

Compliments of Michael Kojonen

AMERICAN LIFESTYLE

THE MAGAZINE CELEBRATING LIFE IN AMERICA

ISSUE 105



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A
Laissez-Faire
MIND FOR DESIGN

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DC home renovation

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AMERICAN LIFESTYLE

The places where we grow up and the people who inspire us shape our lives in a multitude of ways. This issue of American Lifestyle magazine explores such paths from childhood to career.

Native American artist Shonto Begay was raised on a farm in Arizona with his extended family (including eighteen in his immediate family). Begay spent many hours tending to sheep and goats and letting his imagination run wild. In a culture that honors storytelling and images, his creativity came naturally, blossoming into a painting career.

Dean Coombs grew up in the tiny historic town of Saguache, Colorado, where his family's legacy is tied to the town's century-old local newspaper, the Saguache Crescent. After his father's death, Coombs stepped up to run the Crescent, the only newspaper in the country still printed on a Linotype machine.

Architect Anthony Wilder was just fourteen when he found his life's calling. Thanks to the kindness of a teacher who noticed his penchant for woodworking, he was able to get real-world experience building houses. Wilder would eventually go on to open his own full-service architecture, design, and landscaping business in Maryland.

What influences in your life are you grateful for? As always, it's a pleasure to send you this magazine.

Michael Kojonen



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Designed and printed in the USA.

With nearly 100,000 pumpkins, gourds, and squashes, the Pumpkin Village at the Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden is a sight to behold. // **page 18**

AUTUMN AT THE ARBORETUM | DALLAS, TEXAS





BETWEEN THE LINES

written by shelley goldstein | photography by jeff nye



ON THE CORNER OF SAN JUAN

Avenue and Fourth Street in Saguache (pronounced Suh-WATCH), Colorado, stands a building the color of daffodils, with green trim and many windows, and if you tap on the glass, you might just get invited in. On most days, one can find Dean Coombs—the third-generation publisher of the *Saguache Crescent*—tinkering on a Linotype machine inside. The *Crescent* is the only Linotype newspaper in the country, and maybe even the world. Talking to Dean Coombs is like getting a history lesson and a tutorial on newspaper printing at the same time. Coombs has only lived away from Saguache for four years, making the sixty-eight-year-old newspaper publisher a de facto historian of sorts as well.

The *Saguache Crescent* has been a fixture in Saguache County for well over a century and has been in Coombs's family since 1917, when his grandfather moved from New Mexico with his family to purchase the paper. His grandfather's uncle had passed away, leaving an estate worth \$12 million in 1914. The money was divided among a large family, but Coombs's grandfather was able to buy the paper outright. And a couple years later, he purchased a Linotype, having printed previous editions of the paper by hand-setting

type. Linotype machines were very expensive at the time, and most were owned by large papers, which the *Saguache Crescent* was not.

Saguache is a rural town of five hundred people, fifty miles from anything even resembling a large town. The main employer is the county, which provides government jobs as well as jobs for teachers. The other industry is, of course, agriculture, with some farming and a lot of ranching. In other words, the opportunities to make a living are not vast, and the paper offered a steady income for the family. After Coombs's grandfather passed away in 1935, his grandmother ran the paper and his mother operated as editor, while his aunt set the type.

Hand-setting had been the only printing technology available from Gutenberg until 1886, when linotype was invented. Linotype was a form of mechanical typesetting, and it was four times faster than hand-setters. Hand-setting meant the movable metal type all had to be put back after it was used, and you also had to buy it. The Linotype made its own type, for just the price of lead. Coombs explains, "When you did a book, you set the book in handset and then you had to take the book apart. But once you set it in Linotype, you just put it away and then reprint it from that. It dropped the price of books tremendously and made newspapers bigger."

When Coombs's mother married, his father stepped into the role of printer, eventually purchasing a second Linotype for the business. "He got tired of waiting for my mother to get off the machine," laughs Coombs. In 1971, they bought a second, used Linotype outright for \$1,200, plus \$1,000 to ship it from



Linotype was a form of mechanical typesetting, and it was four times faster than hand-setters. Hand-setting meant the movable metal type all had to be put back after it was used, and you also had to buy it.



Denver. In addition to the newspaper, they also printed commercial-work jobs, making the second machine a solvent decision.

When Coombs's father died of a heart attack the day after Christmas in 1978, it was twenty-six-year-old Dean who found himself suddenly the publisher of the *Crescent*. Already realizing college was not the place for him and having spent four years outside of Saguache doing odd jobs, Coombs was not afraid of hard work. "It's harder to get out of the newspaper business than to stay in," he explains. "We pushed on and put out the paper the day he died."





THE SAGUACHE CRESCENT IS A FOUR-PAGE PAPER, WHICH STARTS OUT AS A 30" BY 22" SHEET AND IS THEN FOLDED DOWN TO 15" BY 22". A SINGLE FONT IS USED FOR THE TEXT, THOUGH COOMBS ADMITS TO A BIT OF A FONT HABIT, COLLECTING 250 FONTS FOR HIS OWN LIBRARY.

Coombs had to quickly learn the ins and outs of the Linotype machines now in his care. The mechanical machines are comprised of many moving parts and plenty of screws that can loosen to the point of stopping the machine. Says Coombs, "You don't need an engineering degree. It's mechanical. You stop and look."

Linotypes begin with brass mats, short for matrices, which are anything you can make something out of, like molds. The machine lines up the matrices and puts them into a casting position, which injects molten lead into the molds. This results in what's known as a slug, or an



entire line of type—hence the name Linotype. By contrast, hand-setting was a tedious process, especially when it came to inserting tiny spacers between the letters and words to create the newspaper standard of justified text (meaning the paragraphs lined up on both the left and the right).

The *Saguache Crescent* is a four-page paper, which starts out as a 30" by 22" sheet and is then folded down to 15" by 22". A single font is used for the text, though Coombs admits to a bit of a font habit, collecting 250 fonts for his own library. The paper mails every Wednesday, with a Thursday publication date. An in-county subscription costs just sixteen dollars for an entire year.

The majority of the income does not come from subscriptions, however. Saguache County has so much private property, and with that comes frequent buying and selling. Tax sales are advertised in the paper, and then the titles must be printed as well. The

county pays for the legal notifications to be printed.

The front page is news, but only good news, a tradition Coombs's mother started and he's upheld. The back page is ads and classifieds. The aforementioned legal publications take up one inside page, and the other offers general information, like a book sale listed by a museum or a quilting club announcing its meetings. The *Crescent* does not do any of its own reporting, but it does have some regular contributors, like the school principal as well as a man with a penchant for history articles. Coombs himself has only written one article during his tenure: an account of his own family's history to commemorate their one hundredth anniversary of owning the *Crescent*.

He credits his stubborn personality and his distaste for change as assets when it comes to running the newspaper. There's no pause in the newspaper business, especially a small, family-owned

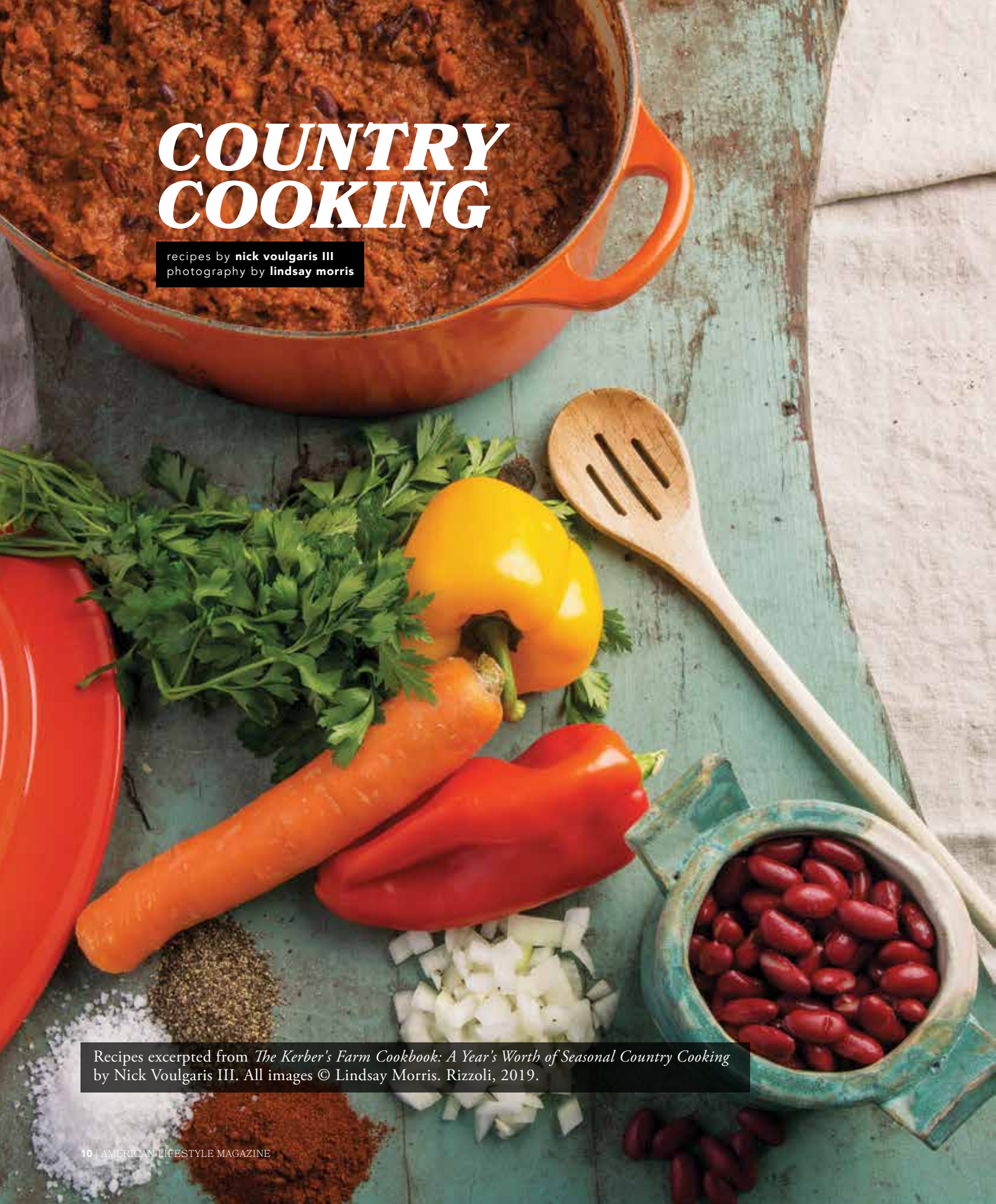
outfit, and one has to be committed. "When my mom was alive, she was interviewed on television, and she said, 'I don't know. I just go to work.' And I thought, 'What a stupid answer that was.' But twenty years later, you know, she's actually right," he concedes with a chuckle. It's impossible to take a week off. He's only missed one day of work, and that was on account of food poisoning. Living next door helps as well—you can't beat the short commute.

Coombs has no plans to train someone to take over the newspaper, joking that there's no one he dislikes enough to give the paper to. He hasn't decided when he'll retire, but he reckons there might be a million-dollar yard sale of equipment (and fonts!) involved. For now, he's happy to have the shop to himself, waving the occasional tourists inside for an impromptu tour and a history lesson.

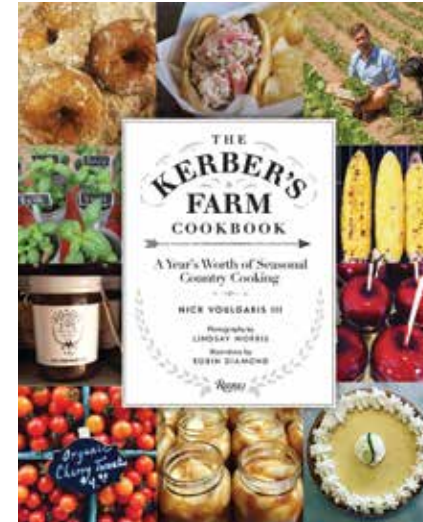
To send a letter to the *Saguache Crescent*:
Dean Coombs, P.O. Box 195
Saguache, Colorado 81149

COUNTRY COOKING

recipes by **nick voulgaris III**
photography by **lindsay morris**



Recipes excerpted from *The Kerber's Farm Cookbook: A Year's Worth of Seasonal Country Cooking* by Nick Voulgaris III. All images © Lindsay Morris. Rizzoli, 2019.



This hearty wintertime favorite is relatively easy to make and a great meal to let simmer on the stove on a chilly day. It goes well with rice, quinoa, couscous, or lentils. For a vegan option, substitute vegetable broth and meatless crumbles for the beef stock and beef.

Serves 5–6

beef chili

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ½ cup diced carrots
- ½ cup diced onion
- ½ cup diced celery
- ½ cup diced yellow bell pepper
- ½ cup diced red bell pepper
- 1 pound ground beef (85% lean)
- 1 (16-ounce) can red kidney beans
- 2 cups beef stock
- ¼ cup tomato paste
- 2 teaspoons dried oregano
- 4½ teaspoons garlic powder
- 4½ teaspoons chili powder
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 2 teaspoons pepper
- 2 teaspoons Cajun spice
- 1 tablespoon chopped parsley leaves
- Sour cream, for garnish
- Shredded jack cheese, for garnish

1. In a medium pot, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the carrots, onions, celery, and bell peppers and cook for 5 minutes, until the onions are translucent.

2. Add the beef to the pot with the vegetables and cook through, about 5 minutes.

3. Add the kidney beans, beef stock, tomato paste, oregano, garlic powder, chili powder, sugar, pepper, and Cajun spice and stir. Bring to a boil and then reduce heat to low and simmer for 20 minutes. Add the parsley. Garnish with sour cream and cheese and serve.



I first had brussels sprouts when I was probably eight years old, and I must say I was not a fan. I have since learned to love this vegetable as a great complement to any meal using this simple recipe. I prefer to cook them until they are just beyond well done, but not quite burnt. The natural sugars the sprouts contain caramelize on the outside, and the outer leaves become light and flaky.

Serves 4

- 3 (12-ounce) packages brussels sprouts**
- ½ cup vegetable oil**
- ⅓ cup grated parmesan cheese**
- 1½ tablespoons salt**
- 1½ tablespoons coarsely ground pepper**
- 1½ tablespoons garlic powder**
- 1½ tablespoons granulated sugar**

roasted brussels sprouts

- 1.** Preheat oven to 425°F.
- 2.** Rinse the brussels sprouts and cut each of them in half. Toss the sprouts in a mixing bowl with the rest of the ingredients until they are well coated.
- 3.** Place the seasoned brussels sprouts on an ungreased baking sheet and roast in the oven for 45 to 60 minutes, rotating and flipping them occasionally. The cooking times will vary based on the oven, and convection ovens will cook quicker. Remove when a dark brown color is achieved.



This nourishing fall dish contains all of the flavors of the season, including apple cider, pears, and cloves. We often serve it with a simple salad and baked yams.

Serves 4

FOR THE PORK CHOPS:

- 2 cups apple cider**
- ¼ teaspoon salt**
- ¼ teaspoon pepper**
- 4 bone-in center-cut pork chops**
- 2 tablespoons (¼ stick) salted butter, for cooking**

FOR THE PEAR SAUCE:

- 4 tablespoons (½ stick) salted butter**
- 2 pears, cored and cut into ½ -inch-thick slices**
- 2 teaspoons all-purpose flour**
- ½ cup chicken stock**
- 6 whole cloves**
- ¼ teaspoon salt**
- ¼ teaspoon pepper**

apple cider pork chops with pear sauce

- 1.** To make the pork chops, combine the apple cider, salt, and pepper in a medium casserole pan or deep dish. Place the pork chops in the mixture, ensuring that all of the meat is submerged. Cover and refrigerate for two hours.
- 2.** To make the sauce, melt the butter in a medium saucepan on medium heat. Add the pears and cook until tender. Add flour and gently turn the pears, taking care that they don't break. Add the chicken stock, cloves, salt, and pepper. Remove the pork chops from the cider and pour the cider into the pear mixture. Allow it to come to a boil, and then reduce to a simmer.
- 3.** In a large skillet, melt 2 tablespoons of butter on medium-high heat and cook the pork chops approximately 3 to 4 minutes per side or until cooked through.
- 4.** Plate the pork chops and generously ladle the pear sauce on top, removing any cloves.



This cookie is a Kerber's Farm favorite. Its moist and chewy consistency, coupled with the molasses and ginger notes, will quickly transport you back to a simpler time.

Makes approximately 18 cookies

1½ cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking soda
1½ teaspoons ground ginger
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon salt
12 tablespoons (1½ sticks) unsalted butter, softened
½ cup light brown sugar
1 egg
¼ cup molasses
¼ cup crystal sugar, for rolling

ginger molasses cookies

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda, spices, and salt. Set aside.
3. In a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, add the butter and brown sugar. Mix on medium speed until light and fluffy. Scrape down the sides with a rubber spatula. Add the egg and molasses and mix until just combined, scraping down the sides with the spatula as needed. With the mixer running on low speed, slowly add the dry ingredients and continue to mix until just combined.
4. Portion out cookies and form into the size of a golf ball. Roll each in crystal sugar and place on the baking sheet. Flatten each cookie slightly using your palms.
5. Bake for approximately 15 to 17 minutes, until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Let cool to room temperature.



A PUMPKIN PARADISE

written by **matthew brady** | photography by **dallas arboretum and botanical garden**

IT'S BEEN SAID THAT EVERYTHING IS bigger in Texas. With three of America's ten most populous cities, that would certainly seem to be true. And, although Houston and San Antonio have more people and Austin has gotten more buzz in recent years, the Lone Star State's ol' reliable, Dallas, is booming as well. It is actually one of the top places in the country for young adults to live, and, by sheer numbers, it had the highest population growth in the entire country in 2019. Not surprisingly, it's also been named as one of the top twenty-five places to live by *U.S. News & World Report*.

What may be surprising—considering that Dallas is one of the country's warmest cities—is that it houses one of America's best outdoor nature destinations. The Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden, located on the southeastern edge of White Rock Lake in East Dallas, does Big D proud. It's a top pick on TripAdvisor, and it's consistently named on "best of" botanical garden lists. With twenty-one gardens of lush flowers over sixty-six acres, plus unforgettable seasonal events,

it's a must-see in Dallas—especially in the fall.

AN AMAZING AUTUMN CELEBRATION

At first glance, this area—with its flat, arid land—might not seem like a mecca for outdoorsy fall travel. But the seasons here are actually an advantage, says Dave Forehand, the arboretum's vice president of gardens. "Because we have a mild climate here in the Deep South, we can have things blooming year-round," he explains. "Our floral displays are really spectacular in autumn. All our summer plantings are fully grown by then, and we layer in a lot of other flowers like chrysanthemums and marigolds, which bloom in autumn colors like orange and yellow. The weather's cooler and the days are shorter, so that causes the flowers to be more vibrant. Plus, we don't get our first frost or freeze until early December, so we can display beautiful blossoms right up until the Christmas holiday."

As spectacular as these 150,000 flowers are in fall, they are only part of the appeal of the venue's seasonal celebration, Autumn at the Arboretum. Now in its fifteenth year, the arboretum's



AMONG THE DISPLAYS WERE CHARLIE BROWN, OF COURSE, AS WELL AS SCHROEDER AT HIS PIANO, LUCY IN HER ADVICE BOOTH, SNOOPY SLEEPING ON HIS PUMPKIN-COVERED DOGHOUSE, AND A HUGE DISPLAY OF THE PEANUTS LOGO MADE OF PUMPKINS.

most popular event (with approximately 300,000 visitors) is an autumn-lover's dream. The programming includes scavenger hunts, harvesting tutorials, and live music, plus events at the popular eight-acre Rory Meyers Children's Adventure Garden, which also has more than 150 interactive science exhibits. Another exciting new attraction added in 2017 is A Tasteful Place, a 3.5-acre garden, pavilion, and kitchen focused on fresh, sustainable, locally grown food.

But as amazing as these are, the star of the show is the arboretum's world-renowned Pumpkin Village.

As soon you enter the main entrance, you're greeted by rows of pumpkins flanking the pathways all the way to the north end of the grounds. "People always stop to take photographs, and I always want to tell them to keep moving and that they ain't seen nothing yet," Forehand adds. He's not kidding. The paths take you to the Pumpkin Village, which is, quite literally, a hand-constructed village awash in pumpkins and other gourds: among other things, you'll see mountains of pumpkins scattered about, lawns covered in them, and houses adorned in them from top to bottom. In all, the arboretum uses nearly 100,000 pumpkins, gourds, and squashes annually for the village.

BUILDING A BLOCKBUSTER

As you can imagine, setting up such a scene takes a Texas-sized amount of planning and effort, and challenges can arise, especially with the weather. "We have one family farm, Pumpkin Pyle,

that grows them for us in a little town called Floydada in far West Texas," Forehand reveals. "The Pyles are actually cotton farmers who grow pumpkins seasonally; they've been providing our pumpkins for quite a while. The problem is, the weather can be an issue. If it's too wet and muddy, they can't pick the pumpkins for when we need them, which can create a bit of a compressed time frame."

Hailstorms are another concern, according to Forehand. In Texas, hail can be the size of baseballs and can destroy roofs, homes, cars—and pumpkins. To account for this, he says the Pyle family started spreading out the pumpkin-growing areas about ten to fifteen miles away from each other on their enormous plot of land to hedge their bets—so if one area got hit by localized hail, it wouldn't affect the other ones.

Once they are picked, the thousands of pumpkins make the three-hundred-mile journey to the Dallas Arboretum, where the staff's physical work begins in earnest. "Every single piece of produce is moved by hand," Forehand shares. "They come in these big pallet-type boxes, and you have to reach in and pull them out. We get some that are pretty big. The banana pink jumbo squash and Naples squash can be sixty pounds or more. You pick those up all day long, and, I tell you what, you feel it. You get into shape doing this."

Every year, there's also a different theme for Autumn at the Arboretum. In past years, the arboretum featured characters

from the *Peter Pan* and *Wizard of Oz* books. In 2019, it welcomed a certain blockhead and his pals as its theme. "We were excited to have *Peanuts* as our theme in 2019," says Forehand. "We asked permission from Peanuts Worldwide and the Schulz Foundation, and, luckily, they agreed to let us use the images. They actually sent a representative out to visit. He was very impressed." Among the displays were Charlie Brown, of course, as well as Schroeder at his piano, Lucy in her advice booth, Snoopy sleeping on his pumpkin-covered doghouse, and a huge display of the *Peanuts* logo made of pumpkins. (Considering the location, Linus was presumably trying to find the Great Pumpkin in earnest.)

GIVING AWAY GOURDS

Setting up the Pumpkin Village every year, of course, means that it eventually needs to come down. So what does the arboretum do with all this produce come November? True to form, it gets creative. "We want to make sure nothing is wasted or goes to landfills," says Forehand. "So we compost some of the pumpkins, just like all our other plant waste. We give gourds—which are dry and have a hard shell and basically last forever, to the Texas Gourd Society, a group of people who like to paint and decorate gourds and make crafty things out of them. It's an endless supply for them every year. We send a lot of the large pumpkins to the Dallas Zoo for animal enrichment. Elephants like them, and giraffes even like them. The big cats there like to play with them. The zoo even gives them to the gorillas."

“

The paths take you to the Pumpkin Village, which is, quite literally, a hand-constructed village awash in pumpkins and other gourds: among other things, you'll see mountains of pumpkins scattered about, lawns covered in them, and houses adorned in them from top to bottom.



A TRADITION LIKE NO OTHER

Every year, Forehand and his team strive to balance the arboretum's much-anticipated seasonal events while keeping them fresh. One notable change in 2019 was the introduction of its Christmas Village for the holiday season. With that in place, however, the time frame of Autumn at the Arboretum needed to be condensed: instead of running until Thanksgiving, it now ends at Halloween. And, of course, there's the matter of a new fall theme each year, which gets chosen and planned over a year ahead of time. For 2020, it is bugs.

Forehand emphasizes that whatever changes do take place are for one reason—to create the most enjoyable, memorable experience for anyone who enters the Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden. “I think we're at a level now where we just want to maintain the quality and guest experience for Autumn at the Arboretum and make sure we keep it as great as it is,” he says. “It has become an autumn tradition for locals, who put it on their calendar every year, and we want to continue welcoming visitors from near and far and keep them coming back.”

For more info, visit dallasarboretum.org



PAINTING A NAVAJO NARRATIVE

interview with **shonto begay**
written by **matthew brady**

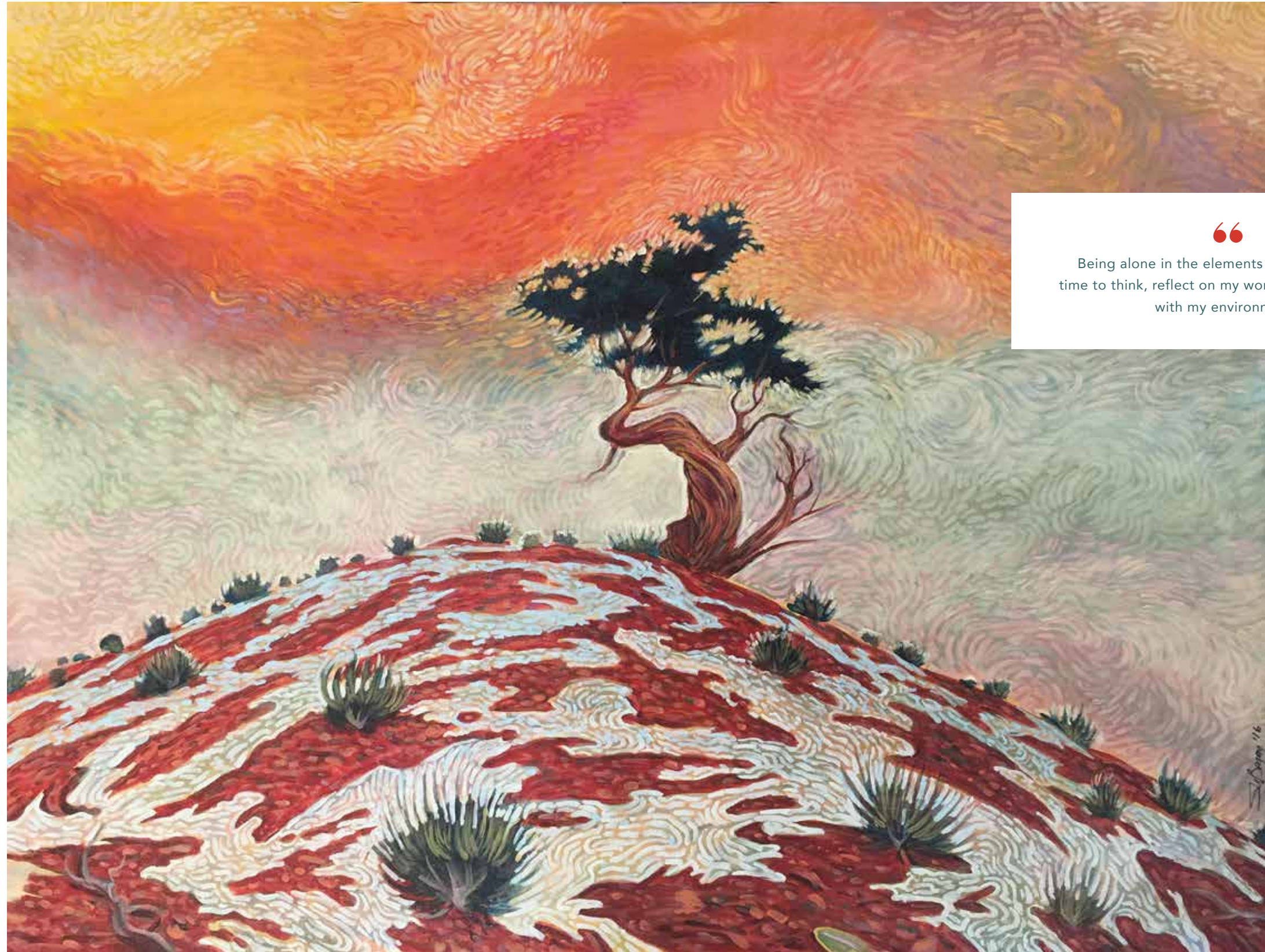
Multitalented painter Shonto Begay discusses what influences his art's subject matter and style, including his culture, his days as a shepherd, his dreams, and comic books.

What was your family life like?

I had a very traditional Navajo upbringing and was one of sixteen kids in my family. We lived in a hogan (a small earthen dwelling) in Arizona, with no television, no electricity, and no running water. My father was a revered Navajo medicine man, and my mother wove the famous Navajo rugs. My sisters, aunt, and grandmother all wove, too.

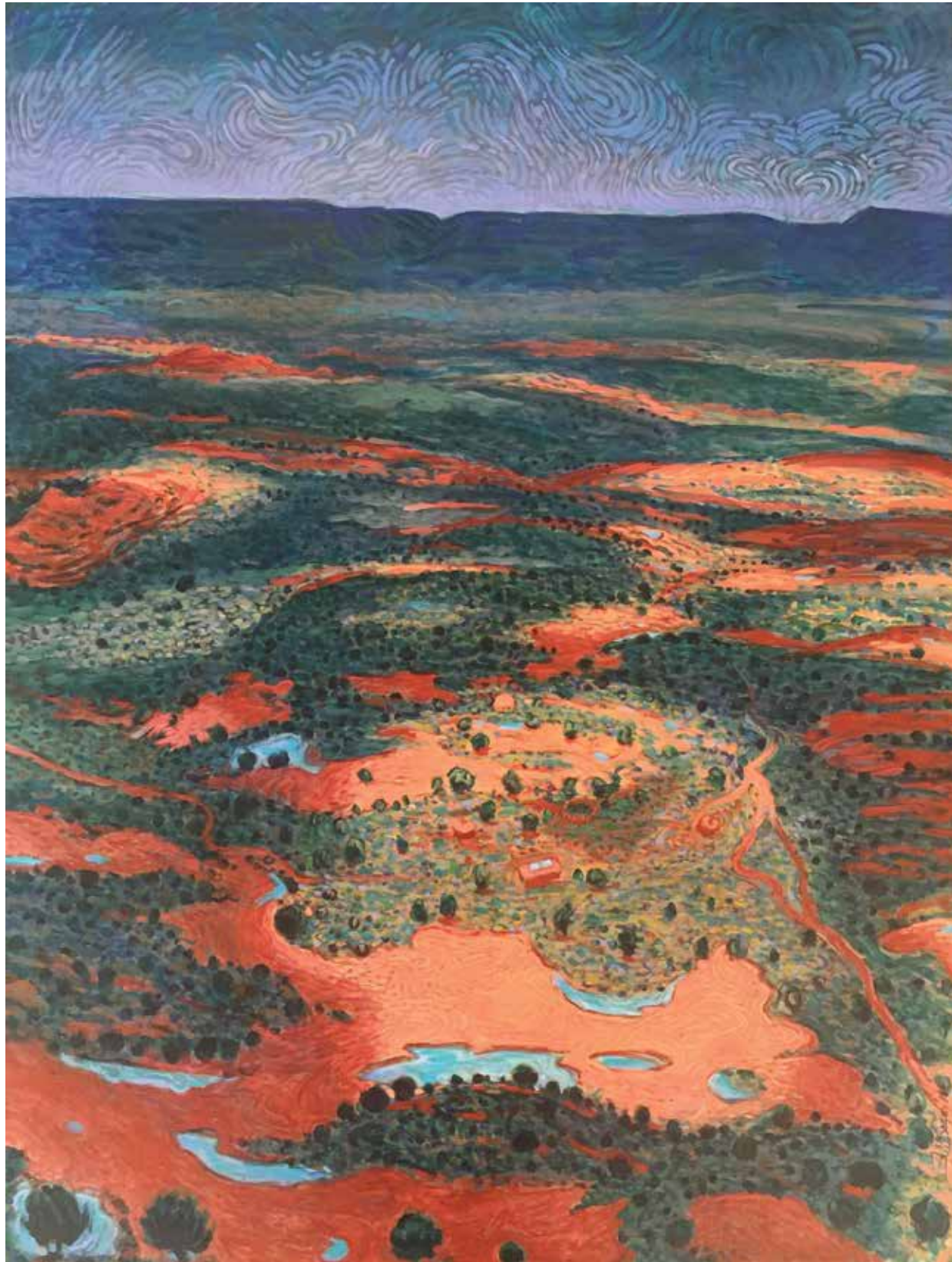
Did you work a lot? Play a lot?

It was a very communal living situation. My older brothers, sisters, cousins, and I tended to the sheep, goats, donkeys, horses, cattle, and chickens. Our farm and its huge cornfields were a communal responsibility as well.



One Tree Hill

“
Being alone in the elements gave me a lot of time to think, reflect on my world, and be intimate with my environment.”



My Birth Place, Light After a Storm



Pastoral Eve

Everybody knew where they were needed the most. My older brothers and cousins were strong, tall, and fast, so they did more adventurous things like hunting and chasing wild horses. I was the smallest, so I was relegated to tending to the sheep and goats at a very young age. My sheepdog and I were out there all day long, so my mind opened up to imagination—being alone in the elements gave me a lot of time to think, reflect on my world, and be intimate with my environment. Listening to the silence, smelling rain two days away, and knowing what was going to happen with the wind taught me a great deal. There was a lot of time for playing with

my siblings as well since we didn't have things like modern toys.

How did your upbringing lead you to art?

There was a lot of vivid storytelling around the campfire, and my culture also respects images: every line and drawing that you make and every interpretation you create is a form of scripting to the spirit world. I was definitely influenced by this.

I started drawing at around age nine. I would use anything that came within my reach—an old can, cardboard, or things that were blowing across the

valley—and drew on it with anything that could make a mark, such as charcoal or a piece of rock. It wasn't until my twenties that I realized that I could go to school, get an art degree, and make a living with art.

You have a mantra that "art saves lives." Would you mind elaborating?

As kids, we were forced into boarding schools by the government; it was there that I started using art materials like crayons and drawing paper, and I started interpreting my world and documenting my life. Bullies were all around me in those schools, but drawing protected me a lot because they liked my art.

WHEN YOU'RE RAISED IN A HOGAN, YOU PRIMARILY STAY THERE AT NIGHT. OTHER THAN THAT, YOU'RE OUTSIDE IN THE MESAS AND CANYONS. SO MY WORLD HAS ALWAYS BEEN MOSTLY OUTSIDE.

I would also draw to escape into my own unconventional reality somewhere else—art kept bringing goodness, beauty, and strength to me, and it kept my spirit and voice alive in those very harsh conditions.

So, yes, art saves lives. I am a living, breathing testimonial to that.

Are your subject matters fictional or nonfictional?

Both. My art documents pretty much everything I experience. I've also been blessed with very exciting dreams, which I tap into. Sometimes, I just can't wait to go to sleep and enter that world. Also, in my culture, a dream is a powerful communication: you are actually living that reality in another space.

When I was living in the Bay Area, I started writing my dreams down. That's how I became my own medicine man and kept my nightmares at bay; it's also when I learned how to really write. Now I love both mediums, and I think they complement each other.

I had my own column for nine and a half years in a local Flagstaff newspaper. It was wonderful. I could talk about anything I wanted. A lot of the articles were a continuation of seeing the world through my eyes and the culture I was raised in—but using vocabulary instead of paint strokes.

Is point of view important to you when you're painting?

Very much so. Because that's how dreams work. I also like drama: the canvas is my stage. A lot of that is because I'm a big fan of comic books. I learned a lot about drawing individuals and actions, and how things can be seen from various angles, from comic books of old—DC, Marvel, and Gold Key. My paintings are all about pulling back the curtain and sharing the view from a stage. I'm basically an illustrator posing as a painter.

Who are your artistic heroes?

I admire artists like Winslow Homer and Norman Rockwell, as well as many comic book illustrators, who I made my teachers of sorts. An illustrator named Neal Adams, who did work for DC, is fantastic. He could just delineate the superhero body and give perspective like nobody's business. Joe Kubert, another DC illustrator who did a lot of *Sgt. Rock*, has a style that is fairly loose, wild, and beautiful but also adds so much information with spare detail.

Your artwork includes many swirling lines. What do they mean to you?

I come from a family of spiritual artists, so my artwork is never done in a vacuum. Navajo healing chants offer an amazing healing journey within, and that is what I try to see when I paint. All the strokes, circles, lines, squiggles,



Kin'aal da Ceremony Run



Gathering Medicine

“

I've also been blessed with very exciting dreams, which I tap into. Sometimes, I just can't wait to go to sleep and enter that world. Also, in my culture, a dream is a powerful communication: you are actually living that reality in another space.



In Spite of the Coming Storm

curlicues, dots, and slashes I use are part of a visual chant through the spirit world. They are syllables, which lead to words, then to sentences, paragraphs, and, finally, to these ancient prayers. I have around thirty-one little marks that are alphabets in my painting, and I use them in every one of my works.

Tell us about the inside-versus-outside dynamic in your art:

When you're raised in a hogan, you primarily stay there at night. Other than that, you're outside in the mesas and canyons. So my world has always been mostly outside.

Being inside is very powerful, too, because it's a place for dreaming, ceremonies, healing, and birthing. I do occasional inside images, but I think there's an element of claustrophobia I want to bust out of—so I leave an opening, an escape for the viewer to get out.

I got this idea from the great Navajo rugs of old. In the beautiful patterns, the women include a line that goes all the way out to the edge. This is called a spirit break, which is where you release your creative spirit as a human. It allows

you to go out and create even bigger and more beautiful things. They say if you don't leave this line, you'll weave yourself into one pattern and could get stuck.

What else do you like to do?

I still do a lot of outdoor things. I go home to see my brother and mother out on the reservation a hundred miles from where I'm living now. Every week, I spend time out there reliving my childhood by hauling firewood and water, riding horses, working with livestock, and planting corn. I'm usually with my kids or younger people, showing them that the way I grew up is a valid life.

I'm also illustrating another children's book for Random House. I've had other offers in the publishing world come through, but I must make smart decisions. A lot of times, I'll even run an offer past my people. I'm also a film buff, and I act. I did a movie called *Monster Slayer*, which was based on a Navajo creation story, and a love story, *Alex & Jaime*. I've turned down other film offers because the content didn't hold true to Navajo life.

Do you think you'll ever stop painting?

I can't imagine moving on to something else. Painting is very important to me, a beautiful addiction, and I love it.

For more info, visit modernwestfineart.com/shonto-begay or follow Shonto on Instagram @shontobegay



WHEN HOMES FOR OUR TROOPS (HFOT) was founded in Massachusetts in 2004, it was out of a simple desire to help a severely injured veteran in need of a home. The veteran needed a customized house that had adaptations made to accommodate his life-altering injuries. His only request? For the contractor to continue building homes for other injured veterans once his was finished. Since then, HFOT has continued to grow into a nonprofit organization that truly abides by its mission of “building homes, rebuilding lives.” Homes For Our Troops builds specially adapted homes that help severely injured post-9/11 veterans regain their lives and move forward with a newfound sense of freedom.

Teresa Verity, a marketing associate for HFOT, speaks to the good that this organization does: “By helping injured veterans, we are granting them the ability to enter back into society and focus on the important things—like starting a family, completing a degree, or embarking on a new career—without restrictions.”

BUILDING HOMES

Finding a new path to your goals once your life has changed in such a drastic way can be difficult, and when it seems like there are no resources to guide you, it’s even harder. Homes For Our Troops prides itself on providing the assistance needed for veterans to be independent.

HFOT is a publicly funded charity, with the budget to build its homes coming from donors, foundations, nationwide fundraisers, and various corporations. All homes built by the organization are 2,800-square-foot, four-bedroom, two-bath residences with forty adaptations—including things like wider hallways,



HFOT ENLISTS GENERAL CONTRACTORS TO SUPERVISE THE HOME-BUILDING PROCESS BASED ON GUIDELINES IT HAS CREATED FROM YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AND VETERAN FEEDBACK.

automatic doors, hardwood flooring, and lower-height appliances. They are constructed using the highest-quality, most energy-efficient products to keep the utility expenses low. The contractors chosen for each project are ones who specialize in making custom-built homes and are local to the area. HFOT enlists general contractors to supervise the home-building process based on guidelines it has created from years of experience and veteran feedback. There is ultimately no cost to the veteran for the new home (and no future mortgage). This is because if a veteran qualifies for a home, it’s due to them first qualifying for a VA Specially Adapted Housing Grant. Once a veteran meets the requirements to qualify for a home, the building process begins. Toward the end of the qualifying process, the veteran is invited to a Veteran Conference in Massachusetts (where HFOT is based) for a final interview.

Verity states that construction usually takes anywhere between six to nine





Veterans are able to heal in a space that has been customized to their needs. And without the mental clutter that would typically come from worrying about their previous environment, they're able to pursue other goals.

months. But the total process, from acceptance into the program to getting the keys to the home, is more like twenty-four to thirty-six months. There are three community events during construction: the Community Kickoff signifies the start of building the home and introduces the veteran to the community; Volunteer Day is an event where the community is invited to help with the landscaping of the home (laying sod, planting trees and flowers, etc.); and, finally, the Key Ceremony “delivers” the home to the veteran.

HFOT has around eighty projects underway nationwide, and it typically completes around twenty to thirty a year. It's up to the veteran where they want the home to be (with some minor restrictions), but many choose an area that is close to family and coincides with their lifestyle. “Although HFOT is based in Massachusetts, many of our veterans choose to have their homes built in states like Texas, California, and Florida, mainly for the warm weather and access to healthcare,” Verity says. “The metro Washington, DC, area and Colorado are popular as well. In total, we've built homes in forty-two states.”

REBUILDING LIVES

While the process may start with building a home, it doesn't end there. HFOT prides itself on providing the assistance needed for veterans to be independent. For example, for three years post-build the organization

provides home recipients with a financial planner, who guides them on how to be a successful homeowner. In addition, HFOT has a peer-mentoring program for veterans and their spouses, which was put in place to assist them post-home delivery. Their network of other nonprofits and government organizations is also available to veterans and their families to assist them with employment, education, health care, and other essentials.

Homes For Our Troops also continues to hear from veterans long after they've settled into their new environments. Marine Corporal Neil Frustaglio, who had a home built for him in Marion, Texas, says, “An accessible home makes everything easier. All the little and big things that I had trouble with in the past, I no longer worry about. I can do what I need to do as a husband and father, and that means so much to me and my family.”

Statistics support veteran testimonials about the good HFOT has done. In a survey, 69 percent of veterans who received a specially adapted home went on to pursue a degree, as opposed to 12 percent prior to receiving a home. They no longer have to worry about putting in extra effort to accomplish even menial tasks. Veterans are able to heal in a space that has been customized to their needs. And without the mental clutter that would typically come from worrying about their previous environment,



they're able to pursue other goals. The employment rate of veterans who have received HFOT homes also increased from 21 to 35 percent, with veterans able to head back into the workforce with confidence. Many have become motivational speakers, bringing awareness to the mental health struggles veterans may experience after serving.

Through building injured veterans new homes adapted uniquely to fit their needs, Homes For Our Troops is able to give them back their freedom. Veterans are able to set their sights on recovery, rebuilding their lives, and doing what makes them truly happy.

For more info, visit hfotusa.org



A LAISSEZ-FAIRE MIND FOR DESIGN

written by alexa bricker | interview with anthony wilder and keira st. claire | photography by john cole



By his own admission, Anthony Wilder began his career with a lot of passion—but also naivete. With a natural inclination toward architecture, he started building homes at fourteen, and just three years later, launched his own firm. Now with a full-service architecture, design, and landscaping business, Wilder and design team member Keira St. Claire dive into the company's laid-back approach and explain how this tactic helps bring them closer to each client.

What prompted you to start your own business at such a young age?

Anthony Wilder: I walked into a wood shop one day, smelled all the natural woods (I'm a very tactile person), and it just connected the dots for me. My shop teacher at the time gave me half the day off, with credits, to help his friend build houses. I just lit up and found myself in that moment being out in the field—I found my calling. I also learned that I really wanted to be the creative mind, so I decided to start a business of my

own and began hiring people; I would oversee the ideas and they would handle the construction.

How did the business evolve to include interior design? And how do you balance those elements for a cohesive project?

AW: The growth has been spectacular. Because we offer so many disciplines—architecture, interior design, landscape design, etc.—we have a process that saves our clients time and money. It's

also important that everyone is rowing in the same direction, so we keep our process very fluid.

Keira St. Claire: We work very collaboratively. I think part of the beauty of how the company functions is we offer services in every area of a home redesign. So it's important for us to make sure what we're doing is cohesive. We'll have meetings where the architecture department and the design department get together to share what

we're doing and come up with solutions. Our company culture is everything, so we all feel very invested in the outcome of our projects.

What is the most important step in understanding the client's vision for a project?

AW: We ask a lot of questions to learn how they tick, how their habits are embedded in their lives, and why they want to do this. It's a deeply collaborative relationship with the client and everyone in the company.

KSC: Once we agree on a vision, clients are assigned a design team and that team will get to work on presenting floor plans, renderings, sketches, and alternative ideas. It's really important for me as an interior designer to get to know that client because I don't design for my own aesthetic.

AW: Right—if you look at the projects on our website, nothing is exactly the same because we don't want to be typecast as a specific style.

What was the client's vision for the French Getaway project outside of Washington, DC? What quintessential French elements did you incorporate?

KSC: That was very much the style of the client. She has a very natural, simple, and authentic sensibility. She loves to cook, so the stove was actually shipped on a steamboat from France. We really drew from the traditional French country style, with grays and neutrals but also a lot of texture. There's a lot of beauty in those natural materials. It wasn't really about saying "This client has a French style, so this design is French." It was about saying "This design feels like the client."



How do you balance textural elements and create interest in a design that is based around a neutral color palette?

KSC: Texture is huge. The dining table in this project has a distressed finish, and the chairs have a hand-painted finish to them—even though they have a traditional form, the pop of blue adds something a little unexpected. If you're doing neutrals and everything is the same texture, even if it's heavy or light, it can be very boring. So layering elements together creates that interest.

The distressed nature of some of the furniture gives it a classic look. Did the client already own a lot of the pieces used in this project?

KSC: A few pieces were the client's, but we also did a lot of antiquing for traditional Scandinavian furniture. The armoire in the dining room and the armoire in the living room were both sourced from antique shops. But some of the elements were new pieces that were painted to look that way.



The dining table in this project has a distressed finish, and the chairs have a hand-painted finish to them—even though they have a traditional form, the pop of blue adds something a little unexpected.



How did you feel about the final result?

AW: We always tell the client to “envision extraordinary.” I think if you were to talk to the client, she would tell you she never thought her house could be this nice. She even named her cat after our lead carpenter.

What is most challenging about working on a project with clients who don't have as clear a vision as this one?

AW: The last 5 to 10 percent of a project is always the hardest. When a client isn't as easy to work with, it's twice as hard. It's like anything—when someone appreciates you, it's much easier. By the end, many clients just want their house back. So we're super cognizant about being tidy and leaving nothing unfinished.



How do you feel when a project is finished? What do you hope a client is feeling by the end?

KSC: The best part is when I have conversations with clients months later and they say “We’re enjoying these spaces so much more because of what you’ve done” or “I used to hate my kitchen and now I love it.” For me, those are the things that bring the most joy. We really changed that person’s daily life in ways they wouldn’t have even thought of.

AW: You begin with the end in mind, but you start that relationship with their lives and what they want. We’ll have a client come back twenty or thirty years later, and they’ll still love their place. We’ll always still keep them in our lives and be a part of their families.

For more info, visit anthonywilder.com



EMBRACING THE SPUDS

interview with **shirley hutner** | written by **shelley goldstein** | photography as noted



© Jackie Cole

EACH YEAR, SIX BILLION POUNDS OF PRODUCE (26 PERCENT) GOES UNHARVESTED OR UNSOLD FOR AESTHETIC REASONS. MUCH OF THE REJECTED PRODUCE GOES UNUSED AND IS PLOWED UNDER AT THE FARMS OR ENDS UP IN LANDFILLS.

When Dieffenbach's, a family-owned business that specializes in kettle-cooked potato chips, realized blemished potatoes were going to waste, it saw an opportunity in the market to embrace the imperfect potatoes and turn them into delicious potato chips, helping farmers and saving millions of pounds of potatoes.

When and where did Dieffenbach's originate as a company?

In 1964, Mark Dieffenbach started making his own potato chips on his kitchen stove in Berks County, Pennsylvania. His chips became very popular with family and friends; a short time later he built his own kettle cookers, which the third generation of the Dieffenbach family stills uses today. As the business grew, Mark needed larger fryers and expanded from his kitchen to a small plant in the garage.

Where did the idea for Uglies come from?

When the company began, we would sometimes receive potatoes that weren't perfect. They were still great potatoes, but they did not meet our standards for a Dieffenbach's-branded product. We instead used those potatoes to make chips that we sold only in our factory store. Consumers loved them, so we decided to develop the national brand Uglies. They were introduced at the Pennsylvania Farm Show in 2017. The brand has taken off, and we have saved over 3.4 million potatoes since then.



© Jenny Bowler

How do USDA Grades and Standards for Fruits and Vegetables affect the produce industry?

Since 1945, the USDA Grades and Standards for Fruits and Vegetables has defined what is "perfect produce" to the fruit, vegetable, and specialty-crop growers and buyers. Although the standards are voluntary, produce that doesn't meet these standards gets rejected. We've become accustomed to expecting our tomatoes to be perfectly round, our vegetables symmetrical, and our fruit unblemished. These expectations have driven up the costs of produce and created the problem of food waste. Each year, six billion pounds (26 percent) of produce goes unharvested or unsold for aesthetic reasons. Much of the rejected produce goes unused and is plowed under at the farms or ends up in landfills.



We are creating a market for these unwanted potatoes and turning a bad situation into a positive, not only for the farmer but also for the community and the planet.

Is food waste increasing or decreasing?

While the trend of food waste appears to be increasing, consumers, producers, and retailers are becoming more aware of the issue and are finding creative ways to deal with this crisis.

Where do the potatoes that make Uglies come from?

We rescue these potatoes at different stages of the supply chain—as far back as the farm all the way to the doorsteps of a potato chip plant.

How does this help farmers?

We are creating a market for these unwanted potatoes and turning a bad situation into a positive, not only for the farmer but also for the community and the planet.

Will you briefly take us through the process of making a potato chip?

We are able to use our same production lines for Uglies as we do for our other root vegetable chips. The potatoes come in via truckload and are placed on a conveyor belt, where they are sorted, washed, and peeled. The potatoes are washed once more and then sliced. The sliced potatoes go into the kettle to be cooked and are then seasoned to perfection, bagged, and packed into a case.



© Jenny Bowler



© Jackie Cole

What flavors do you offer?

Original Sea Salt, Barbecue, Buffalo Ranch, Salt and Vinegar, and Jalapeño.

What was the idea behind the packaging?

We wanted to develop packaging that really conveyed our brand, Ugliest. The idea at first was that we were using reject potatoes, which is where the thumbs down came from. But we took the word “rejected” off the packaging because some retailers thought we were using inedible potatoes. We wanted to add a little fun to our packaging, and that is how Sir Spudly came to be. Each bag has a different version of Sir Spudly wearing some type of hat, like a cowboy hat or a top hat.

Where are Ugliest potato chips sold?

Ugliest are sold at local grocery stores in Pennsylvania and online at Amazon and ugliestsnacks.com.

How many facilities do you have?

Right now, we have two facilities—one in Womelsdorf and one a few miles down the road in Bethel.

Does being in Pennsylvania inform some of the decisions the company makes?

We are in the heart of the Pennsylvania Dutch area where many snack food

companies started. We have a lot of resources in this area for a family company to be successful.

What has been the consumer response to Ugliest potato chips?

We have had a great response—consumers love the product. I was just on the phone with a consumer yesterday who said our barbecue seasoning was the best she ever tasted. Consumers also like to know they are helping to reduce food waste and that we are donating 10 percent of our profits to a local hunger-fighting organization.

What is the ultimate goal for Ugliest?

Our goal is to be able to create a market that is large enough with the Ugliest brand that we don't have to turn away any ugly potatoes. While we saved 1.6 million pounds of potatoes in 2019 alone, there are far too many more that went to waste. Along with reducing food waste, every potato we upcycle into a premium product allows us to donate to the local charity. We love our consumers and want to bring them the best tasting chips in new and exciting flavors while also bringing a little fun to their lives with our whimsical packaging.

For more info, visit ugliestsnacks.com

Popcorn-ucopia!

written by **matthew brady**

*Popcorn is the quintessential American snack. Americans eat more of it than anyone else—**fifteen billion quarts per year** (that's forty-five quarts per person)—and the US produces the most in the world. Plus, **autumn is popcorn season!** It's peak popcorn harvest time, and **National Popcorn Poppin' Month** is celebrated in October.*



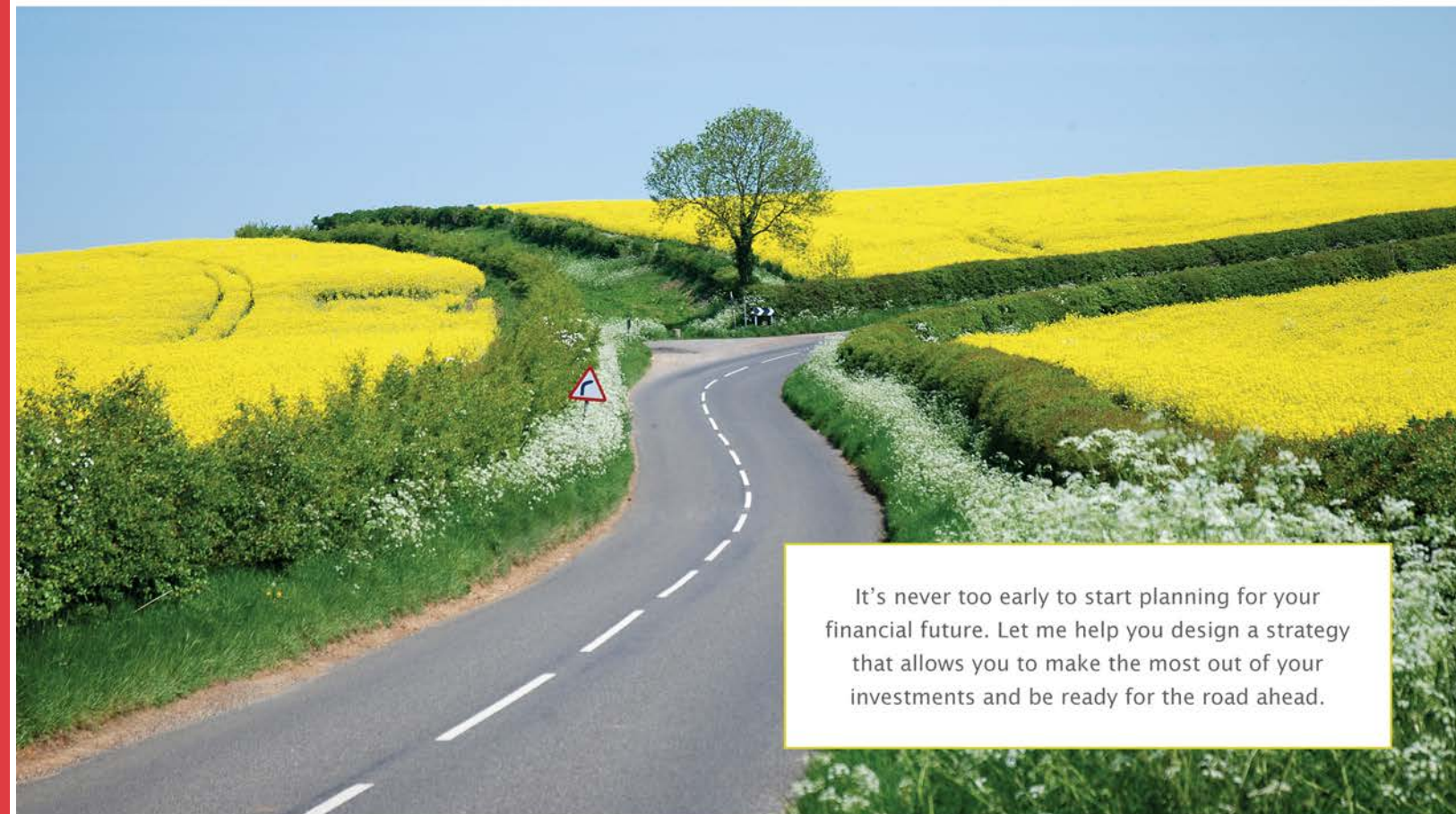
Here is some **tasty trivia** about this **corny treat**:

- There are **four primary types of corn**: dent (or field) corn, flint corn, sweet corn, and, yes, popcorn—the kind that actually pops.
- How high can it pop? Up to **three feet** in the air!
- Popcorn pops when the kernels reach **135 psi** (pounds per square inch). For perspective, most car tires are fully inflated at between 30 and 35 psi.
- **Movie theaters** initially refused to sell popcorn because they thought it wasn't befitting of such a sophisticated industry but caved due to popular demand (and the Great Depression).
- There are **two basic popcorn shapes**: snowflake (larger and irregular) and mushroom (firmer and round). The former is used in theaters and stadiums and the latter for things like caramel popcorn.
- **Nebraska** grows the most popcorn—about 350 million pounds per year.
- The largest popcorn ball on record reportedly weighed **several tons**.
- Popcorn is believed to date back thousands of years. It was also used prominently by the **Aztecs** as far back as the 1500s—for food, decoration, and ceremonies.
- Popcorn was once a **breakfast cereal** in the 1800s. Yum!
- Popcorn is a **super snack**. Per the Popcorn Board, it's naturally gluten-free, GMO-free, and sugar-free, plus it's 100 percent whole-grain, low-calorie, and low-fat.

For more info, including fun recipes, visit popcorn.org

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"I decided to host this podcast because today's financial marketplace can be volatile and there are too many voices clouding the truth. I want our listeners to be able to determine fact from fiction and I'm hopeful this podcast can begin to lay that foundation."
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