written by ASHTON GUSTAFSON photography by HOLLY FISH and JOANNA JAMES

SEAN OSWALD, A LOCAL ARTIST, calls Waco, Texas his home and creative haven. Our conversation unfolded against the backdrop of his home studio in the autumn of 2023.

Sean's roots trace back to Toledo, Ohio, a city straddling the line between industry and artistry. It was here, in 2004, at Miami University in Oxford, that his artistic odyssey commenced. The small university town, nestled an hour north of Cincinnati, provided the canvas for Sean's initial brushstrokes in the world of art education. Evenings, weekends, and summers were dedicated to refining his craft in the studio and immersing himself in transformative workshops.

The turning point came in 2012 when Sean, accompanied by his wife Hilary, made a bold move to the enchanting Hudson River Valley. There, he apprenticed with Garin Baker, a realist painter whose studio, "The Carriage House Atelier," became the genesis of Sean's artistic evolution. Submerged in the tradition of "alla prima" oil painting, Sean's days were a

symphony of morning still-life creations, afternoon explorations of landscapes, and evenings with live models. Trips to New York City for collaborative painting sessions and studies at the Art Students' League became part of his routine, enriching his artistic vocabulary.

The year 2013 marked a pivotal moment when Sean and Hilary decided to leave their established lives, community, and jobs, embarking on a courageous journey into graduate school. During this transformative period Sean delved into various art-making styles, mediums, and forms of expression. His portfolio today is a testament to this exploration, ranging from conceptual pieces bridging contemporary Christian and arts communities to traditional works exploring beauty, style, shapes, experimentation, play, colors, and intuition.

Several years later, a new chapter unfolded as Hilary accepted a creative role with Magnolia, leading the Oswald family to Waco. Amidst the joys and challenges of parenthood,



with three children under the age of six, Sean found a home at Mary Hardin Baylor University in Belton, TX, where he now shares his passion as an art teacher. Simultaneously, he continues to produce and showcase his work across the country, capturing the essence of family, children, and even pets in commissioned pieces.

Throughout our conversation, Sean consistently referred to both teaching and creating art as practices, em-

phasizing themes of persistence and the continual honing of one's craft. "Good things simply take time," he remarked, echoing the sentiment that resonated throughout his journey. He encourages others to "just keep making things."

Reflecting on his path, Sean expressed gratitude for Waco, recognizing it as a welcoming and nurturing community that has shaped his identity as an artist. His simple philosophy towards his life, profession,

and artistic expression serves as a profound reminder that a creative existence is accessible to anyone who sets their intention to lead a life filled with imaginative output.

"I'm an ordinary person with a family, and I create and teach art. If you want to be an artist, it is available," Sean observed, inviting us all to witness, pursue, and forge what lies ahead. His narrative mirrors the stories of notable artists, extending a perpetual invitation to embrace the creative journey with authenticity and confidence.

In his artist statement, Sean unveils the soul of his creative process. Painting and drawing, for him, are about engaging with subject, content, material, and self. His acts of creativity become a performance of individual perspective and voice, evident in his deliberate choices to flatten space, manipulate perspective, or paint subjects differently from perception.

Authenticity and confidence, Sean asserts, are the cornerstones of his artwork. Bold colors and expressive, gestural marks manifest as poetic and beautiful storytellers. The challenging question that echoes in his mind is, "Is this good, true, and beautiful?" A question that propels him to continually seek the essence of his creations, infusing his art with an enduring quest for meaning and beauty.

As I left Sean Oswald's studio that autumn day, I carried with me not just the visual imprints of his artwork but the resonance of his story—a testament to the transformative power of art, the dedication to one's craft, and the reminder that, indeed, good things take time. Sean Oswald's narrative stands as an inspiring thread in the grand tapestry of the artistic community: *an ordinary person with an extraordinary dedication to the pursuit of a life filled with imagination and creative expression.*

"GOOD THINGS SIMPLY TAKE TIME," HE REMARKED, ECHOING THE SENTIMENT THAT RESONATED THROUGHOUT HIS JOURNEY, ENCOURAGING OTHERS TO PERSEVERE AND "JUST KEEP MAKING THINGS."



Mother and Child: Reading Lesson, 20 x 24", Acrylic, Ink, and Caran d'ache on Canvas



Oswald's Studio



Still Life with Bottles and Apples, 30 x 40", Acrylic on Canvas

MIRACLES

Walt Whitman 1819 – 1892

WHY, WHO MAKES MUCH OF A MIRACLE?
AS TO ME I KNOW OF NOTHING ELSE BUT MIRACLES,
WHETHER I WALK THE STREETS OF MANHATTAN,
OR DART MY SIGHT OVER THE ROOFS OF HOUSES TOWARD THE SKY,
OR WADE WITH NAKED FEET ALONG THE BEACH JUST IN THE EDGE OF THE WATER,
OR STAND UNDER TREES IN THE WOODS,
OR TALK BY DAY WITH ANY ONE I LOVE, OR SLEEP IN THE BED AT NIGHT WITH ANY
ONE I LOVE,
OR SIT AT TABLE AT DINNER WITH THE REST,
OR LOOK AT STRANGERS OPPOSITE ME RIDING IN THE CAR,
OR WATCH HONEY-BEES BUSY AROUND THE HIVE OF A SUMMER FORENOON,
OR ANIMALS FEEDING IN THE FIELDS,
OR BIRDS, OR THE WONDERFULNESS OF INSECTS IN THE AIR,
OR THE WONDERFULNESS OF THE SUNDOWN, OR OF STARS SHINING SO QUIET
AND BRIGHT,
OR THE EXQUISITE DELICATE THIN CURVE OF THE NEW MOON IN SPRING;
THESE WITH THE REST, ONE AND ALL, ARE TO ME MIRACLES,
THE WHOLE REFERRING, YET EACH DISTINCT AND IN ITS PLACE.

TO ME EVERY HOUR OF THE LIGHT AND DARK IS A MIRACLE,
EVERY CUBIC INCH OF SPACE IS A MIRACLE,
EVERY SQUARE YARD OF THE SURFACE OF THE EARTH IS SPREAD WITH THE SAME,
EVERY FOOT OF THE INTERIOR SWARMS WITH THE SAME.

TO ME THE SEA IS A CONTINUAL MIRACLE,
THE FISHES THAT SWIM—THE ROCKS—THE MOTION OF THE WAVES—THE
SHIPS WITH MEN IN THEM,
WHAT STRANGER MIRACLES ARE THERE?

Winter Playlist



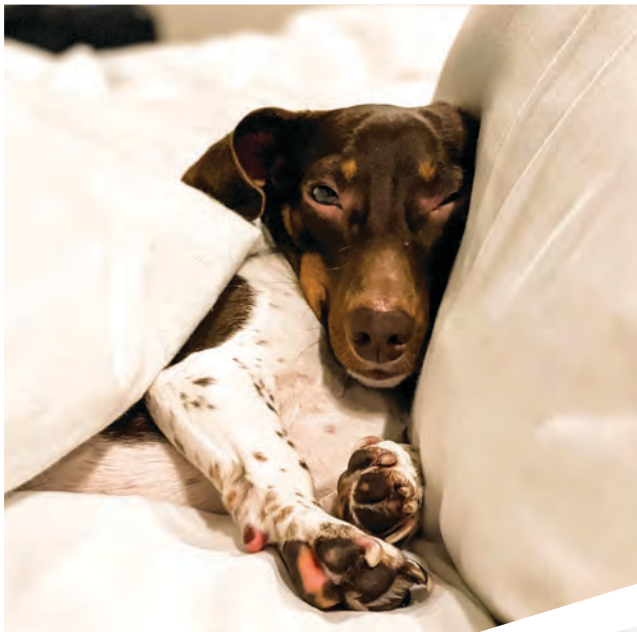
01	Back In The High Life Again Steve Winwood	06	It's Too Late Carole King	11	I Keep Forgettin' (Every Time You're Near) Michael McDonald	16	Ventura Highway America, George Martin
02	Cigarettes and Coffee Otis Redding	07	dream easy drowsy	12	Better Khalid	17	Re: Stacks Gregoire Maret, Romain Collin, Bill Frisell
03	The New Year Death Cab for Cutie	08	8 Solitude Billie Holiday	13	Impossible Germany Wilco	18	Slipping Away LEISURE
04	Building a Mystery Sarah McLachlan	09	Biggest Part of Me Ambrosia	14	mirrorball Taylor Swift	19	Dreams Fleetwood Mac
05	One More Time Daft Punk	10	Don't Panic Coldplay	15	One Headlight The Wallflowers	20	Champagne Supernova Oasis

ANY HOME

thewacohomefinder.com

ANY TIME

Baller



MEET BALLER, the dapper dachshund who's a canine sensation in downtown Waco, TX. This pint-sized pooch is a big deal, strutting through the streets with undeniable flair. Baller is more than just a pretty face – he's a fashion icon with a penchant for donning iconic, fashionable necklaces that turn heads wherever he goes. Beyond his impeccable

style, Baller relishes long walks through the heart of Waco, charming locals with his infectious personality. Whether he's turning heads with his accessories or spreading joy on the streets, Baller proves that big things come in small, stylish packages.

Mixology

WINTER SPICE BOULEVARDIER

Ingredients:

- 1 ½ oz Bourbon
- 1 oz Spiced Red Vermouth
- ¾ oz Winter Spiced Campari
- Orange twist, for garnish

Instructions:

SPICED RED VERMOUTH:

- 1 cup red vermouth
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 4 whole cloves
- 1 star anise
- 1 orange peel (wide strips)
- 2 tablespoons honey

Combine all ingredients in a saucepan over low heat. Warm the mixture for about 15 minutes, allowing the spices to infuse. Remove from heat, let it cool, and strain out the solids. Bottle the spiced red vermouth for later use.

WINTER SPICED CAMPARI:

- 1 cup Campari
- 1 cinnamon stick
- ½ teaspoon grated nutmeg
- 3 whole allspice berries

Combine all ingredients in a jar and let it infuse for at least 24 hours. Strain out the solids, and your winter spiced Campari is ready.

COCKTAIL:

1. In a mixing glass, combine the bourbon, spiced red vermouth, and winter spiced Campari.

2. Fill the mixing glass with ice and stir well for about 30 seconds to chill the ingredients.

3. Strain the mixture into a rocks glass filled with a large ice cube.

4. Express the oil from an orange twist over the drink by holding it over the glass and giving it a twist, then drop the twist into the

glass as a garnish.

This Winter Spice Boulevardier combines the warmth of winter spices with the bold flavors of bourbon and Campari, making it a perfect seasonal cocktail. Adjust the ingredient proportions to suit your taste preferences. Enjoy responsibly!



BUTTERNUT SQUASH BISQUE:

Ingredients:

- 1 large Butternut squash, peeled and cubed
- 1 large Onion, chopped
- 2 cloves Garlic, minced
- 4 cups Chicken or vegetable stock
- ½ teaspoon Ground cinnamon
- Pinch ground nutmeg
- 8 ounces Cream cheese, room temperature
- ½ cup Heavy cream
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Instructions:

1. In a large pot, sauté onion and garlic over medium heat until softened, about 5 minutes.
2. Add butternut squash, stock, cinnamon, nutmeg, salt, and pepper to the pot. Bring to a boil then reduce heat and simmer for about 20 minutes or until squash is tender.
3. Use an immersion blender to puree the soup until smooth.
4. Stir in heavy cream and cream cheese, heat through.

WINTER SALAD WITH POMEGRANATE, PEAR, AND GORGONZOLA CHEESE

Ingredients:

- ¼ cup Apple cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon Honey
- ½ teaspoon Dijon mustard
- ⅓ cup Extra-virgin olive oil
- 6 cups Mixed salad greens or finely chopped kale
- 2 Pears, cored and thinly sliced
- ½ cup Crumbled Gorgonzola cheese
- Seeds from 1 pomegranate
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Instructions:

1. In a small bowl, whisk together apple cider vinegar, honey, Dijon mustard, salt, and pepper.
2. Slowly whisk in olive oil until emulsified.
3. In a large bowl, toss together salad greens, pear slices, pomegranate seeds, and Gorgonzola cheese.
4. Drizzle dressing over salad and toss to coat.

BEEF BOURGUIGNON SERVED WITH MASHED POTATOES

Ingredients:

- 6 slices Bacon, chopped
- 3 pounds Beef chuck roast, cut into cubes
- 2 tablespoons All-purpose flour
- 2 cups Red wine
- 2 cups Beef broth
- 2 tablespoons Tomato paste
- 3 cloves Garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon Dried thyme leaves
- 2 Bay leaves
- 1 pound Baby potatoes, halved or quartered if large
- 1 cup Cream
- ½ stick Butter
- Chopped fresh parsley
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. In a large Dutch oven or oven-safe pot over medium heat, cook bacon until crispy. Remove bacon with a slotted spoon and set aside.
3. Season beef cubes with salt and pepper then coat in flour.
4. Add beef to the pot in batches and cook until browned on all sides.
5. Remove beef from pot and set aside.
6. Add wine to the pot and scrape up any browned bits from the bottom of the pot.
7. Add beef broth, tomato paste, garlic, thyme leaves, bay leaf, cooked bacon, beef cubes back into the pot.
8. Bring to a simmer, then cover with a lid.
9. Transfer pot to oven and bake for about two hours or until beef is tender.
10. While beef is cooking in the oven, boil potatoes in salted water until tender, then drain.
11. Mash potatoes with butter and cream until smooth, salt and pepper to taste.
12. Remove bay leaves.
13. Plate beef bourguignon alongside mashed potatoes. Top with fresh parsley.



APPLE CRISP WITH VANILLA ICE CREAM

Ingredients:

FOR THE FILLING:

- 6 cups Thinly sliced apples (about 4 large honeycrisp apples)
- 3 tablespoons All-purpose flour
- 3 tablespoons Granulated sugar
- Juice of half a lemon (about 1 tablespoon)
- Zest of half a lemon (about 1 teaspoon)

FOR THE TOPPING:

- 1 cup All-purpose flour
- ¾ cup Old-fashioned oats
- ¾ cup Light brown sugar
- Pinch of salt
- Pinch of cinnamon
- 12 tablespoons Unsalted butter (1 ½ sticks), cut into small pieces and chilled

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. In a large bowl, toss together apples with lemon juice and zest.
3. In another bowl, whisk together flour and sugar, then add to apple mixture.
4. Toss apple mixture until evenly coated, then transfer to an 8-inch square baking dish.
5. In another bowl, whisk together flour, oats, brown sugar, salt, and cinnamon (if using).
6. Using your fingers or a pastry cutter, cut in butter until mixture is crumbly.
7. Sprinkle topping over apples.
8. Bake for about 45 minutes or until the topping is golden brown and apples are tender.



Brad Stulberg, The Practice of Groundedness



HOSTED BY ASHTON GUSTAFSON, *GOOD, TRUE, & BEAUTIFUL* IS AN ONGOING CONVERSATION WITH THOUGHT LEADERS AND VISIONARIES FROM ACROSS THE WORLD.



The following transcript was taken from an interview between Ashton Gustafson and Brad Stulberg on his latest book, *The Practice of Groundness*.

To listen to this full interview, scan the QR Code below.



ASHTON: When you introduce yourself and your work in the world, where do you begin?

BRAD: I say that I'm interested in sustainable excellence in mastery. I define that as feeling good and doing good over the long haul. I wear two hats. One is as a researcher and writer trying to uncover the science and the art of what makes for sustainable excellence. The other is as a practitioner, working with clients as a coach to help them achieve this in their lives.

AG: Sustainability has been a theme I've been interested in for a long

time, and I love this idea of playing the long game. Not just being successful for this month, but as a rhythm, routine, and momentum that you can build and enjoy. You just wrote *'The Practice of Groundedness.'* So, every time we jump into a book, my first question is always, "Why this book and why now?"

BS: Well, the answer to that question gets back to the two hats I wear. As a researcher and a writer, the trends were unequivocal that more people were feeling burnt out, especially conventionally successful individuals. They were struggling to be happy,

fulfilled, and play the long game. As a practitioner and in my personal life, I saw many coaching clients experiencing burnout. In my personal life, I went through a period of anxiety and depression, prompting me to step back and examine what I was doing. Seeing these patterns in literature, research, and personal experience led me to delve deeper and share my findings in a book.

AG: Which led you to this realization that you call "heroic individualism." How would you invite us to understand exactly what you're getting at when you say heroic individualism is

probably the major cause of those chronic feelings of 'I'm never getting to this finish line. I'm never satisfied. I'm never content, etc.'"

BS: I define heroic individualism as an ongoing game of one-upmanship against yourself and others, where measurable achievement is the main arbiter of success and value. The finish line is always 10 yards down the road. You think achieving a goal will bring contentment, but it's fleeting. It manifests in our culture across personal and professional lives, with a frenetic energy focused on the next thing.

AG: You wrote the book about five and a half years ago, and since then, social media has amplified this focus on measuring our identity. How do you see this playing out?

BS: Since writing the book, our identity and sense of being get wrapped up in social media metrics. We measure our 'self' based on followers, newsletter subscribers, etc. We didn't evolve for this, and it contributes to the pressure for constant achievement.

AG: We for sure have an overemphasis on measuring. You get those things you measured for a lifetime, and then you start asking yourself, "Wait a minute, where's the

meaning here?" You have to find a new language. It's almost like you're inviting us into a new way of being in the world that isn't number driven, but it gets you back to some of those things that you can't put on a scale and weigh them. You can't weigh joy, you can't weigh peace, you can't measure "I've got this much love." It's either there or it's not. Right?

BS: Yes. I love that you say a new language because my goal was to provide language for something many feel but don't have words for. This isn't about checking out of life; it's about finding meaning in the process of striving, not just in the achievement.

AG: In your experience of coaching, what are some signs that one is battling heroic individualism?

BS: A sense of frantic and frenetic energy, constant success from the outside but increasing exhaustion inside. Addiction to working or pushing forward, coupled with a dread of doing the task yet feeling worse if not done. It's a feeling of "stuckness" despite external success.

AG: The danger of relentless optimization is a concept you discuss. Why is this problematic?

BS: Relentless optimization complicates life

unnecessarily. Life inherently brings complexity, and the focus on optimizing can trap individuals in short-term thinking. What's good for us in the short-term often isn't good for us in the long term. Additionally, the culture of optimization undermines the importance of community, which is not efficient but crucial for long-term well-being.

AG: Absolutely. It seems like a short-term fix, like a sugar high. This connects to the Eastern psychology idea of the Hungry Ghost. Can you elaborate on that?

BS: The Hungry Ghost is a metaphor for heroic individualism, craving more despite diminishing returns. It represents the never-ending pursuit of more, leading to dissatisfaction and misery.

AG: It's like the "two wolves" parable, where you can feed different aspects of yourself.

BS: Yes, that's a great comparison. It's age-appropriate and conveys the idea even to a five-year-old: the danger of always wanting more.

AG: You also wrote about expectations in the book and had a helpful formula: happiness equals reality minus expectations. Can you break that down?

BS: If expectations are higher than reality, happiness diminishes. It's crucial to have accurate expectations, accepting both pain and joy in being human. False expectations, often fueled by societal positivity, lead to dissatisfaction when reality doesn't align.

AG: Do you have any daily rituals that you adhere to?

BS: I make coffee every morning, engaging in the ritual. I practice some form of physical activity daily. I've also adopted a weekly ritual where my wife hides my phone and computer on Saturday mornings until Sunday mornings to create a digital break.

AG: What's currently keeping you curious?

BS: I'm exploring the concept of identity over time, a topic of my next book. How do we reconcile impermanence and change with the human desire for a stable and enduring identity?

AG: What advice would you give to your younger self?

BS: Self-discipline is essential, but it's only as strong as your self-compassion. Be kind to yourself along the way, acknowledging that life is hard, and doing hard things is challenging.

Rolodex of Local Businesses

Mortgage

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Chris Allman
Fairway Mortgage
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Extraco Bank
Mortgage Jason Wolfe
jwolfe@extracobanks.com

Title

First Title
tcwaco.com

Home Abstract
homeabstract.com

Inspection

Navigator Inspections
navigatorinspections.com

Banking

Alliance Bank
alliancebanktexas.com

American Bank
ambankwaco.com

Lawn and Landscape

Field Creek Land Management
fieldcreekland.com

Phoenix Landscape
phoenixlandscapeswaco.com

Pool Installation and Service

Premier Pools and Spas
premierpoolsandspas.com

Remodel and Renovation

KC Construction
kccconstructionwaco.com

Whyte Oak Homes
whyteoakhomes.com

Home Decor

Lu and Home
luandhome.com

Auto

Christian Brothers Automotive
cbac.com/woodway

Food

Milo All Day
milowaco.com

Di Camplis
dicamplis.com



BLAIR GULLEY

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Where were you born and raised?

Dunwoody, Georgia, a suburb of Atlanta, GA.

What brought you to Waco?

Baylor! I came from Georgia as a freshman with one rule from my parents: “Don’t fall in love with a Texan.” I broke the one rule and never left!

When and how did you get into the real estate business?

My grandmother was a Realtor, and I was always fascinated by it. As a little girl, I remember looking through Architectural Digest and Southern Accents magazines, captivated by the pictures of beautiful homes. Then, we had the pleasure of having AG’s very own Tanya Murphy as our realtor 9 years ago, and I enjoyed the process so much that I decided I would love to do that too!

What surprised you most about our market over the last few years?

How strong our market has been and how people from all over the US have looked at Waco as the place to be! Also, 2020 was a crazy year for sure. It was actually one of my busiest years with buyers! Low-interest rates and more time at home seemed to make everyone decide they wanted a change.

If you could host a dinner party in any property you’ve sold, who would be your dream guests?

My sister-in-law creates the most beautiful dinner parties in her backyard. We have a group of couples that have walked together for many years. They are the kind of friends that will either laugh all night or go to tears in a minute - or both. Sitting with them is always a treasure. But having Dan & Shay come and provide live music would be a dream come true too!



AUSTIN HOOPER

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Where were you born and raised?

I was born in Katy, TX and grew up there before moving to the Kansas City in middle school. I came home to Texas to attend Baylor University and graduated with a business degree in 2006.

What brought you to Waco?

After spending seven years in NYC after college, I returned home to Waco in 2013 with my wife, Casey, to be closer to family and take part in the exciting growth and development happening in the area.

When and how did you get into the real estate business?

The son of a homebuilder and interior decorator/designer, I’ve been around the “home creation” process my entire life, and spent several years in home construction/remodel myself before feeling called to the people side of the business. I began my career as a realtor with A.G. Real Estate in 2013 and haven’t looked back. I love it!

What surprised you most about our market over the last few years?

What’s surprised me the most in our market over the last few years is the steadiness we’ve seen. While we certainly experienced the sharp increase in home values from 2020 to 2022 that we saw across the country (and certainly in Texas) driven by high buyer demand and low supply, the increase was not as dramatic as in other markets, nor have we experienced the fallout or “bust” that we’ve seen elsewhere. We’re still seeing lots of people moving to Central Texas from other parts of the state & country which has kept values afloat and in most cases increasing in value, albeit at a lower rate than in previous years.

If you could host a dinner party in any property you’ve sold, who would be your dream guests?

David Chang, Nate Bargatze, Scott Drew, Tina Fey, Damon Lindelof, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Dave Grohl, Ben Folds, Paul McCartney and Bandit Heeler (the real ones know).

Our Team



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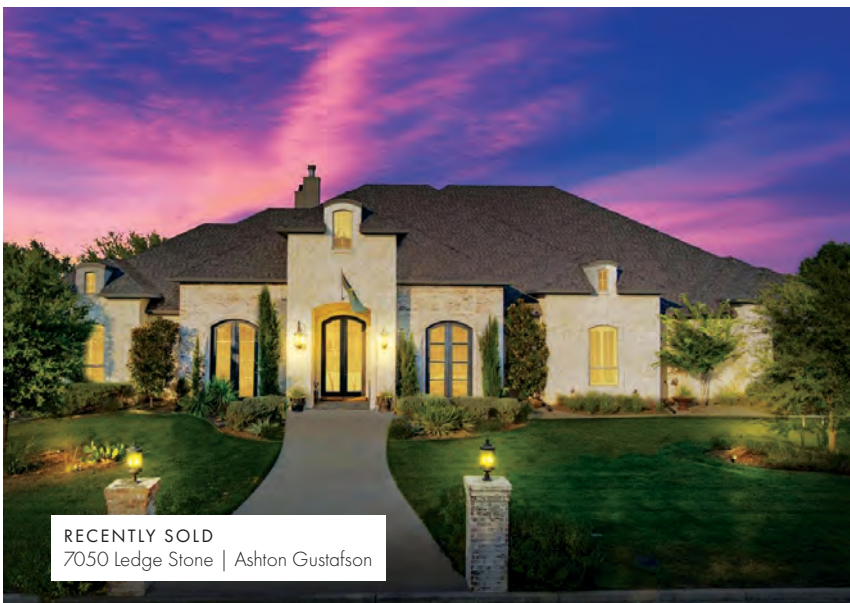


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