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A PUBLICATION OF THE TEXAN NEWS SERVICE

OCTOBER 31, 2024



**HALLOWEEN
SPIRIT IN
STEPHENVILLE**
PG. 8

FALL EDITION

texannews.net

VOL. 106, NO. 5

FALL EDITION

Stephenville's best fall treats

BY ANDREW UTTERBACK

Multimedia Journalist

It's fall y'all.

I'll be honest here, before this week I had never had a pumpkin spice latte. I quite enjoy fall festivities, but those have not yet included the beverage that fuels many Texans this time of year.

Stephenville, Texas is a college town, and college students love their coffee. And sugar. I went to two of the most popular coffee shops in town and one bakery in hopes of finding the best fall treats.

My quest started at King Coffee in downtown Stephenville. I walked up to the counter of the coffee shop, which is located right on a street corner you pass on the way to Tarleton State University, and asked for their "best fall items."

My order request for their fall fan favorites was the same at all three fall-food-featuring establishments, leaving my "review" in the hands of the shop itself.

King Coffee picked out, guess what, a pumpkin spice latte alongside a cream cheese pumpkin muffin.

I was accompanied by my friend and co-taste-tester Evan, who says he is not the biggest coffee consumer. I figured this would help my objectivity.

The latte was very smooth with a good pumpkin flavor that isn't too sweet. I was told that this would not taste like Starbucks' offering of the drink, not like I would know what that tastes like, but I assume it means less of a sugary taste.

There was also a wonderful smell of cinnamon and nutmeg floating up from the fluffy layer of foam sitting atop the latte.

The muffin was also quite good. Perfectly moist with an amazing cream cheese frosting. It tasted like above average pumpkin bread in muffin shape.

Evan backed up my pumpkin muffin praise, saying the muffin's strength was the cream cheese frosting.

King Coffee had the least fall decorations in their shop, but the latte and muffin's performance easily made up for it.

We then gathered our belongings, hopped in the truck and headed to Red Umbrella Bakery, about a minute down the street from the Tarleton campus.

Red Umbrella easily won the decoration award. Halloween decor stretched every wall of the bakery, and their cupcakes kept the theme going strong.

After letting yet another kind employee choose my test subjects, I was treated to the Ghostbuster and Redrum salted caramel cupcakes.

The ghostbuster was Vanilla Cake, Green Bavarian Center, Chocolate Ganache topping, topped with a Vanilla Buttercream Ghost.

The Redrum salted caramel was caramel everything including the cake, center and buttercream topped with flaky salt. The red drizzle across the top added a Halloween flare.

Both were quite good. The Ghostbuster tasted mostly like a traditional chocolate cupcake with the green filling in the center giving it an extra flavor note.

The Redrum salted caramel tasted, unsurprisingly, strongly of caramel, with a perfect hint of salt in the frosting.

My co-tester agreed with my analysis and said both cupcakes were very good.

Finally, we went to the coffee shop that I had heard the highest praise for: Cold Smoke Coffee Craft House, better known as just Cold Smoke.

Located in the same building as Barefoot Campus Outfitters, Cold Smoke has the coziest atmosphere of all the places we tested and definitely is one of the best coffee shop atmospheres



PHOTO BY ANDREW UTTERBACK

Red Umbrella's Ghostbuster cupcake.

I've seen.

I was given their Candied Pecan coffee and a pumpkin cookie.

The cookie was about average. Soft, good notes of pumpkin here and there, but it definitely tasted more like a spice cookie. Evan said it was definitely not as good as the pumpkin muffin we had an hour or so earlier.

The Candied Pecan, however, was very good. So good in fact, that I went back with my roommate a few days later and got myself another.

It tastes like a vanilla iced coffee with little hits of pecan saltiness and possibly cinnamon. This coffee paired

with their cabin-esque design made it quite the fall welcome.

To add to the whole experience, I did all of my taste testing on the one day this month so far with a high below 70 degrees.

If you're looking for the perfect fall treats, you definitely can't go wrong with any of these Stephenville offerings.

A Red Umbrella cupcake is a perfect late night treat, and my dream coffee pairing would be a Cold Smoke Candied Pecan coffee and a King Coffee pumpkin muffin.

FALL EDITION

No tricks, just treats:

America's favorite Halloween candies

BY ANNABETH JOHNSON
Multimedia Journalist

With Halloween creeping upon us, candy isles are becoming empty, and plastic bowls are about to be piled high and sit out on front porches.

According to CBS News, after reviewing thousands of Instacart orders, these 10 Halloween candies were ranked the most popular in America.

Reese's Peanut Butter Cups: These candies are a common favorite for many. Reese's Peanut Butter Cups are a chocolate shell candy with a peanut butter filling that does not deserve rank #1.

Peanut M&M's: They are another highly favored candy that is overhyped. These are a spin on the classic M&M candies that include a peanut in the center of the crunchy chocolate shell.

Regular M&M's: The classic M&M candies will always have a spot on the leaderboard for some of the best candy out there. The creamy milk chocolate center is coated in a crunchy chocolate shell.

Tootsie Pops: Tootsie Pops are a spin on regular Tootsie Rolls. While Tootsie Rolls are just chocolate-flavored chewy candy, Tootsie Pops include that chewy goodness that is encased in a hard candy lollipop. Tootsie Pops will always be a staple in the Halloween season.

Twizzlers: These candies can be controversial as delicious or disgusting. There is an equal 50/50 love-hate relationship with these candies among many. They are good, not great, and sit at the right ranking within this list.

Hershey's Milk Chocolate: A delicious milk chocolate candy that should be ranked second on the favorites list.

Sour Patch Kids: These are arguably some of the best sweet, chewy candies that are coated in a sour citric acid powder.

Candy Corn: The greatest candy to be ever made. Candy Corn is a sweet treat that resembles a soft, marshmallow texture compacted in a colorful corn-shaped shell.

KitKat: The original crunchy wafers layered in between milk chocolate which deserves to sit higher on the list of favorites.

Starburst: These chewy fruit-flavored candies are perfect to eat by the bunch or by little at a time. Starburst also deserves more credit as one of the greatest candies ever.

With all of these sweets being ranked by how much was sold, does Reese's Peanut Butter Cups really deserve to be sitting at the top?

In order to appreciate this candy, one must enjoy the flavor of peanut butter in general. A food that I, personally, do not.

The candy combines sweet milk chocolate with a peanut butter center which some individuals enjoy enough to make it America's favorite candy.

Nonetheless, I disagree with this ranking as the peanut butter is often gritty and the chocolate shell is disproportionate to its internal peanut butter filling.

I have never had one Reese's cup that maintained the same texture and consistency between the chocolate and peanut butter ratio; never have I enjoyed one either.

Personally, I argue that the candy sitting at the eighth rank should be replaced by that of the first.

Candy Corn has been a staple in the Halloween season since the 1950s and is often an indicator that cooler weather and treat or treating is just around the corner.

Candy Corn is a sweet made of mostly sugar which gives it a soft texture and a satisfying taste.

This candy also has white, orange and yellow stripes that we all know are nibbled off and enjoyed in a certain order making it only more fun to eat. There is no specific or fun way to eat a Reese's Peanut Butter Cup.

Candy Corn simply tastes better, is more appealing to the eyes, and is more enjoyable to eat rather than a plain regular Reese's.

As I am entitled to my own opinion on Candy Corn, so are those who enjoy Reese's Peanut Butter Cups.

In the end, the best part of candy during Halloween is bartering with others and trading what you don't like to get all the sweet treats that you enjoy.

Happy Halloween and whatever you do, reach for the Candy Corn first.



FALL EDITION

The Top 5 spookiest reads of the season

BY ASHTYN HANSARD

Executive Producer

With Halloween coming closer as October reaches its end, popular “Halloween” media starts to gain more traction. While there’s many lists for movies and songs to listen to around this time, here’s a list of the top five books to read for Halloween.

“**The Haunting of Hill House**” by Shirley Jackson. “The Haunting of Hill House” was released in 1959, making the book almost 70-years-old. While the book has been around for several decades, it only started gaining more popularity around 2018.

“The Haunting of Hill House” limited series was released on Netflix in October of 2018 and was directed by Mike Flanagan, a popular horror series director. While the series was only inspired by the book, there are still several connections between the two.

Many famous quotes from the series are taken directly from the novel. For example, the last sentence of the starting and ending paragraph of the novel says, “Silence lay steadily against the wood and stone of Hill House, and whatever walked there, walked alone.”

This quote is also mentioned in the final episode of the limited series. An original character, Steve Crain, narrates this line at the beginning of the episode and at the end with the final monologue.

In the book, the reader follows Eleanor Vance, Theodora, Luke Sanderson and Dr. John Montague as they stay in the abandoned Hill House for a summer. Both Eleanor and Theodora are staying under Dr. Montague’s wishes to observe the paranormal of the house while Luke is staying in order to make sure they researchers don’t cause damage to his future inheritance of Hill House.

“**Tender is the Flesh**” by Agustina Bazterrica. “Tender is the Flesh” was

released in November of 2017 in Spanish and was later translated into English in 2020.

The book is set in a dystopian land where animals are unsafe to eat after a deadly virus has affected them. In order to quench people’s thirst for meat, companies began to select certain humans and breed them in captivity to be slaughtered.

This book is a hard finish according to most readers. The Bates Student writer Fiona Cohen wrote, “This is not a novel for the weak of stomach. Bazterrica does not shy away from gory descriptions of human slaughter. There are also some graphic descriptions of abuse and sexual assault.”

While this book is definitely scary and uncomfortable to read, it also has extreme themes that may be too much for some readers. If you want to read this book, please proceed with caution.

“**Coraline**” by Neil Gaiman. “Coraline” is a widely known stop-motion movie, but it was first produced as a book. Published in 2002, “Coraline” was an instant hit, winning three different awards within a year of publishing.

The book plot is very similar to the movie plot. Coraline moves into a new house and finds a secret tunnel that leads to another world with another set of parents, known as the “Other Mother” and “Other Father.” When Coraline discovers that her “Other parents” are evil, she has to fight to protect her family in the real world while saving herself.

Although the book and movie’s primary audience is children, people of any age can find themselves enjoying this fantasy story just in time for Halloween.

“**The Shining**” by Stephen King. “The Shining” is one of the most popular horror books of all time.



PHOTO BY ASHTYN HANSARD

Three books with spooky themes, fitting for the season.

Released in 1977, “The Shining” solidified King’s writing career and established him as a horror author.

Similar to “Coraline,” the plot for “The Shining” novel is very similar to the movie. The Torrance family, the main characters of the book, stay at a hotel during the winter to be its caretakers. During their stay, the Torrance family becomes haunted by the hotel’s past and are forced to find a way to survive.

“**The Silent Patient**” by Alex Michaelides. “The Silent Patient” was released in 2019, making it the youngest book in this list. Although it’s been out to the public for five years now, the book only started gaining popularity in 2023 due to its praise on

TikTok.

The story of “The Silent Patient” follows a psychotherapist handling a patient that refuses to speak to anyone after the murder of her husband.

“THE SILENT PATIENT is immersive and hypnotic—the kind of confidently drawn suspense story that doesn’t need big, flashy twists to keep you hooked... but that delivers an exceptional twist or two anyway,” said Crime By The Book, a crime fiction review blog.

If you’re looking for a way to add to our Halloween spirit, I recommend reading any of the books listed here. All are available at your nearest bookstore or online shop.

FALL EDITION

3 fall flavors to celebrate the season right

BRENNA DEMPSEY

Multimedia Journalists

Desserts bring friends, family and even strangers together over the fall season. The good feelings it brings to the table is something to celebrate

Shelby Bredfield is a student at Tarleton State University who also works in the kitchen at Oma Leen’s, a restaurant in Hico.

“A really important part of the menu is seasonality; what’s in season, what’s ready, what sort of things are comforting and warm and kind of cozy,” Bredfield said. “It gives you almost a nostalgic feel and it kind of does bring a sense of comfort I feel like.”

The colder seasons are often focused on shared meals and there are a lot of recipes that become traditions to people.

A few of the staple flavors that make people think of fall are apple, pumpkin, cinnamon, chai, maple and caramel.

Ava Painovich, a Tarleton student, enjoys baking and uses it to relax when she is stressed.

“If the recipe doesn’t call for it, my secret ingredient in almost all of my sweet baking dishes is nutmeg,” Painovich said.

One of her favorite fall recipes is a traditional pumpkin chocolate chip bread.

“I definitely recommend it because it’s on the sweeter side compared to some other holiday breads,” Painovich said.

Here are some recipes for pumpkin chocolate chip bread, apple cinnamon muffins and a pecan pie

Pumpkin Chocolate Chip Bread

Ingredients:

- 2 cups granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 3 large eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 15 ounces canned pumpkin
- 2 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves

- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/2 cup milk
- 12 ounce package chocolate chips

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Line the bottom of two 8.5 x 4.5 inch loaf pans with a piece of parchment paper. Spray all over with cooking spray.

Add the sugar and butter to a mixing bowl and beat with an electric mixer until well combined. Add eggs, pumpkin and vanilla and mix to combine.

In a separate bowl mix together flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, cloves and nutmeg.

Alternate adding the flour mixture, then milk to pumpkin mixture, starting and ending with flour. Fold in chocolate chips at the end.

Pour the batter into prepared pans. Bake at 350 degrees F for 45-55 minutes or until a toothpick inserted comes out clean. Cool for a few minutes in the pan before inverting onto a wire rack to cool.

Mini loaves will bake for around 25-35 minutes or for 2 dozen muffins. Bake at 350 degrees F for 28-38 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out with few moist crumbs.

Easy Apple Cinnamon Muffins

Ingredients:

- 1 ¾ cups all-purpose flour
- ¾ cup white sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 large egg
- ! cup vegetable oil
- 1 cup milk
- 2 cups peeled and chopped apples (about 2 apples)
- Topping:
- ½ cup white sugar
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 1/3 cup butter, cubed
- 1 ½ teaspoons ground cinnamon

Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F (220 degrees C). Line 6 large (3½-inch) muffin cups with paper muffin

liners.

To make the muffins: Stir flour, sugar, baking powder, cinnamon and salt together in a large bowl. Mix in egg, oil, and milk. Fold in chopped apples.

Spoon ½ cup of batter into each muffin liner.

To make the streusel topping: Place sugar, flour, butter and cinnamon into a small bowl; mash mixture with a fork until mixture begins to cling together. Sprinkle topping evenly over unbaked muffins.

Bake in the preheated oven for 5 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C) and bake until a toothpick inserted into the center of a muffin comes out clean, 25 to 30 minutes. Let cool in pan briefly; remove muffins and cool on a wire rack.

Pecan Pie Recipe

Ingredients:

- 1 cup light or dark corn syrup
- 3 eggs
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1–1/2 cups (6 ounces) coarsely chopped pecans
- 1 (9-inch) unbaked OR frozen deep-dish pie crust

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Mix Karo light corn syrup, eggs, sugar, salt, butter and vanilla using a spoon or a rubber spatula.

Stir in pecans.

Pour the mixture into pie crust.

Bake on center rack of oven for 60 to 70 minutes.

Cool for at least 2 hours on wire rack before serving.

Notes:

If you are using a prepared frozen pie crust, place cookie sheet in oven and preheat oven as directed. Pour filling into frozen crust and bake on preheated cookie sheet.

The pie is done when center reaches 200°F. Tap center surface of pie lightly – it should spring back when done. If pie crust is over-browning, cover edges with foil.

These sweet treats are some great options to get into the fall spirit and will surely impress people at any holiday gathering you bring them to.

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Pumpkin spice takes over the commercial world

BY CAROLINE CRAIN

Multimedia Journalist

For many, the arrival of pumpkin spiced everything is an annually celebrated event. While traditional treats like coffee and desserts are expected, some brands take the craze a step further.

Below are several of the oddest pumpkin and pumpkin spiced items on the market today.

Dog treats

Why let humans keep all the pumpkin-flavored fun for themselves? Zuke's Mini Naturals are one example that took on the trend with their turkey and pumpkin flavored dog treats.

Faye Della, a junior and self-proclaimed pumpkin spice lover, showed full support of the pet-centric item.

"That sounds amazing. I think that they would love it, and pumpkin is actually really good for dogs," Della said.

Trash bags

That's right - even your garbage can smell like pumpkin spice. Hefty shared their take on fall with their cinnamon pumpkin spice trash bags in September 2022, and they have remained on shelves every fall season since.

Senior Jozelin Molinar shared her mixed feelings behind the unorthodox product.

"They have lavender ones, so I guess it's not that crazy," Molinar said. "I definitely wouldn't use them, though."

Protein bars

Looking for a way to fuel your body and embrace the season? Pumpkin pie protein bars might be the answer. Atkins featured this festive flavor in their 'limited seasonal edition' snack package.

Deodorant

After your pumpkin-protein driven workout, you can neutralize those post-gym odors with pumpkin scented antiperspirants.

Brands like Native and Dove have come out with different pumpkin scented deodorants in the past few seasons, and they have been stuck to enthusiasts (and their armpits) during pumkin season ever since.

Della was also enthusiastic about the festive hygiene product.

"I actually have some pumpkin spice deodorant, and it smells amazing," Della said. "It's my favorite thing."

Breakfast

Pumpkin spice pancakes? Check. Pumpkin spice Cheerios? Check. Whether you're spreading Philadelphia pumpkin spice cream cheese on your bagel or grabbing a pumpkin pie Pop Tart on the go, there is no shortage of fall-flavored breakfast foods to

kickstart your day.

The toughest decision will be choosing which one to eat first.

Senior Emma De La Cruz gave her opinion on the morning food options.

"I think I would definitely have to try the cream cheese," De La Cruz said. "I love cream cheese on toast already, so that's got to be good."

Toilet spray

~Pourri debuted its pumpkin spice toilet and home sprays in September 2019. More fall themed scents were released in August 2022 as well, including Autumn Air and Maple Pumpkin.

The brand was not shy about their appreciation for the craze.

"If loving pumpkin is wrong, we don't want to be right," ~Pourri said on their website.

These festive products showcase only a few of the quirky pumpkin-themed items available just at Walmart. If one store offers such a variety, think of the selection at Target, dollar stores and many other retailers fully embracing the trend.

Pumpkin spice has truly taken over the season, one surprising product at a time.



PHOTO BY CAROLINE CRAIN

Pumpkin pie Pop Tarts displayed on Stephenville Walmart shelves

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FALL EDITION

Tracing Halloween's roots

BY COLTON BRADBERRY
Multimedia Journalist

Halloween, celebrated annually on Oct. 31, is one of the most anticipated holidays in North America, combining costumes, haunted houses and trick-or-treating in a mix of spooky fun. Yet, the origins of Halloween are far from the candy-filled night familiar to modern celebrants.

The traditions we associate with Halloween stem from ancient rituals honoring the changing seasons, blending practices from Celtic, Roman and Christian traditions into the contemporary celebration known today.

The earliest origins of Halloween trace back to Samhain, an ancient Celtic festival marking the end of the harvest season and the beginning of winter. Samhain, pronounced “SAH-win,” was celebrated on Oct. 31, a day when the Celts believed the barrier between the living and the dead was at its thinnest, allowing spirits to roam the earth.

According to Heidi Stonehill, executive editor for The Old Farmer's Almanac, people would light bonfires and don costumes to ward off wandering spirits, using these practices as symbols of protection and ways to blend in with the supernatural.

“During Samhain, superstitious country folk would disguise themselves with animal skins and masks made from sailcloth or linen,” Stonehill said. “In costume, they would go outdoors and make lots of noise in an effort to fool troublesome spirits into thinking that they were one of them or to scare them away.”

As the Roman Empire expanded its influence, it encountered and absorbed the lands of the Celts, intertwining local customs with Christian traditions.

According to Joshua Mark, co-founder in the 7th century, All Saints Day was started by Pope Boniface IV to celebrate saints who didn't have a designated day. All Saints Day was originally in March and is also commonly called All Hallows Day.

In the 8th century, Pope Gregory III moved the holiday to November, Making Oct. 31 All Hallows Eve. While the reason isn't known, it is believed that it was moved to Christianize Samhain.

“The move follows an established Christian paradigm of ‘redeeming’ all things pagan in an effort to ease the conversion process of a given population,” Mark said.

Halloween has many traditions that come from both pagan and Christian practices.

The jack-o'-lantern has roots in Irish folklore. According to legend, a man known as Stingy Jack tricked the Devil and, as punishment, was forced to roam the earth with only a carved turnip lantern to light his way.

The Irish would then carve their own turnips and put candles in them to ward off spirits. Then as the Irish started migrating to America they brought their traditions and it was soon tied to Halloween.

“Shortly after their arrival in the United States, the Irish traded the turnip for the pumpkin as their lantern of choice as it was much easier to carve,” Mark said.

Trick-or-treating is another Halloween tradition with multiple theories of origins.

The practice may be traced back to Samhain when the Celts left food out to appease roaming spirits. Heather Thomas, a librarian for the Library of Congress, suggests that this custom was tied into “guising,” a Scottish practice



PHOTO BY PEW NGUYEN

Spooky Halloween decorations. A spider hanging down from the ceiling over a skeleton.

where poor children would visit homes to pray in exchange for food.

“Over time, people began to dress as these unearthly beings in exchange for similar offerings of food and drink,” Thomas said. “Guisers dropped the prayers in favor of non-religious practices with the inclusion of songs, jokes and other tricks.”

Today's Halloween has evolved into a family-friendly celebration focused on costumes, treats and community, yet its themes of transformation remain. Each Halloween tradition, from jack-o'-lanterns to trick-or-treating, reflects the holiday's long history and the diverse influences that have shaped it.

FALL EDITION

Halloween takes over Stephenville homes

BY DREW FLEMING

Multimedia Journalist

In October, the seasons change and fall officially sets into the atmosphere. With the weather change comes decorating for the new season: Halloween.

The change of leaves from summer green to autumn colors of red, orange and yellow comes the celebration of All Hallows Eve. Scarecrows, ghosts and spider webs take over towns all across America.

Instead of sunshine and pool days, October is filled with pumpkin patches and cooler weather. Here in Stephenville, there are plenty of spooky filled streets and neighborhoods to trick-or-treat in.

There are various family traditions around decorating for fall and Halloween. There are many ways to show creativity through decorating for the Holiday.

According to the Chandler Mansion facebook, the mansion is, “an icon constructed in 1919 for the Chandler Family that still stands in the heart of Stephenville. The mansion was restored by Vance and Amy Wade.”

“This is our first Halloween in the home, we’ll see Thursday. I have a feeling it’s going to be nuts,” said Wade.

Community is a valuable part of living in Stephenville. With that comes local businesses. Local business, Lida’s Bakery has plenty of decorations for customers to “oooo” and “ahhhh” over.

Courtney Elleby is the owner of Lida’s bakery.

“I like when the leaves change and the weather, it brings on Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas,” Elleby said.

Elleby said the bakery enjoys decorating for every holiday. Their



PHOTO BY DREW FLEMING

Life size Michael Myers outside outside Lida's bakery

annual tradition for Halloween is putting up a life size Micheal Myers mannequin to spooks customers and passersby.

Tori Green is an employee of Lida’s bakery.

“It really makes me happy when all the kids come in and want to give the

lifesize ghost a high-five, it’s so sweet. Or when older customers get scared by Miceal Myers,” Green said.

The decorations are welcoming and greet customers. The calming autumn colors and spooky decorations create a comfortable climate.

“I think decorating makes it a little

homier, reminds me of when I was a kid and my grandma always decorated,” said Elleby.

Houses and businesses, decorating means something different to everyone. Being festive and in the Halloween spirit adds a whole new level of celebration and holiday spirit.

FALL EDITION

Taylor and Travis sugar rush:

Is there any treat more tempting?

BY GAVIN PATRICK
Multimedia Journalist

Halloween is a time for people to pretend that they're someone or something else -- at least for one night. It can serve as an escape from reality, and perhaps, bring out a different side of ourselves.

One of the most popular couples-costumes in 2023 -- and surely, 2024 -- was Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce. Because of course -- most people would do anything to be as happy, as cool, as talented, as stylish and as famous as those two. Right?

Well, one thing Swift and Kelce can't do is escape from reality.

One thing people have in common nowadays -- Tayvis stan or not -- is seeing those two in the headlines almost every single day. Personally, as a 19-year-old, I have never seen such extensive media focus, fanaticism and obsession on a celebrity couple in my lifetime. That is until I opened social media on Sept. 24, 2023, to find that Swift had pulled up to the Chiefs game against the Chicago Bears to see her boyfriend play football for the first of many times.

Since then, "Swift mania" has completely manifested into the NFL world, and her relationship with the superstar tight end has arguably become the epicenter of popular culture. The two really are a perfect match for lights and cameras, almost like peanut butter and chocolate is for Reese's cup lovers.

So, in honor of that (I guess), and while everyone is out trick-or-treating this Halloween, let's take a look at some of Swift and Kelce's latest whereabouts.

US Open (Sept. 8)

The super-power couple headlined the list of celebrities in attendance for the 2024 US Open men's final.

The two were caught on video walking hand-in-hand into the arena. Kelce, per usual, showed off his eccentric fashion style -- sporting a "Gucci" green-and-red-striped bucket hat -- while Swift kept it simple with a red-and-white-dotted skirt and sunglasses.

Kelce's superstar quarterback, Patrick Mahomes, was also in attendance alongside his wife, Britney Mahomes. It served as a fun double-date for the close-knit bunch, three days after the Chiefs' opening



ILLUSTRATION BY GOOGLE GEMINI

night win against the Baltimore Ravens.

Swift attends Chiefs' first three home games (Sept. 5, 15 and Oct. 7)

Speaking of that game, Swift was in attendance to watch Kelce defend the Chiefs' Super Bowl banner on Sept. 5, as well as the team's two subsequent home games against the Cincinnati Bengals and New Orleans Saints -- all of which the Chiefs won.

Swift's last appearance on Oct. 7 was particularly noteworthy because of her fashion choice. Her face was decorated with red body glitter freckles, which instantly sparked a new trend among fans (as she tends to do). Sales of the Fazit-brand makeup patches Swift wore spiked 2500% in the hours following the game, according to TODAY.

I thought everything wasn't about her, but I guess it is.

Yankees/Guardians playoff game (Oct. 14)

With the Chiefs on a bye week and Swift having four days before starting the final leg of "The Eras Tour," the two linked up again in New York City to see the Cleveland Guardians play the New York Yankees in Game One of the American League Championship Series.

Kelce, a Cleveland native, was rooting hard for the away team, hoping to see his Guardians get a step closer to their first World Series appearance

since 2016. He sat cozied up with Swift in the suite alongside friends, including comedian Jerrod Carmichael.

The night was rather low-key, but not to be left concealed, Swift was (of course) seen planting a kiss on Kelce's cheek. And later, Kelce covered both of their faces with his hat (like a smooth operator) as they puckered up. All while, at one point, Swift's song "Welcome to New York" played over the PA... totally coincidentally.

Kelce's "Are You Smarter Than a Celebrity?" premieres (Oct. 16)

The new game show was recorded in the spring, avoiding conflicts with Kelce's football schedule, and premiered on Amazon Prime Video on Oct. 16.

New episodes come out every Wednesday through Feb. 12, with Kelce as host. The show features contestants trying to answer 11 questions, ranging from a first to sixth grade-level, with the help of celebrity guests. If they answer every question correctly, they win a grand prize of \$100,000.

In a 4-minute promo posted to Prime Video's YouTube page, Kelce dives into what fans can expect from the show. One thing for certain, he said, is that his exuberant personality will be on display.

"It's always gonna be a party when I'm involved," Kelce said. "I can guarantee you that."

For what it's worth, Kelce even got a visit from Swift one day on set, according to one of the show's celebrity guest panelists, Garcelle Beauvais.

Swift shouts out Kelce (again) at her Miami "Eras Tour" shows (Oct. 18)

Kelce could not attend Swift's three-day stand in Miami, but she was sweet to acknowledge his spirit.

Any Swiftie would know what the first tribute was -- changing the lyrics of her song "Karma" to "Karma is the guy on the Chiefs." But there was a second tribute that was much more subtle.

Swift was seen wearing "T" initial earnings throughout her performance, which she hadn't worn before to the shows. Although both of their first names start with a T, some believe it was a subtle tribute to her boyfriend. Because why else would she wear them?

FALL EDITION

Top 10 best movies and shows to watch this fall

BY ANNABETH JOHNSON

Multimedia Journalist

With fall in full swing, there is nothing better than cuddling up on the couch with a good movie. Here are ten fall shows and movies to watch this season.

Gilmore Girls

“Gilmore Girls” is the show about the iconic mother-daughter duo Rory and Lorelai Gilmore. As the pair experiences highs and lows dealing with love, work, school and drama in their small town, they always manage to bring a smile to people’s faces and warm our hearts.

Jordis Fox, a freshman business marketing major, says that “Gilmore Girls” reminds her of home during the fall season.

“It’s just so comforting; the small town feel reminds me at home when I’m at college,” Fox said.

This show is an essential fall watch, especially for mother-daughter duos.

When Harry Met Sally

“When Harry Met Sally” is a romantic comedy about Harry Burns and Sally Albright’s relationship over the span of 12 years; after meeting each other on a taxi ride, the two can’t seem to get away from each other and keep meeting. The two become close friends through the years and fall in love.

This movie is a heartwarming fall classic that makes you want to cuddle on the couch.

Practical Magic

Halloween is here and it’s time to get in the spooky mood with a fall classic. “Practical Magic” follows two sisters, Sally and Gillian, who are both witches who have hidden their family’s dark magic traits their whole lives, but when tragedy sticks, they are forced to use them.

This movie is the perfect fall watch when you don’t want to be scary but you want a few goosebumps.

You’ve Got Mail

“You’ve Got Mail” is a classic romantic movie about Joe and Kathleen, who meet in an online chatroom and start an online relationship. They are unaware that they have met in real life and may even be closer than they think.

This is a perfect fall romance watch.

Brilyn Fowler, a sophomore sports management major, loved “You’ve Got Mail,” especially during the cold weather.

“The setting of it being New York in the fall just makes it a great fall movie, and the fact that it is a love story just warms your heart during the cold weather,” Fowler said.

Little Women (2019)

“Little Women” is about the four March daughters, Jo, Meg, Amy and Beth, who grow up left alone to take care of themselves and each other while their father is off at war. This is a perfect movie for preparing to transition from fall to winter.

Friday Night Lights

When people think of fall, they think of cool weather, the leaves, changing weather and, most importantly, football. Friday Night Lights is a drama about the high school football team, the Dillon Panthers. It follows the team, the coaches, and the members of the town.

Marketing Junior Bryce Murphy loved “Friday Night Lights” because it reminds him of high school memories.

“I remember watching it in the locker room in high school; it reminds me of my favorite fall sports,” Murphy said.

Harry Potter

“Harry Potter” is a comfort character we have all loved since we were kids.

This franchise consists of eight films and follows the life of young wizard Harry Potter as he navigates the wizarding world with his two best friends, Hermione and Ron. With the the going back school theme and iconic spooky storyline, these movies are definitely a fall watch.

Kenzi Duggi’s favorite fall movies are those of the Harry Potter series.

“It encourages creativity and imagination while being a staple culture experience for all ages,” Duggin said.

October Sky

Some people may think that “October Sky” only consists of a fall movie because of its name, but it’s so much more than that.

Set in the fall season in a small town

in West Virginia during the year 1958, this movie follows Homer Hick as he pursues a career in rocket design, going against his dad’s wishes to be a coal miner and instead creates his own path.

This movie is a feel-good watch that makes you want nothing more than to go after your dream and accomplish your goals.

The Breakfast Club

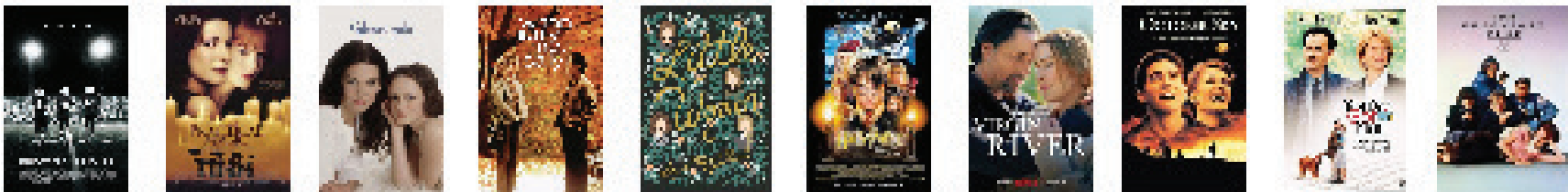
Nothing screams fall quite like the beginning of school, and “The Breakfast Club” perfectly represents that. Following their day-long detention, five completely different high school students all learn that they aren’t as different as they seem. This movie is thought to be one of the finest movies about high school life.

Virgin River

“Virgin River” is a romantic drama set in a small town in California. This show follows the life of Mel, a nurse practitioner who just lost her husband. After moving, Mel finds love with Jack, a restaurant owner who has lived in Virgin Rivers his whole life.

This show is set as a feel-good show with loads of drama. It is perfect for getting your favorite pumpkin-inspired drink and lounging on the couch.

There are so many fall movies and shows to watch, but these few are the top-season watches.



FALL EDITION

‘Smile 2’ is a terrifying sequel

BY LINDSEY HUGHES
Multimedia Journalist

Halloween is here, and in turn many new thriller and horror movies are being released in theaters. “Smile 2,” sequel to the popular horror/thriller film “Smile,” was released October 18, 2024.

Warning, there will be plotline spoilers in this review.

This film was psychologically a thrilling, terrifying watch. Not many movies have the ability to leave a watcher feeling unsettled and inwardly deeply uncomfortable, but that is exactly what “Smile 2” does.

The plot revolves around a popstar, Skye Riley, who is newly sober and making a comeback after a tragic car accident. The film shows the stars struggle with the “smile monster” after being infected.

Actress Naomi Scott does a fantastic job of portraying the fear, desperation, emptiness and despair that Skye Riley feels during the battle she is forced to fight inside her own head.

“Smile 2” was Scott’s first encounter with the horror genre, and was quite the turnaround, as two of her most popular movies are Disney’s “Lemonade Mouth,” and Disney’s live action “Aladdin.” Based on her overall performance, it would be difficult to tell that it was Scott’s first time acting in horror.

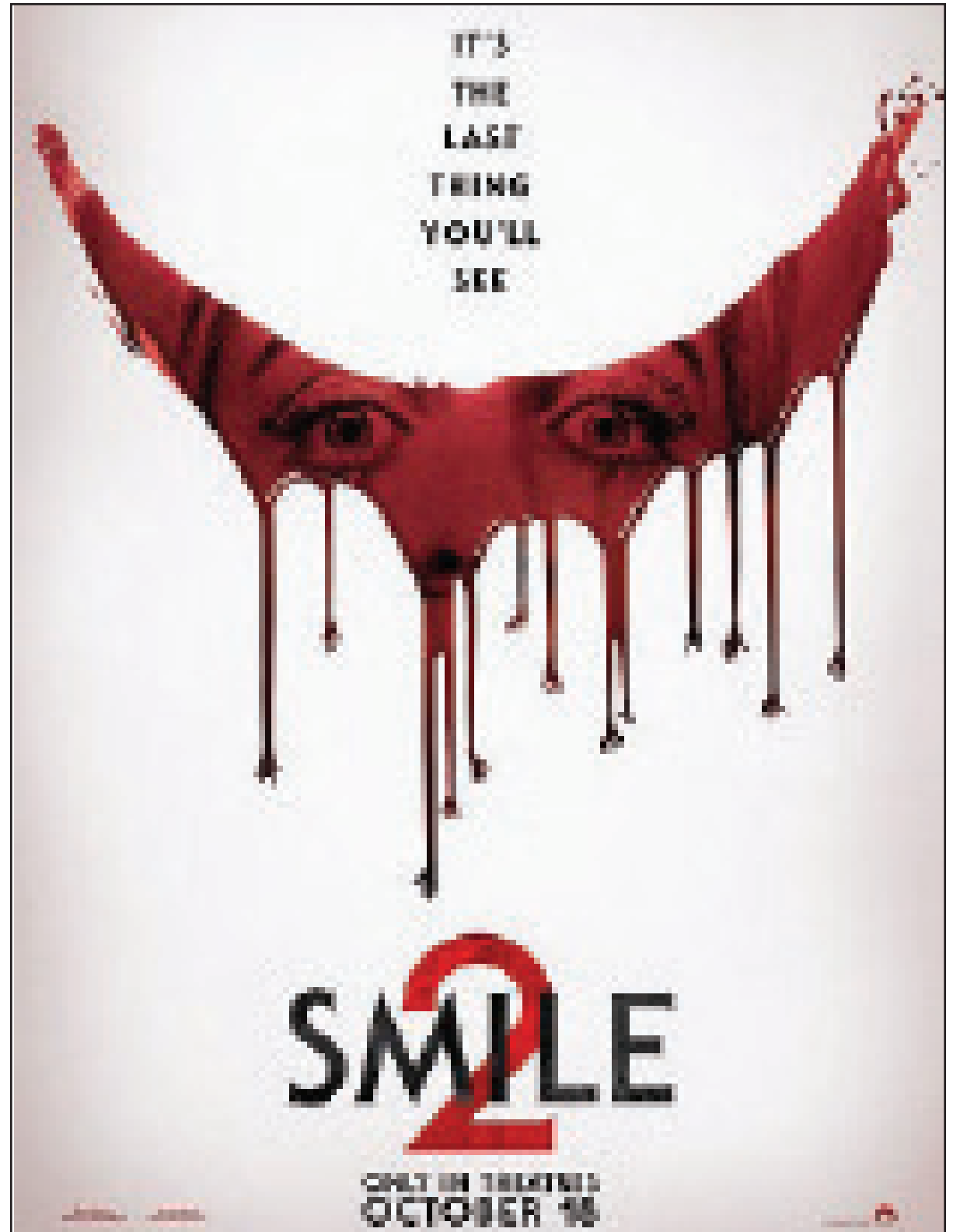
“Smile 2” was certainly different in several prominent ways from its prequel. While it is gorier and certainly more graphic than the first movie, “Smile 2” also incorporated some humor, which is difficult to do in a horror film without taking away the fear factor.

Several of the scenes in “Smile 2” were executed in ways that made them both scary and unexpected. Throughout a large chunk of the movie, Riley is living her life inside her head, every scene that plays out is purely psychological.

As the viewer, however, you do not realize this until she “snaps out” of the trance that the Smile monster had put her into. This played out in a terrifying way, and ultimately ended in the somewhat predictable death of the star.

The Smile movies are the first franchise of director Parker Finn’s career and have also proven to be the most popular. While there hasn’t been any official talk of a “Smile 3” movie, the director and writers did a great job of setting the stage for a third addition to the franchise.

“Smile 2” is overall a great horror movie. If you enjoy psychologically and mentally scary, challenging, movies, and are not easily bothered by gore, this will be an entertaining watch.



The “Smile 2” movie cover to show case the new movie out in theaters now.

FALL EDITION

Enjoy fall season's best outdoor activities

BY BARRETT JORDAN

Multimedia Journalist

If you need inspiration to get outside and enjoy everything the fall season has to offer, look no further.

From outdoor sports to walking trails there's nothing better than getting out and finding things to do in the autumn weather, although Texas likes to keep it hot for an extra month or two.

When thinking about things to do in the fall camping was one of the first things that came to mind. As a kid I remember having backyard campouts on random nights every so often during the school year. I think I liked those nights even more because I got to stay up later than usual.

There's something about setting up tents with close friends and spending a night outside in nature that's soothing.

Whether you go to a campground or set up right outside your house, camping is a fun experience that I recommend if you've never had the chance to do it before.

Sports, or more specifically, adventure sports perfectly capture the essence of fall. Take a weekend and find a place to go kayaking or canoeing. Lakes and rivers are less crowded than they are in the busy summer months so take advantage of that opportunity.

If kayaking isn't your thing, rock climbing and biking are also just a few other ideas to consider taking up during this time of year.

The Tarleton State University Recreation Center has a program called Outdoor Pursuits. This is where students can explore local areas while having fun adventures.

Fishing is an activity that can be pretty much done year-round but there's something about autumn weather that just makes it a better experience. Instead of having to endure hot temperatures for hours or the biting



PHOTO COURTESY PIXABAY

Fishing during the fall is a comforting activity for some people as it allows you to enjoy the autumn weather while taking in the surrounding nature.

cold, the cool environment is better suited for all you fishing enthusiasts.

Who knows, if you get into it enough you might just find yourself applying for the Tarleton Bass Club next semester.

A common activity, especially among students pending all the

weather changes, is to go for walks or runs. Sometimes it's nice to just step out of the house and get some fresh air. It's simple and doesn't require much effort or traveling as some of the other activities listed.

Find a nearby trail or a sidewalk on campus. However you choose to do it,

it's something anyone can participate in.

With the arrival of the fall season, the call of the outdoors beckons. With a unique variety of activities that become more enjoyable during the season there's no reason to hesitate.

FALL EDITION

Texan football mid-season check-in

BY JAXON HANSARD

Sports Editor

Seven victories and one loss is what Tarleton State University Texan Football has captured at the over halfway point of the 2024 season. After their second consecutive 42-0 homecoming shutout of the now 0-8 Utah Tech trailblazers the Texans earned themselves a little break with their second bye-week of the season.

All victories have come with the Texans scoring at least 20+ points with half coming within 3 points of the opposing team.

While there are some differences on the roster sheet between last year's team but the play has been very familiar from Victor Gabalis sitting in the pocket to throw impossible catches that Darius Cooper keeps somehow catching and converting yards or points. Cooper has snagged 5 receiving touchdowns this season on his 546 yards which 141 came at homecoming along with one of his touchdowns.

Kayvon Britten has gained yards on the football field like Monopoly as he sits with 1160 yards on 158 attempts, all adding up to his 13 rushing touchdowns. Through the seven games played in 24 seasons, he has already surpassed his yards total from last season. The yards are nice but Britten just wants the wins.

"I say just keep executing, if we keep everything it'll be taken care of itself," Britton said.

After all the running, scoring, touchdowns and celebrations it's good for the purple and white to take it easy for a week but not too easy as the final 5 games have a postseason outlook about them. 2023 UAC Coach of the Year Todd Whitten wanted to ease the team into this by-week

"Anytime you have an open week, get a little rest and try to be healthy," Whitten said.

A similarity of last season and this year's team is finishing the game. Half the victories have been close or Tarleton had a lead that they almost lost.

"There have been times when we don't finish quite as well as a team, a lot of that you



PHOTO BY JAXON HANSARD

Offensive lineman Hunter Smith (60,) tight end Dawson Hearne (88) and quarterback Daniel Greek.

have to credit to the opponent but that is the thing we have talked about most," Whitten said.

Over the break, Tarleton continued to gain as they rose to 8th in the FCS top 25 poll. This ranking and start to the first postseason-eligible season for the D1 school has been

a great thing to track as the Texans keep winning.

After their week to rest and another to prepare, the Texans increase their winning streak of 6 along with their record to 7-1. More and more D1 records being set by the 2024 Texan Football team. Austin Peay was

the reigning UAC champs that have been on a bit of a downfall this season and while the iron is hot the Texans took away a happy homecoming from the Clarksville fans with a final score of 27-17.

FALL EDITION

Texas A&M AgriLife leads in peanut research

BY MACKENZIE JOHNSON

Multimedia Journalist

In the scorching hot temperatures of July, a large majority of people excessively apply sunscreen, park themselves in their air conditioned homes and blissfully dream of the cool fall days to come when they can pull out the sweaters shoved into the backs of their closets and place pumpkins on their front porch.

In the scorching hot temperatures of July, there is also a small minority of people who don't necessarily look forward to fall for the scary movies and holiday decorations, but rather for the opportunity to finish harvesting the plant they've been growing since the spring.

Although peanuts may not be the first thing that comes to mind for most regarding fall, it is to those who farm them.

The Peanut Breeding and Genetics Program at the Texas A&M AgriLife Center in Stephenville is a place that prides themselves on the quality of peanuts they produce this time of year and the loads of research that goes into it.

Team members Kate Costello, Emily Green and Brian Bennett are within the labs and fields that these prized peanuts are developed in and are committed to preserving the over 75 years of rich history the Peanut Breeding and Genetics Program upholds.

Costello graduated from Virginia Tech University in 2018 with a Bachelors of Science in crop and soil sciences and a focus on crop genetics and breeding before getting a master's degree in plant pathology at the University of Georgia in 2022. She is now a third year doctoral student and graduate research assistant for the peanut program.

Green graduated from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse in 2018 with a bachelor's degree in microbiology and a minor in chemistry. In 2021, she moved to Texas to work as a lab technician, focusing on biochar at the Stephenville AgriLife Research Center before deciding to earn a master's degree in the Wildlife and Natural Resources Department at Tarleton

Upon pursuing her master's, Green became project coordinator for the Peanut Breeding and Genetics Program when Dr. John Cason, assistant professor and peanut breeder at Stephenville's research center, thought she'd be the perfect fit after securing a

\$6 million grant to collaborate with Chevron on developing a high-oil peanut seed for renewable biodiesel.

Bennett graduated with a horticulture business degree from Tarleton in 2002 and started out with the peanut program as a college student a year prior to graduating. He's been full time with Texas A&M AgriLife since 2003. Bennett is now a research senior associate and picked up the pursuit of a master's this fall.

Although all heavily involved in the program, the three each carry different roles when it comes to the everyday aspect of peanut breeding and research.

"I am not personally very involved in the fieldwork side of things," Costello said. "Dr. Cason is constantly driving around to different fields in Texas to harvest. Those of us who work mainly in the greenhouse, like me and my fellow graduate student Emily Green, are busy in a different way."

Costello primarily is working on the production of peanuts that have high oil content and drought tolerance through crossing, the process of removing the pollen from the flowers of designated "female" plants before they self-pollinate to then take the pollen from the designated "male" plants and manually pollinate the females.

"This way, we can breed specific combinations in hopes of creating hybrids with our traits of interest," Costello said. "The project I am on right now is breeding peanuts for high oil content for potential use as biofuels along with the more typical peanut oil industry. We want to create peanuts that have traits that are useful for peanut farmers and those traits are usually beneficial in other ways as well."

Green's aim in the Peanut Breeding and Genetics Program is along the lines of essentially helping those commoner farmers.

"The ultimate goal of my research is to develop peanut cultivars that require fewer inputs from farmers, helping them increase both their profitability and the sustainability of their operations," Green said. "For instance, cultivars with improved drought tolerance would allow farmers to better manage the increasing duration and severity of droughts brought on by climate change. This would reduce the need for irrigation, saving farmers money on water while helping replenish aquifers and groundwater levels."

Bennett's mark in the program has him where a lot

of the fundamentals of the operation unfolds - out in the field, especially in the fall.

"A typical day in the fall can be kind of hectic," Bennett said. "We can control everything done at the center in Stephenville, but everything we do off station revolves around what the farmers do. We have several farmers that let us plant test plots in their field so we can evaluate our lines under normal growing conditions."

The program evaluates plots in Gaines, Terry, Yoakum, Frio, Comanche, Erath and Lavaca counties.

"When the farmer says he's planting, we have to go then," Bennett said. "Same with the digging and the harvesting. You don't make plans during planting and harvest. We may have a farmer planting in west Texas and south Texas at the same time - we just split up then and go."

Bennett considers the harvesting process to be more vigorous than the actual planting of the peanuts.

"We try to be finished with all the field work by Thanksgiving," Bennett said. "Then we spend the next four months processing all the plots we harvested. We have around 2,500 plots we bring in to process and grade. We try to finish all that by March so we can start shelling seeds to get ready to plant starting mid April. Then it all starts back over."

Although their individual roles and projects keep these team members busy, there are several objectives the Peanut Breeding and Genetics Program focuses on as a whole.

"There is a big focus on wild peanut species here at the Stephenville center," Costello said. "Wild peanut species (*Arachis* sp.) have many beneficial traits that can be utilized by crossing them with the cultivated peanut (*Arachis hypogaea*, aka the typical peanut that you see in the grocery store). So a big part of the program here is figuring out which wild peanut species have traits we are interested in and then seeing if we can cross those species with the cultivated peanut."

Costello credits Dr. Charles Simpson, who's been working with wild peanuts for more than 50 years, along with many other researchers for maintaining a collection of *Arachis* germplasm (genetic material from different varieties of peanuts) to build this research off of.

"There are several people involved in the program," Bennett said. "We have six full time employees, 13



COURTESY PHOTO

Emily Green has been with the Peanut Breeding and Genetics Program in Stephenville since 2021 and primarily focuses on projects within the greenhouse.

college students, a doctoral student, a postdoctoral and of course Dr. Simpson, who is in his mid 80s and still working for the peanut breeding program.”

All of these people lend a hand in breeding the top of the line peanuts the program is recognized for, no matter whether those hands are planting in fields, steadying microscopes in labs or filling out forms in the office.

“The greenhouse crew takes care of early generation seeds and all the crosses being made,” Bennett said. “I have two technicians that I drag everywhere with

me to help plant and harvest, and the girls in the offices keep the program going by handling all the paperwork and are always available to help in the field when needed.”

With so much dedication and collaboration involved in the production of each and every individual peanut, team members easily grow and foster a passion for the work they do and the program they do it for.

“Texas A&M AgriLife Research Centers are known for their innovative approaches to addressing agricultural challenges, and I feel privileged to be

part of efforts that aim to improve the livelihoods of Texas farmers,” Green said. “There’s no greater reward than knowing that the hard work we do today will make a lasting difference for someone tomorrow. As I like to say, there’s progress in every pod.”

There’s no doubt that there’s progress in every pod at the Peanut Breeding and Genetics Program in Stephenville, and that proof can be found nowhere better but in the peanuts.



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