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ΤΗΕ Citizen

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SUMMER 2025

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Whoever thought all of this up knew we needed a halftime of sorts—	
A window of breath. And we've chosen to call it summer.	
I wonder what They call it?	
It's never convenient to put down your hammer,	
Or lock up your protractor,	
Or lock up your protractor, Or leave the magnifying glass in your drawer.	
All this building, measuring, searching	
Maybe when we're 80, we'll realize there wasn't anything to build, measure, or search for.	$\boldsymbol{\boldsymbol{\zeta}}$
Ask any 90-year-old, alone and gazing at the ocean, what she's thinking—	
and she'll likely whisper some version of: "Don't forget to enjoy."	
The menu is generous—	5
clockless,	
vacant,	
spacious,	
free.	
Any takers?	

Letter from the Editor

ACCORDING TO THE CALENDAR, meteorological summer begins June 1 and ends August 31—a total of 92 days. But let's be honest— summer doesn't live on a timeline. It lives in our senses. In the songs that played on repeat. In the smell of chlorine or cut grass. In the echo of laughter after curfew. Summer is less about the dates and more about the imprint.

When I look back on my four decades of laps around the sun, I don't often remember and reflect on the "Autumn of 2001" or the "Winter of 2010." But I can tell you the exact texture of the summer of 1995. I can recall the rhythm and speed of the summer of 2003, how it seemed to blur and shine all at once.

We live through every season each year—but somehow, summer is the one that sticks. Maybe it was the record that dropped. The sticky snowcone that turned our hands into candy. The first time we were away at camp, on our own. Or maybe it's just the magic of long days and short nights, that invitation to loosen up, look around, and live a little more freely.

Whatever the reason, summer has a psychological batting average that few things in life can match. It asks us to be present, and later, it rewards us with memories we didn't even know we were making.

This issue of The Citizen is our humble attempt to bottle that feeling. Inside, you'll find stories, songs, a poem, and - as always - even a cocktail. We hope something here clings to you like the best parts of summer do—unforced, unexpected, unforgettable.

Here's to the moments and memories. Here's to summer.

With Gratitude,

Ashton Gustafson Editor, The Citizen

Before the Blueprint, There Was Silence

HOW TEXAS ARCHITECT JEFF GARNETT IS RESHAPING MODERN DESIGN BY LISTENING TO THE LAND FIRST.

BY ASHTON GUSTAFSON



WHEN YOU DRIVE INTO GLEN ROSE, TEXAS—where the limestone outcrops and cedar trees outnumber the cars it's easy to miss the small studio just off the square where Jeff Garnett is quietly reshaping what Texas architecture means. The space isn't flashy. No ego. No gimmicks. Just clean lines, natural light, and a vibe that feels more monk's retreat than modern office.

That's by design.

Jeff Garnett is not your typical architect. He listens before he draws. He lets the land speak before he lifts a pencil. He calls it "letting it breathe," and it's not just poetic—it's his process. And in a world addicted to renderings, rush orders, and carbon copies, amid the endless repetition of design, his work feels like a rare breath of something honest.

"I never start sketching on the first visit," he tells me. "I go with the client, walk the site, soak it in. I don't want to pollute my imagination too early. I let the land breathe. Then I come back. That's when I start."

We're sitting in his studio—a sanctuary of steel, glass, exposing and showcasing the neighbor's rock wall —with windows that seem to frame the Texas sky like paintings. It's clear he built this place with the same intention he brings to his work: reverence for space, light, and the story a building is supposed to tell.

West of Convention

Jeff's journey to architecture didn't begin in a design textbook—it started in Pasadena, Texas, surrounded by oil refineries and strip centers. But even then, he was noticing what others ignored.

"I saw two identical houses side-by-side when I was a kid and thought, 'That's not fair. They paid the same thing.' It just felt... off. I've been chasing authenticity ever since."

His father, a residential designer, introduced him to the world of drafting tables and blueprints. But it was the vastness of West Texas—where his roots run seven generations deep—that shaped his soul. Alpine, Marfa, Brackettville. Places where silence isn't absence, it's presence.

"That silence changes you," Jeff says. "You see the stars how they're meant to be seen. You feel the ground in a different way. It recalibrates you."

It's that recalibration—the contrast between industrial suburbia and the raw expanse of the Texas plains—that informs his work. Garnett doesn't just design on land; he designs with it.

Sketches in the Silence

After studying at the University of Texas at Arlington and paying his dues at an Austin architecture firm, Garnett returned home in 2016 with a license, a young family, and a dream.

"Austin taught me the technical side of things—the grind, the grit, how buildings actually go together. But I didn't feel free to truly design until I understood that side. Once I did, it was time to go out on my own."

He and his wife moved to Glen Rose with two young kids and no safety. It was a leap—more faith than finance. "We had one income, and I rented a small office in Fort Worth. Eventually, we built this studio during COVID. I always dreamed of a space on a Texas square or maybe something way out west in the middle of nowhere. I still might do both."

His process is part mystic, part methodical. First visit: walk, listen, feel. Second visit: begin to draw. "It's like a memory game," he says. "If you listen well enough, the ideas are already there. I just have to bring them forward."

Instead of sending rough sketches, he builds full 3D models before showing clients. "I go all-in right out of the gate. It's risky, but it's authentic. I don't do halfway."

A Modern Minimalism

Garnett's aesthetic is unmistakable: clean lines, intentional symmetry, a minimalism that feels neither cold nor trendy.

"Some people say my work looks simple. That's a compliment. It takes a lot of complexity to make something feel that effortless."

He's not anti-flash—he's just pro-context. "I'm not against a bold roofline or height, but it has to belong to the land. Repetition, local materials, scale—that's how I anchor my work. I want it to feel like the building was always supposed to be there."

And it's not just lip service. He's turned down plenty of projects where he knew the values didn't align. "If someone calls and says, 'I've got plans already, just need you to tweak them,' I'm out. That's not what I do."

Instead, Garnett's projects arrive quietly—mostly through word of mouth and the occasional scroll through his Instagram presence. Over time, he's found a rhythm in his practice: alignment is everything. If the values aren't shared from the outset, it's not the right fit. During the design process, he keeps things professional and focused. The "grab a beer" friendship? That can come after the last nail is in place.





The Work That Hasn't Been Built (Yet)

Some of Garnett's most compelling projects live only on paper-for now.

"Not every design needs to be built to be meaningful," he says. "Some ideas are meant to haunt, to linger."

One such design is a cemetery concept that reimagines burial grounds not as sterile places of sorrow, but as poetic, reflective landscapes—a sacred space where architecture meets afterlife. Another is a design for a care facility focused on memory loss, where the entire environment is tailored to evoke a sense of calm, recognition, and safety. It's architecture as empathy, rooted in deeply human needs.

These "idea works," as Garnett calls them, aren't portfolio pieces to impress. They're meditations. Exercises in asking, what if we did this differently? What if buildings could carry emotional intelligence, not just aesthetic weight?

"Design has the power to hold memory," he says. "Even if these projects never get built, the thinking behind them will find its way into everything I do."

Curiosity & Fatherhood

Outside the studio, Garnett's greatest inspiration these days is his family. "I've got four kids—from four to eleven.

Watching them discover the world, build forts, ask questions—it's the best part of life right now."

His oldest has started to show interest in architecture. "We talk about lines, about light. I show him buildings I love. But mostly, I just want to slow down enough to be present."

When I ask what's next for him—whether it's designing a church, a ranch house, or something sculptural in Marfa—he smiles.

"Whatever it is, I just want it to be honest. That's the bar. I want the work to feel like it belongs—not just in the landscape, but in people's lives."

And that's the thing about Jeff Garnett. He's not trying to reinvent architecture. He's just trying to remember what it's supposed to do: shelter us, reflect us, and remind us of our place in the bigger story.

In an age of algorithms and aesthetic sameness, Garnett offers something rare—a quiet architecture that listens first. That pauses. That breathes.

And in doing so, invites us to do the same.

FOLLOW JEFF GARNETT @jeffgarnettarchitect jeffgarnettarchitect.com

Summer Playlist

01	I Don't Want to	Wai
	Paula Cole	

- 02 Golden Harry Styles
- 03 California Waiting Kings of Leon
- **Tripping Billies** 04 Dave Matthews Band
- 05 Forget Myself Third Eye Blind
- Fa Fa 06 Guster
- You Look Good in Neon 07 Silverada
- **Bubble Toes** 08 Jack Johnson
- 09 Undone - The Sweater Song Weezer
- Good Graces 10 Sabrina Carpenter

- 11 Sweet Nothing Calvin Harris feat. Florence Welch
- 12 Pink + White Frank Ocean
- Moving On and Getting Over 13 John Mayer
- Smooth Operator 14 Sade
- Slipping Away 15 LEISURE
- Remember the Time 16 Michael Jackson
- Walk Home 17 Bon Iver
- 18 Dancing With You (Baby) James Smith
- 19 Don't Send Me Away Dawes
- 20 Some Kind of Love The Killers



The Gustafson Girls' Guide to the Perfect Summer Day

TO LIVE THE PERFECT SUMMER DAY, you need just the right balance of sunshine, music, and magic. For Story and Sterling Gustafson, summer is not merely a season—it's a mindset. Whether poolside in Woodway or hiking through Cameron Park, these two sisters know how to do summer right. We asked them to share the non-negotiables—the can't-leave-home-without-it items that turn any ordinary day into one for the memory books. Think of it as your guide to the ultimate local summer starter pack. From curated playlists to the perfect towel, here's everything they recommend to be fully equipped for good vibes only:



Goodr Sunglasses goodr.com

Ultra-light, glare-reducing, and always ready for action. These are the shades that stay on your face through bike rides, water balloon fights, and sunset hangs. Bonus: they come in fun colors and names that sound like inside jokes.

The Perfect Spotify Playlist spotify.com

Every iconic day needs a soundtrack. Sterling's current go-to has plenty of surf rock and breezy Sabrina Carpenter ballads. Story's list leans more hiphop and vibey—think Zach Bryan meets early 2000s radio with a Bone Thugs-N-Harmony finish. Combine both and you've got the sound of summer.

The Daily Drink from Sip City 9111 Jordan Ln, Woodway sipcityco.com

Whether it's a fruit tea, iced matcha, or a fizzy signature drink, summer doesn't really start until you've got your Sip City cup in hand. Pro tip: ask for light ice, more flavor.



Vacation Sunscreen vacation.inc

Marketed as "The World's Best Smelling Sunscreen," this stuff actually lives up to the hype. It smells like nostalgic beach days with just enough SPF to keep you protected while chasing the sun. Leisure and luxury in one bottle.



Parachute Organic Cabana Beach Towel parachutehome.com

Stripes on stripes, soft as a cloud, and big enough for two. Whether it's a picnic blanket, pool lounger, or spontaneous cape, this is the MVP of any summer setup.

Acai Bowl from Mamaka Bowls 215 S University Parks Dr

mamakabowls.com

Cool, colorful, and packed with goodness, these bowls are the official fuel of summer fun. Customize it with strawberries, peanut butter drizzle, or extra granola—there are no wrong choices.

Because summer isn't just about where you go—it's about how you show up. With a little preparation (and a lot of SPF), even the smallest days can become the brightest.



Beach Vibes in a Bowl

THE MAMAKA STORY

SOME BRANDS ARE BORN out of spreadsheets, focus groups, and business plans. Others are born out of obsession—like, can't-stop-thinkingabout-it, reorder-before-you-finish-it, eat-it-every-day-of-the-summer kind of obsession. For KK and Carrie, the founders of Mamaka Bowls, that obsession began under the sundrenched skies of Laguna Beach, California. Three months of acai bowls every. single. day. And then—cruelly back to Texas, where the acai scene was... not exactly SoCal.

Rather than accept that smoothie sadness, KK did what any true believer would do: she convinced Carrie to recreate the magic from scratch. Armed with frozen fruit and a blender, Carrie reverse-engineered the dream bowl. The granola alone? Said to be divinely inspired—KK swears it was "probably from Jesus himself."

What started as a low-key delivery hustle to KK's high school turned into a full-blown phenomenon. One bowl became 50. Week after week, Carrie's house smelled like fresh granola, and Sunday nights meant strawberry slicing marathons. But after a year of bowls, blenders, and burnout, the girls hit pause.

Fast forward a few years, and the craving came back with a vengeance. KK, now living out of state, casually brought Mamaka back—thinking it'd be a chill summer side gig. Spoiler alert: it wasn't. Her college home turned into an acai speakeasy, with lines wrapping around the block. By the end of the summer, KK and Carrie had one clear realization: this wasn't just a passion. It was a thing.

So they signed their first lease in Fayetteville, Arkansas, and Mamaka Bowls officially left the backyard. Since then, they've surfed a wave of momentum, opening new shops and spreading their sun-soaked, smoothie-fueled lifestyle—one spoonful at a time.

Now in Waco, Mamaka is more than a healthy pit stop. It's a mood. A vibe. A little slice of West Coast soul in Central Texas. KK and Carrie believe life's best when you're barefoot, laughing, and eating something you love with the people you love. Their bowls? They just happen to be the spoon-fed version of that philosophy.

So grab a bowl. Throw on some corduroy shorts. And remember: the beach is a state of mind.

> MAMAKA BOWLS Waco Location 215 S UNIVERSITY PARKS DR WACO, TX 76701 WWW.MAMAKABOWLS.COM @MAMAKABOWLS

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THE CITIZEN - VOL 8 10





INSIDE AMY GULLEY'S BLOOMING BACKYARD AND THE SACRED LESSONS IT KEEPS OFFERING

by Ashton Gustafson Portrait Photography by Corey O'Connell Garden Photography by Taylor Vieger





HE FIRST THING AMY GULLEY EVER GREW was a miracle. She was five. A kindergarten teacher handed her a Dixie cup filled with soil and a few anonymous seeds.

Days passed. Then something green pushed through the dark. That was the moment.

"I remember watching it grow and thinking, this is magic," she says. "It felt like proof that God is real."

More than four decades later, Amy still hasn't recovered from that miracle—and she hopes she never will. Because in her backyard in Waco, on the very soil where a driveway used to be, a living sermon now blooms in full color. Zinnias. Dahlias. Passionfruit vines. Foxglove and snapdragons. The occasional rogue carrot.

This isn't just a garden. It's a spiritual ecosystem. A slow unfolding of beauty, wisdom, and sacred disor-

der-where patience is currency, letting go is a form of worship, and death is just a different kind of seed.

WHAT THE LAND WANTS

Amy didn't design her garden as much as she listened it into being. After bulldozing the crumbling driveway and garage, she started asking the land what it wanted to become.

"I try to walk the space like it's already speaking. Like it has its own dream," she says. "And then I just help it get there."

She planted what would nourish: vegetables for the table, flowers for the heart. She repurposed rocks from her parents' ranch in Palo Pinto County. She turned a clearance shed into a greenhouse. Chickens moved in. Dogs meandered through. Free seeds from a now-fa-



mous florist friend, Erin Benzakein, sprouted into fields of unexpected color.

Today, some flowers she never even planted—they came back from last season, or the wind carried them in, or the bees insisted on a pollination palette of their own. "Every zinnia is like a surprise cousin," Amy laughs. "They come back different, but still related."

SEEDS, SOIL, AND THE SOUL

Everything begins in the dirt. Amy starts every plant from seed, coaxing life from what looks like nothing. "If the soil is healthy," she says, "everything else follows."

That's more than a horticultural fact—it's a metaphor for the inner life. Like a garden, a person can only flourish from deep, unseen health.

There's no rushing it. No shortcuts. Some plants bolt. Some collapse. Some need to move because they're not happy where they are. It's all part of it.

"It never looks perfect. Something's always dying next to something blooming," she says. "But that's how the garden speaks. That's life."

THE SPACE TO HEAL

In a world addicted to control, Amy's approach feels almost rebellious. She doesn't rush to poison pests or over-correct nature's curveballs. Instead, she waits. Asks questions. And let the land try to heal itself.

"When I give the garden space, the solutions usually come," she says.

This ethic of trust is mirrored in her life. Years ago, Amy and her husband returned to Waco after leaving ministry. In transition and dreaming of what was next, they followed what felt like divine guidance to partner with friends on an unknown project—what would become "I wanted people to step on the ground and feel hope," she says. "And They did. They still do."

Magnolia Market. Her job? Listen, pray, and build a garden from rubble.

If you've ever strolled through the grounds of the Magnolia Silos and found yourself pausing at a bloom or wondering who imagined such harmony in the landscape design, chances are, it was Amy. She was there at the project's genesis, prayer-walking the land, envisioning what it might become, and ultimately helping bring it into bloom.

"I wanted people to step on the ground and feel hope," she says. "And they did. They still do."

BOUQUETS AND BENEDICTIONS

Amy now sells her flowers to local florists and from a charming little flower booth parked near the sidewalk of her home. There's no register, no employee, no lock. Just instructions, a Venmo handle, and trust. Every Friday morning, this little booth is filled with flowers for anyone to come and leave with their very own batch of beauty.

"If you can't pay, that's okay," she says. "Just take what you need and pay it forward with kindness."

That might be a bouquet. Or it might be something quieter—a breath, a moment, a reminder that beauty is still here and grace is still free.

RESURRECTION IN BLOOM

What Amy tends isn't just plants—it's presence. Her garden teaches patience by forcing you to wait, joy by being unnecessary, and surrender by refusing to be tamed.

And maybe that's the greatest lesson—that the land and the soul are more alike than different.

We bloom when we're grounded. We grow when we're nourished. We wither sometimes. But even that isn't the end.

A flower, after all, gives its life while still holding beauty. So do we.

To see what's currently blooming or to learn about Amy's seasonal workshops, follow along at @amygulley.





WE LOVE THIS CITY. WE LOVE THE FRIENDLY PEOPLE. WE LOVE THE LOCAL VIBE. WE LOVE THE LOCAL ECONOMY.

WE LOVE WHERE WE LIVE, AND SO SHOULD YOU.



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The Awakened Brain with Dr. Lisa Miller





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Hosted by Ashton Gustafson, Good, True, & Beautiful is an ongoing conversation with thought leaders and visionaries from across the world.

IN THIS EPISODE of Good / True / & Beautiful, Ashton Gustafson sits down with Dr. Lisa Miller, and what unfolds is less of a podcast and more of a pilgrimage into the sacred terrain of the human spirit.

Dr. Lisa Miller is no fringe thinker. She's a New York Times bestselling author (The Spiritual Child, The Awakened Brain), the founder of the Spirituality Mind Body Institute at Columbia, and a veteran of over 25 years of groundbreaking research exploring the intersection of science and spirituality. But what sets her apart isn't just the data—it's her presence. And in this episode, presence becomes everything. What unfolds is not just a Q&A, but a revelation: about children, depression, prayer, perception, and how modern life might just be starving us of something essential—namely, our spiritual core.

Miller details her early academic battles, recounting how her ideas were dismissed at Columbia Medical School in the '90s—spirituality and science? Oil and water, they said. But she persisted. Not for recognition, but because, as she puts it, "there's nothing more bedrock than our connection to Spirit—who I call God." And now the science backs her up.

The conversation is electric with insight. Miller reveals MRI scans and genotype studies that prove what mystics and mothers have known all along: those who cultivate a spiritual life don't just feel better—they live better. An



80% decreased risk in addiction. A 60% drop in depression. Brain scans showing stronger processing in areas tied to perception and reflection. If a pharmaceutical drug promised these effects, we'd call it a miracle. But Miller calls it our birthright.

They dive deep into parenting, too—not the Pinterest kind, but the sacred duty of helping a child name and nurture their inner world. "Walk the walk," Miller urges, "but talk the walk too." Pray aloud. Narrate the mystery. Let your children witness your awe.

But perhaps the most moving moment arrives in Miller's account of Mr. Danner, a patient whose healing began not in reliving trauma, but in being seen, known, and held—in "There's nothing more bedrock than our connection to Spirit who I call God." love. "We weren't locking him in the past," she says. "We were opening a window and letting life in." That window, this episode suggests, is still open.

What Gustafson and Miller uncover together is urgent and radiant: a new frame for modern life. One not defined by achievement, algorithms, or Instagramable identities—but by awakeness, presence, and that ancient, shimmering relationship with the sacred.

If you've ever longed to feel life again—fully, vividly—this episode is the invitation you didn't know you were waiting for.

Listen now. Your awakened brain might just thank you.

Rolodex of Local Businesses

Mortgage

John Snider SWBC Mortgage JSnider@swbc.com

Chris Allman Fairway Mortgage chris.allman@fairwaymc.com

Title

First Title ftcwaco.com

Home Abstract homeabstract.com

Inspection

Navigator Inspections navigatorinspections.com

Jeremy Heffner heffnerhomeinspections.com

Banking

Alliance Bank alliancebanktexas.com

American Bank

The First National Bank of Central Texas fnbct.bank

Lawn and Landscape

Field Creek Land Management fieldcreekland.com

Phoenix Landscape phoenixlandscapeswaco.com

Pool Installation and Service

Premier Pools and Spas premierpoolsandspas.com

Remodel and Renovation

KC Construction

Whyte Oak Homes whyteoakhomes.com

Home Decor

Lu and Home luandhome.com

Auto

Christian Brothers Automotive cbac.com/woodway

Food

Milo All Day milowaco.com

Di Campli's dicamplis.com



Aperol Passion Fruit Margarita

Ingredients

Passion Fruit 0.25 oz Agave Syrup 0.75 oz Lime Juice 1 oz Aperol 2 oz Blanco Tequila

Instructions

Add a scoop of passion fruit, agave syrup, lime juice, Aperol, and tequila into shaker.

Add ice and shake.

Double strain over ice and garnish with a lime, passion fruit, or edible flower.





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RECENT HAPPENINGS



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RECENTLY SOLD 2208 Cushman | Ashton Gustafson



RECENTLY LISTED 838 Country Lane | Austin Hooper



UNDER CONTRACT 10031 Tumbling Trail | Ashton Gustafson



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UNDER CONTRACT 2317 Lenamon | Blair Gulley



UNDER CONTRACT 1308 Fort Collins Dr | Ashton Gustafson



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Interested? Contact Ashton Gustafson at 940.224.0881 or email ashton@agwaco.com