



"BOWLEGGED H" MAGAZINE

SPRING 2020 • VOLUME XXVIII • NO. 1 • HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW AND RODEO™



"BOWLEGGED H" MAGAZINE

SPRING 2020 Volume XXVIII • No. 1

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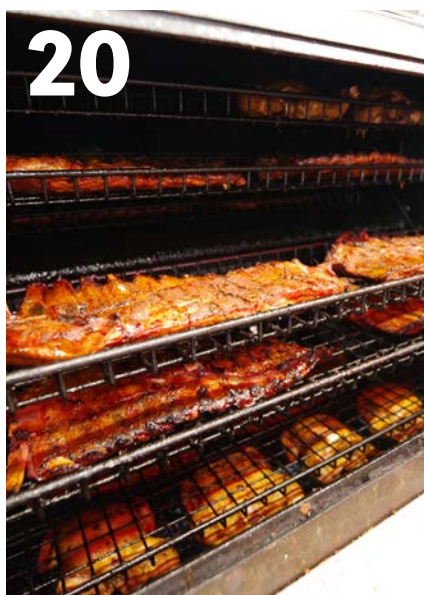
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ON THE COVER



Chris Stapleton on the RODEOHOUSTON® star stage at the 2019 Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™.



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Questions:

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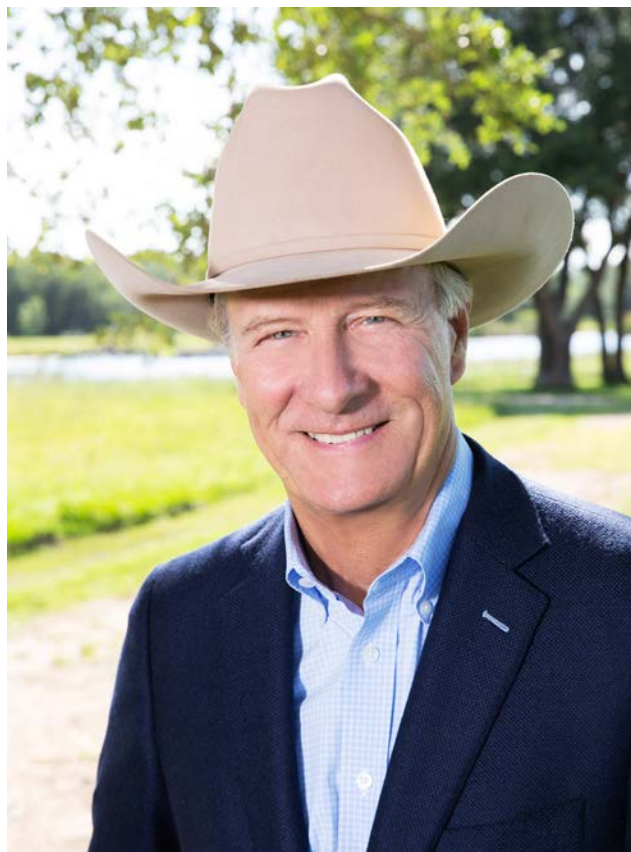
James M. "Jim" Windham

AGRICULTURE

EDUCATION

ENTERTAINMENT

WESTERN HERITAGE



from the CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Welcome back everyone. I hope you were able to spend time with your loved ones and get some much-needed rest over

the holidays. The start of a new year is always exciting, and inside NRG Center and around NRG Park it means we are in our busy season, getting ready for another great Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™. This will be my third and final Rodeo serving as your chairman of the board, and as we make our final preparations, I see the halls getting busier every day. I am constantly reminded of the hard work our volunteers put forth to make this event possible.

During my time serving as the Rodeo's chairman of the board, I have seen this dedicated group of people continue to grow, and in 2019, we reached our highest number yet. We currently

have 35,000 volunteers, and it takes every single person, serving on our 108 committees, to successfully host the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. As we gear up for another exciting year, I want to give a Texas-sized thank you to each of our volunteers. My wife, Lynda, and I feel incredibly fortunate to be part of such a great organization that impacts people in so many ways.

The mission of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo is to promote agriculture, but we also support Texas youth and education and deliver a top-of-the-line experience to our visitors.

We are always working on bringing in exciting new attractions, and this year, we are excited to unveil two new exhibits on our grounds during the 2020 Rodeo that will allow fans to get up-close-and-personal with animal athletes, the Born to Buck® exhibit and Extreme

Dogs. In addition, the new Farming Simulator will put participants to the test in a timed hay stacking competition, and our Industrial Crafts Competition will show the hard work of Houston-area students gaining experience in industrial construction. These exhibits and competitions are just a few of the many new additions to the Rodeo grounds. See our "What's New" page to learn more.

Providing our visitors with an exciting experience every year is key to the success of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, and we are only able to achieve this through the support of our volunteers. The work that you do is important and does not go unnoticed. Your time and effort support deserving Texas students, educates and entertains our guests and supports the world's largest livestock show and rodeo. Let's get ready for another great season. 🤠

All my best,

Jim Winne



WHAT'S NEW?

3-D RODEO Photo Opportunity

Commemorate your 2020 #RODEOHOUSTON experience in a big way with a new, larger-than-life 3-D photo opportunity, where the letters speak for themselves. Get an Insta-worthy close-up in front of oversized letters that spell out R-O-D-E-O.

AGVENTURE Park

AGVENTURE Park, located in AGVENTURE, presented by Occidental, offers a parakeet encounter, with a walk-in aviary, where you can interact and feed the friendly birds.

Balloon Art

Check out the balloon art display, located in AGVENTURE, presented by Occidental, as an artist creates a balloon-filled mural featuring a scene that will evolve during the run of the Rodeo.

Born to Buck® sponsored by



The Born to Buck exhibit, located in The Junction, allows Rodeo fans to see mares and foals up close and gain a better understanding of their lives inside and outside of the Rodeo arena.

Extreme Dogs

This amazing dog show, located in The Junction, features rescue dogs and includes all your favorite dog sports like agility, dock diving, high jump, weave pole racing, disc and tricks with a brilliant cast.

Farming Simulator

The Farming Simulator is an interactive game that allows players to build their own virtual farm from the ground up. The exhibit, located on the east side of NRG Center, includes six stations where participants can test their farming skills in a timed hay stacking competition.

Sensory Friendly Carnival Experience

The Rodeo's first-ever Sensory Friendly Carnival Experience will be held Thursday, March 5, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in select areas of the Rodeo carnival. During this time, there will be minimal lights and sounds permitted in the carnival to provide an accommodating and positive experience for guests with sensory sensitivities or challenges.

The Social Spur

The Social Spur is an interactive social media experience for Rodeo fans, located near the McNee entrance, and features music, TVs, photo opportunities and engaging activations for visitors. It also offers phone charging stations, a water refill station and seating areas for attendees to relax and recharge during their visit.



HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW AND RODEO™

2020 RODEO UNCORKED!®

INTERNATIONAL WINE COMPETITION



**GRAND
CHAMPION
BEST OF SHOW**
Piper-Heidsieck
Brut
Champagne, NV



**RESERVE GRAND
CHAMPION
BEST OF SHOW**
Cavaliere d'Oro
Bellezza
Chianti Classico
Gran Selezione
DOCG, 2015



TOP TEXAS WINE
Bingham Family
Vineyards
Dugout Red,
Texas High Plains,
2017



BECKER VINEYARDS
Texas Hill Country

TOP TEXAS WINERY
Becker Vineyards,
Fredericksburg, Texas

DOUBLE-GOLD MEDAL WINNERS FROM TEXAS

Augusta Vin Winery

Becker Vineyards

Bending Branch Winery

Bingham Family Vineyards

Brennan Vineyards

Carter Creek Family Winery

Frascone Winery

Haak Vineyards & Winery

Hye Meadow Winery

Llano Estacado Winery

Longhorn Cellars

Messina Hof Winery

Old Man Scary Cellars

Pelle Legna

Perissos Vineyards and Winery

Reddy Vineyards

Threshold Vineyards

Wedding Oak Winery

CHAMPION WINE GARDEN

Visit the Champion Wine Garden during the 2020 Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, March 3 – 22, to enjoy award-winning wines. Stop by the Champion WineGarden Thursday, March 5, for Texas Wine Celebration Day.

Visit rodeohouston.com/wine for a complete list of 2020 winners.



BY SCOTT HILL BUMGARDNER

RODEOHOUSTON® hosts many amazing athletes each year, with the world's best rodeo competitors vying for top prizes. However, two-legged rodeo competitors are not the only top athletes at the Rodeo. Their athleticism and performance also depend on the abilities of the stock they ride — a distinction that makes rodeo unique, thrilling, unpredictable and often dangerous. Massive, angry bulls test the bare strength of competitors in the bull-riding competition, while

barrel-racers test the agility and speed of their ponies against an unforgiving clock.

Held Feb. 27 - March 5 in NRG Arena, the Cutting Horse Show challenges riders and their horses against cattle. The competition is a unique contest that combines athleticism and artistry; one where the rider is little more than a passenger on the half-ton horse driven by instinct and intelligence. This sport is dominated by the American Quarter Horse breed, with cutting horses that have been specifically trained and bred to work cattle.



Photo by Trout Photography

“Cutting began years ago on the large ranches in order to sort and separate cattle for weaning, branding and doctoring,” said Bryant Slaughter, a cutting horse trainer. “If you couldn’t rope a cow, you could ride in and cut it out of the herd so you could do whatever you needed to do with it. This work eventually turned into a sport and hobby — an expensive sport because you need cattle.”

Once the cow is driven from the herd, the cowhand lowers the reins and the horse takes over. Because of their instincts, the separated cow tries to return to the herd, as if being drawn back by a giant magnet. The horse will duck and dodge to stop the separated cow from rejoining the herd, but even a good ranch horse may not be able to handle the job.

However, the cutting horse has been bred for this work, mirroring the cow as it charges from one side of the arena to the other, sometimes nose-to-nose, constantly blocking its return to the herd. The athleticism of the horses is a thrill to watch. They often lower their centers of gravity to maintain balance, increase their agility and look eye-to-eye with the cow — dipping so low that the rider’s saddle stirrups almost hit the ground. The horses slide with legs spread

wide, making jarring stops, and then instantly pivoting and lurching in the opposite direction — all to maintain control of the cow. It makes for an exciting event that often has the audience on its feet.

The National Cutting Horse Association oversees and promotes these competitive events, where judges decide who works best at dominating two or three cows in each 2.5-minute run. The Rodeo operates as an affiliate of the NCHA to bring the event to our Houston competitors and audiences. Ty Tipton, vice chairman of the Cutting Horse Committee, is hoping for a return of Phil Rapp, the NCHA all-time-leading money earner in the sport, with winnings of \$8.8 million.

In 2019, the Rodeo provided added prize money amounting to \$59,900 to the cutters in 12 classes. The Rodeo also provides scholarships and other prizes, including saddles, for youth competitors.

“Before the first slice of brisket is served at the World’s Championship Bar-B-Que Contest, cutting horses and contestants are working the floor of NRG Arena,” Tipton said. “We are cutting over there all day long, and we would love to see the folks come out and enjoy the show.”

MEET ANNA ZUMPARNO

BY STEPHANIE EARTHMAN BAIRD

Photos Courtesy of Anna Zumpano



It is a familiar scene: March comes around and parents bustle kids in the car to go to the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™. Anna Zumpano's childhood followed suit, and she has been lucky to attend the Rodeo her whole life.



Zumpano will take her Rodeo experience to new heights this year as junior chair of the Jr. Rodeo Committee. JRC allows volunteers between the ages of 17 and 20 to support the Rodeo's mission through rotating work assignments across multiple committees.

She's a true "daughter of the Rodeo" as Zumpano's parents are committee volunteers themselves. "My mom would come home and talk about how much fun the kids were having in JRC and all the cool experiences they were getting," Zumpano said. "I knew as soon as I was old enough, I wanted to join."

Mission accomplished in 2017. Zumpano wasted no time exhibiting her ambition, rising from volunteer to captain, vice chair and now chair in four short years.

The Texas A&M Animal Science major prioritizes school first, but enjoys finding time to fulfill her JRC duties. "It gets challenging at times, but overall it has been a very rewarding experience that has shown me how capable I am of being a leader," she noted.

Zumpano is driven by her desire to improve the committee each year. Her goals as chair include spreading awareness of the Jr. Rodeo Committee into local schools and increasing interaction between the junior volunteers.

Her favorite work assignment was with the Calf Scramble Committee. "They were all so enthusiastic and made the whole experience memorable," Zumpano said. Her heart is set on joining Calf Scramble when she turns 21.

Peek behind the scenes and you'll find the Dayton, Texas, native's upbringing is heavily tied to agriculture. Zumpano started participating in 4-H at the age of 8 and showed heifers through high school. The overachiever was also jumping on horses from age 5, leading her from English and Western riding to ranch sorting.

Her philanthropic attitude is alive in College Station, Texas, where she volunteers for two charities while also finding time for the Texas A&M University Pre-Vet Society. Linking college education to her role as JRC chair, Zumpano said, "I hope to gain people skills that will help me throughout my life and eventually help me advance in my career. JRC is helping me do that." 🐾





GRANTING THE

Future

BY KATY GRAGG

The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ donates millions of dollars in scholarships to Texas 4-H and FFA members each year.

However, the Rodeo's support of 4-H and FFA students extends beyond the scholarships. Over the past 10 years, the Rodeo's educational grants total more than \$1 million, helping thousands of students across the state.

"The support that the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo has provided for 4-H is pretty unbelievable," said David White, executive director of the Texas 4-H Youth Development Foundation. The grants specifically fund programs that have statewide impact, broad appeal and bring kids together from across Texas for leadership conferences.

FFA's grants support state leadership development events, which are competitions that require individuals and teams to work together, practice public speaking, think critically and work with fellow students toward a goal. For example, mock parliamentary procedures and contests help build students' comfort levels with public speaking.

"We try to support programs that will develop leaders," said Chris Boleman, chief mission officer for the Rodeo. FFA sponsors student leaders who receive intense leadership training and take those skills back to help run FFA chapters across the state. The skills include developing leadership workshops, learning




to facilitate those workshops, leading committees and becoming experts in agricultural topic areas. By taking these skills back to their districts and chapters, the students “extend premier leadership, personal growth, and career success skills to thousands of other students who are FFA members,” according to Texas FFA Association Executive Director Austin Large.

The FFA program helps with vocational skills, including job interview contests, where students are given hypothetical, entry-level agricultural job postings, participate in mock interviews, and are rated on skills including eye contact and ability to articulate their skills. “These are authentic, real skills that would be applicable throughout life, and transcend their time in the FFA jacket,” Large said. “Some may call these soft skills, but I call them life skills.”

For the Texas 4-H organization, the grants also fund statewide leadership programs and contests similar to FFA. One unique program is a mock Congress session, where 300 4-H members from across the state convene

in Austin, Texas, to simulate how government works. Each student plays the role of a congressman, senator or other role. Bills are then submitted, mock hearings are held and students go through the process of passing laws.

“This is a phenomenal educational opportunity to teach leadership and show how society is governed,” White said. The critical element of all these grant-funded programs is that they are all taught through an agricultural lens. Mock town halls bring forth issues that may affect farmers. The 4-H ambassadors learn leadership skills while preparing to teach other students about livestock, water and gun safety.

Supporting these leadership programs is mutually beneficial for the Rodeo, as well. Students grow their relationships with the Rodeo and develop lifelong bonds. Boleman considers the students and their educators key partners for the mission of the Rodeo. “We cannot do what we do without 4-H and FFA.” 



HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW AND RODEO™

2020

MARCH 3 – 22, 2020
at NRG STADIUM

Buy Tickets Today!
rodeohouston.com

RODEOHOUSTON® STAR ENTERTAINER LINEUP



Tuesday, March 3
MIDLAND

Wednesday, March 4
WILLIE NELSON

Armed Forces
Appreciation Day
presented by BHP

Thursday, March 5
BECKY G

Friday, March 6
**CHANCE THE
RAPPER**

Saturday, March 7
MAREN MORRIS

Sunday, March 8
RAMON AYALA

Go Tejano Day
presented by Fiesta

Monday, March 9
CHRIS YOUNG
First Responders Day
presented by BP

Tuesday, March 10
NCT 127

Wednesday, March 11
KANE BROWN

Thursday, March 12
CODY JOHNSON

Friday, March 13
LIZZO

Black Heritage Day
presented by Kroger

Saturday, March 14
JON PARDI

Sunday, March 15
DIERKS BENTLEY
RODEOHOUSTON
Super Shootout®
*presented by
Crown Royal*

Monday, March 16
KEITH URBAN

Tuesday, March 17
GWEN STEFANI

Wednesday, March 18
KHALID

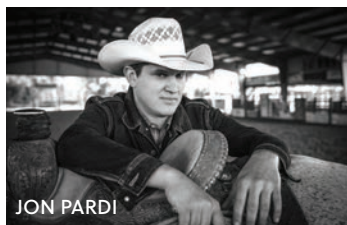
Thursday, March 19
CHRIS STAPLETON

Friday, March 20
MARSHMELLO

Saturday, March 21
BRAD PAISLEY

Sunday, March 22
LUKE BRYAN





JON PARDI



MARSHMELLO



CHANCE
THE RAPPER



LIZZO



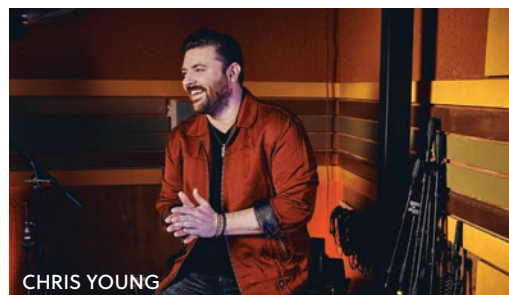
KANE BROWN



LUKE BRYAN



GWEN STEFANI



CHRIS YOUNG



CHRIS STAPLETON



BRAD PAISLEY



CODY JOHNSON

RAMON AYALA



MIDLAND



WILLIE NELSON



MAREN MORRIS



KHALID



DIERKS BENTLEY



KEITH URBAN



BECKY G



NCT 127





HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW AND RODEO™

THE HIDEOUT

presented by 

The Hideout is open March 3-22, from 6 p.m. to midnight. Weekday performers at 10:15 p.m. Weekend performers at 8:30 p.m. Free admission with NRG Park admission or RODEOHOUSTON® ticket (21 and up)

- 1 Tuesday, March 3
Josh Grider
- 2 Wednesday, March 4
Wynn Williams
- 3 Thursday, March 5
Croy and the Boys
- 4 Friday, March 6
Jake Worthington
- 5 Saturday, March 7
Pauline Reese

- 6 Sunday, March 8
Go Tejano Day
Grupo Zenio
- 7 Monday, March 9
Mason Lively
- 8 Tuesday, March 10
Max Flinn
- 9 Wednesday, March 11
Big Joe Walker
- 10 Thursday, March 12
Jon Stork

- 11 Friday, March 13
Black Heritage Day
Leon Chavis & the Zydeco Flames
- 12 Saturday, March 14
Chad Cooke Band
- 13 Sunday, March 15
Braydon Zink
- 14 Monday, March 16
Sun Valley Station
- 15 Tuesday, March 17
Market Junction

- 16 Wednesday, March 18
Grady Spencer & the Work
- 17 Thursday, March 19
Small Town Habit
- 18 Friday, March 20
Texas Renegade
- 19 Saturday, March 21
Bubba Westly
- 20 Sunday, March 22
Junior Gordon



MOBILE APP

The RODEOHOUSTON® app includes information on all activities happening on the grounds, parking information and maps, rodeo scores and athlete bios, shopping and dining information, social media feeds and fun camera filters.

Powered by T-Mobile®

Download our free
RODEOHOUSTON app
for Android and iPhone



Play RODEO RALLY & Earn FREE Prizes!

NEW FOR 2020: Check out the Games & Prizes section of the RODEOHOUSTON mobile app to earn digital buckles and FREE prizes.

Visit different areas of the grounds and/or complete tasks.
Prizes are awarded based on how many buckles you collect.



Did you buy your half-price carnival packs? Download the RODEOHOUSTON app or the Rodeo Carnival app to access your carnival packs!

#RODEOHOUSTON • rodeohouston.com

RODEO SCHOLARSHIPS – PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS



JUSTIN TANKERSLEY

Today Justin Tankersley's life revolves around the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, where he currently serves as chair of the Gatekeepers Committee and on the board of directors, but his initial involvement came about because of a personal loss. "My senior year of high school, my dad passed away, so I was applying for any scholarship I could," Tankersley said.

Tankersley received a \$10,000 Rodeo scholarship, which paid for most of his tuition at Texas A&M University. "It was just such a relief for my family, and my mom didn't have to worry as much," he said.

Today, in addition to his leadership roles, Tankersley also serves on the Scholarship Alumni Task Force, set up by the Rodeo to create more engagement for scholarship recipients. He encourages scholars to maximize all the opportunities the Rodeo provides. "Getting the Alumni interacting with the Rodeo is the biggest thing," Tankersley said. He has personally made the most of those connections and loves supporting the youth of Texas through his service. "There's so many benefits and perks to volunteering that make it a great experience. Knowing that our volunteer hours, when you're out there having fun, meeting new people – that you're impacting so many people's lives that you'll never meet, that's what keeps me going."



MICHELLE SANCHEZ

As a child, Michelle Sanchez always attended the Rodeo. Back then, she never thought much about it, but that changed in a big way when she won the Rodeo's Metropolitan Scholarship in 2016. The next year, the Texas State University music education major sang The National Anthem at RODEOHOUSTON® before the Willie Nelson concert with a paid attendance of more than 75,000. "I was not quite 19 years old," Sanchez said.

It is just one of many blessings she credits to the Rodeo. "Having this scholarship makes me not stress about finances as much during a semester. That makes a huge difference," Sanchez said, who juggles a busy performing schedule with student teaching.

Like the Rodeo, Sanchez is at home with a variety of music and styles. Now a senior at Texas State, she has performed in operas, with a salsa band and as a section leader in the Texas State Chorale.

Thanks to the Rodeo's Metropolitan Scholarship, Sanchez will have a world of options available when she graduates in 2020. "I see myself teaching in the future, but I see myself performing too. I can't express how blessed and thankful I am that the Rodeo is providing this for me. And, not just me, for the thousands of kids who have received a Rodeo scholarship," she said.

Since 1957, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ has awarded more than 19,000 scholarships to students attending Texas colleges and universities. Careers and life have taken these alumni all over the world — but for the following four scholar recipients, all roads circled back to the Rodeo.

BY MARY BETH MOSLEY

ELORA ARANA

When the Rodeo awarded a scholarship to Elora Arana, they got a package deal. First, her mom joined the Wine Garden Committee. “After learning that the money from the carnival and the Rodeo benefits scholarships, she wanted to give back and volunteer,” Arana said. Now it is a family affair. “My mom, my dad and me are on the same committee, on the same team, in different roles,” she said.

Arana said her family not only volunteers together at the Rodeo, they learn together, “I never got any experience around livestock or agriculture things until I joined the Rodeo, and it surprised me how much I enjoy that aspect. Each year, we try to plan to see all the grand champion ceremonies at the end of the Rodeo, the livestock competition, things I thought I would never plan to do. I’ve learned a lot about livestock and agriculture and rodeo in general,” she said.

Arana, now employed by Phillips 66, has enjoyed being involved at the Rodeo so much, she encourages other scholarship scholars to do the same. Not surprisingly, her recruiting started at home, with her sister, also a scholarship recipient. “My sister is in school at The University of Texas Medical Branch, and she promised that when she graduates, if she stays in Houston, she’ll join the team,” Arana said.



CORY SINKULE

Like many young people, Cory Sinkule’s path to the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo started with his involvement with 4-H and the FFA. The Abbott, Texas, native showed beef heifers for years and competed in the Calf Scramble in 2015. He successfully caught a calf and showed it in Houston the following year.

Sinkule’s experience with FFA drove him to seek out a leadership position with the Penelope Chapter and awakened a desire to serve in greater capacity. “The FFA kind of took over my life, and I guess I kind of took over the FFA,” he said with a laugh. In 2018, Sinkule was elected president of the Texas FFA Association.

Now attending Texas A&M University on a Rodeo scholarship, Sinkule said the experience has changed him for the better. “I’m no longer shy in front of other people. I’m very outgoing, and I feel like my ability to think on my feet, to speak in front of other people has been enhanced by this past year,” he said. Those skills brought him back to the Rodeo to speak at the Calf Scramble Banquet and at FFA events.

He is happy to keep coming back to the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. “All those people, all those donors, those volunteers, are all making a difference for kids like me.” 🤠





EXPLORING THE WONDERS OF THE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM OF HOUSTON

BY ABIMBOLA FARINDE

Photos courtesy of Children's Museum of Houston

Many Houston-area families enjoy spending time at the Children's Museum of Houston. It is not only a special place that provides unique learning activities for children in a fun and entertaining way, it is also supported, in part, by the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™.

The Rodeo has been a supporter of the Children's Museum of Houston since 2013, when the museum became a grant recipient. Since then, the Rodeo has donated nearly \$450,000 to the museum, which has supported The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Vet Clinic, as well as other programs such as Wonder Weeks and Abilities Days. Through the generous funding of the Rodeo and other supporters of the museum, 40% of admissions to the Children's Museum of Houston were free in 2018.

Since its creation, the Children's Museum of Houston has been educating the community through innovation in learning, which is evident in its mission statement. "The purpose of the museum is to transform the community through child-centered learning that parallels the mission of the Rodeo," said Tammie Kahn, executive director of the Children's Museum of Houston. The museum continuously works to provide educational programs and services to more than 1 million children and families in the Houston area on an annual basis.

The vet clinic is located within "Kidstropolis," which is the central exhibit at the museum where children run the town. Children can open bank accounts, work various jobs, pay with checks and use debit cards. In the vet clinic, they learn how to care for domestic and farm animals, such as cows, horses, pigs and chickens. It offers real-life experiences for children through learning day-to-day activities, animal care and food production.

Wonder Weeks, held each year during the Rodeo, encourages children to dress in their best Western gear to experience the museum exhibits, which are more focused on agriculture and farming. It is a valuable opportunity for children who live outside of Houston or even the United States to see products and services produced through the agricultural industry.

Abilities Day, tailored to children with learning differences, enables attendees to participate in special events with modifications such as light and sound reduction and extra visual signage for safety. The ability to tailor learning to any and all children, regardless of background, makes the museum stand out.

The Children's Museum of Houston was founded in 1980 by Houston parents who had the desire to promote early childhood development, but it was not officially opened until 1984. The museum works to achieve "a playground for your mind" through diverse projects and activities focused on classroom curriculum development, including

information on animals and the weather. The exhibits are specially designed to offer learning opportunities and help reinforce the knowledge that students gain from their day-to-day school life. The goal is to promote lifelong learning for children, which can start with their first trip to the Children's Museum of Houston. 🌟



HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW AND RODEO™ MERCHANDISE

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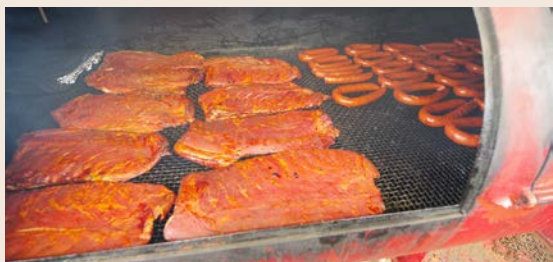
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BAR-B-QUE CHAMPS COMPETE INTERNATIONALLY

BY REBECCA MCGOVNEY-INGRAM

Everyone in Texas might think the Lone Star State has the best barbecue, but one local cook team took their flavor to the land down under for a global taste test. The Buns-N-Roses Cook Team, a local team from Friendswood, Texas, and the Grand Champion Overall of the 2018 World's Championship Bar-B-Que Contest, had the chance to put their recipes to the test in Australia.



Buns-N-Roses was formed in 1996 and first competed in the World's Championship Bar-B-Que Contest in 1997. Team owner James "Jimmy" Ledet said the team's name combines their original sponsor, Mrs Baird's®, and their favorite band, Guns N' Roses.

"The cook-offs we do are all fun; the camaraderie, competition, friendships and partying are all part of it. We have a blast with other teams and guests at cook-offs. It is a lot of hard work for everyone involved, but it is also a passion to win that coveted title," Ledet said.

In 2018, Buns-N-Roses received the prestigious invitation from the Australasian Barbecue Alliance to compete in the BBQ Wars of "Meatstock" in Melbourne, Australia. Meatstock is a two-day music and meat festival, full of barbecue competitions, live bands, butcher wars, meat expos and more.

Two Buns-N-Roses team members, assistant cook Chet Gentry and first-year member Rob Garner, attended Meatstock Melbourne in March 2019. Currently in its fourth year, the competition is one of the largest of its kind in Australia, with 55 teams competing this year.

"We were excited to hear that we qualified to compete in another country. We wanted to see how the competition and the barbecue compared to U.S. competitions," Gentry said.

Buns-N-Roses competed in the brisket, chicken, ribs, pork butt and lamb categories. Gentry, who has been a team member for 17 years, said the cuts of meat were slightly different from what they have used before, but they felt at home in the competition, even though lamb was a new category for them.

"The competing teams were very accommodating and helpful. They really enjoyed having someone from the U.S. in their competition. It was an awesome experience, and I hope to be able to go back again someday," Gentry said. "All in all, the barbecue community, whether here in the U.S. or in Australia, is very close-knit."

Buns-N-Roses received help from their own international team members, Jared McDonald and Grant Fitzgerald, to secure equipment, supplies and fees for the competition in Australia. The two, who

are from New Zealand, have traveled to Houston the last two years to be part of the Buns-N-Roses team at the Rodeo's competition.

The Australasian Barbecue Alliance, the group that sponsors the Aussie teams in the International Village of the World's Championship Bar-B-Que Contest, connected with the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ in 2017 when the first Australian team competed at the World's Championship Bar-B-Que Contest. The following year, the Australasian Barbecue Alliance returned the favor, offering a reciprocal invitation to Meatstock.



"There's such a great relationship between Texas and Australia," said Jess Pryles, co-founder of the Alliance. "There's no cultural or language barriers, and we love cooking low-and-slow barbecue. We're excited to welcome our first Texas team and strengthen that connection."

Even though Buns-N-Roses did not place at Meatstock, they are no stranger to the spotlight. In 2004, the team placed first in brisket and won Reserve Champion Overall at the World's Championship Bar-B-Que Contest. A decade later, the team was awarded first place in the chicken category and Grand Champion Overall. Then in 2018, they again earned first place with ribs and a second Grand Champion Overall win. Only three teams in the history of the World's Championship Bar-B-Que Contest have won Grand Champion Overall more than once, and Ledet said they plan to be the team that makes it to three. 🍖



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