FEBRUARY 2020

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Texas in Bloom

FEBRUARY 2020 | VOLUME XXXXVI | NUMBER 2

From the President

TSFA President
Gina Waters AAF TMFA

Love is in the air!

Valentine's Day is on a Friday this year and sure to be a busy day for all of us! Do you remember the Valentine's Day candy called Conversation Hearts? How long has it been since you have taken a look at how each reads these days…Text Me, Call Me, Tweet Me, Email Me, Help Me. Oh, how times have changed! Think about it for a minute! This is just what we should be doing to promote our sales! Taking time to Text, Call, Tweet, Email, and doing all possible to reach out to our customers, encouraging each to spread the love. There is simply no better way than with flowers! The consumer is going to buy something. It might as well be flowers! Text, Call, Tweet, Email to remind your customers that you are there to help. Good Luck! Hope it is your Best One yet!

2020 is off and running and sure to be one of our best ones ever. Education, Education, Education! The first High School Teachers Training & Certification class was at capacity, with many more scheduled throughout the year. High School Student Certification testings are scheduled throughout the state, preparing students to become certified to help fill the much needed openings in floral retail and wholesale locations.

Did you know you can enroll in Online Classes through TSFA? To obtain the Texas Master Florist Credential, seven out of the ten classes are offered online on the TSFA website. Then there are three hands on classes to be taken in a classroom setting. This level of education will elevate your recognition as a floral professional.

TSFA takes the best in education on the road, arriving in Waco on April 1 and then on to Dallas on April 4. There will be plenty of time to share with fellow flower friends and learn ways to be more artistic and time efficient. Take a moment before the Valentine's rush and register for one of TSFA's Regional Educational Events! It is as easy as 1,2,3!

1. Enter the Regional Design Competition
2. Register to study with Stacey Carlton AIFD EMC during the Organic Structures Hands-on Workshop
3. Register to attend the State of the Art Dinner Interactive Demonstration showcasing Stacey Carlton AIFD EMC. This registration also gives you entrance to the Product Gallery 2020!

Watch for more exciting things coming this year.

"All you need is Love" The Beatles

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PO Box 859 | Leander, Texas 78646 | 512.528.0806 | FAX 512.834.2150 | www.tsfa.org | dnordman@tsfa.org | taressad@tsfa.org | caroles@tsfa.org | amandam@tsfa.org

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Director of Education and Membership | Taressa Dominguez
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Education Assistant | Amanda McCoy
Production | Graphics by Kandi, Inc.
Cover Credit | Stacey Carlton AIFD EMC
Cover Photography Credit | Stacey Carlton AIFD EMC
Contributing Writers | Ashley DeFranco, Debbie Lyon TMF, Jodi McShan AAF CFD TMF, Maya Sagastume, Lisa Schuessler and Gina Waters AAF TMFA

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INGENUITY

WATCH YOUR STAR RISE

TSFA launches two of the six 2020 Regional Design Competitions
in Central Texas and in the DFW Metroplex.

TSFA returns to Regional Design Competitions in 2020 creating an opportunity for increased design recognition. A competition will be held during each of the 2020 regional events. The six regional winners will go on to compete in 2021 for the chance to be named Texas Designer of the Year!

Central Texas • April 1, 2020 • Waco
DFW Metroplex • April 4, 2020 • Dallas

TO ENTER IS AS EASY AS 1-2-3!

1. Verify your eligibility according to these requirements

2020 Regional Design Competition Eligibility Requirements

- Competitor must be at least 18 years of age.
- Competitor must be a member of Texas State Florists' Association.
- Competitor must reside in the designated region within the state of Texas
- Only one competitor per company may compete in any given year.
- Previous winners may compete after a period of five years.
- Competitor must pay the entry fee of $195.00. The entry fee includes Dinner and the State of the Art Interactive Demonstration where the winners will be announced at the end of the evening.

2. Review the rules at tsfa.org

3. Pay the entry fee of $195.00 and register on-line at tsfa.org

Additional Opportunities in June and August
TSFA will travel to two areas of Texas in June and two areas of Texas in August!
Determine the area closest to your place of residence and register at tsfa.org !

Rio Grande Valley
June 24, 2020 • Corpus Christi

East Texas
August 26, 2020 • Longview

Gulf Coast
June 28, 2020 • Houston

West Texas
August 29, 2020 • Lubbock

FOR COMPLETE INFORMATION VISIT TSFA.ORG

STACEY CARLTON TO TRAVEL TEXAS IN 2020

THE 2020 REGIONAL EVENTS OFFER THREE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES!

INGENUITY • A Regional Design Competition
ORGANIC STRUCTURES • A Hands-on Workshop
STATE OF THE ART • An Interactive Demonstration with Dinner and Product Gallery

Central Texas
April 1, 2020
The Baylor Club • Waco
Chair Tom Wolfe, Jr.

DFW Metroplex
April 4, 2020
Dallas Arboretum • Dallas
Co-Chair Jodi McShan AAF CFD TMF
Co-Chair Susan Piland TMF

A SCHEDULE TO HELP PLAN YOUR DAY!

8:00 am - 11:00 am	Regional Competition
11:00 am - 12:30 pm	Lunch on your own
12:30 pm - 3:30 pm	Hands-on Workshop
6:00 pm - 7:00 pm	Product Gallery
7:00 pm - 10:00 pm	Dinner and State of the Art Interactive Demonstration

REGISTER TODAY AT TSFA.ORG!

Registration price • TSFA member $75.00 • Non-member $99.00

ADDITIONAL FUNDING PROVIDED BY THESE TEXAS FLORAL EDUCATION UNDERWRITERS

Texas Floral Education and Product Partners

Platinum Level Founding Texas Floral Education Underwriter
BloomNet

Gold Level Founding Texas Floral Education Underwriter
Rio Roses

Bronze Level Founding Texas Floral Education Underwriter
Design Master

Bronze Level Founding Texas Floral Education Underwriter
Smithers - Oasis

TWO CITIES • TWO HANDS-ON WORKSHOPS

Organic Structures
WACO

Join Stacey for a hands-on workshop and discussion as she demonstrates organic structures as the foundation of a variety of floral designs with an emphasis on Midollino. Explore new techniques and mechanics to inspire your next creations. Bring your tools and create your own guided version of designs rooted in nature. Principles, elements and the process of design will be discussed during this interactive workshop.

To register for Waco call TSFA at 512.528.0806 or visit tsfa.org
Tuition for TSFA member is $175.00 and for a Non-member $199.00.

Organic Structures
DALLAS

Experience first hand the subject of large scale floral art installation from concept to completion. This is a first in Texas and TSFA is thrilled to bring it to you! Set in the Dallas Arboretum, this opportunity will open your mind to scale and proportion expanding possibilities.

To register for Dallas call TSFA at 512.528.0806 or visit tsfa.org
Tuition for TSFA member is $175.00 and for a Non-member $199.00.

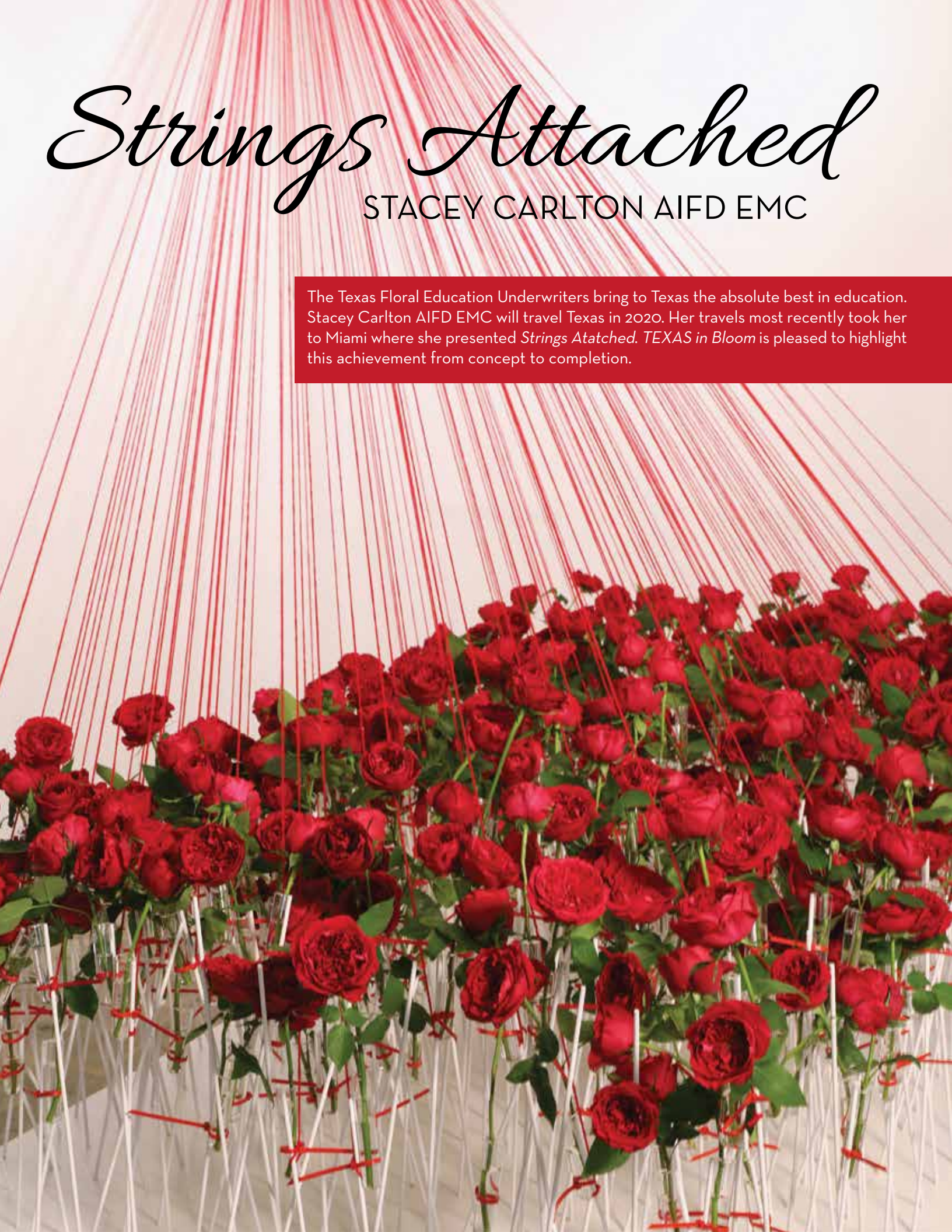
Hotel information for Waco and Dallas with special rates is located at tsfa.org

Artist Stacey Carlton celebrates the value in the vast diversity of the floral industry by wearing many hats including educator, consultant, event designer, magazine contributor and product developer. As the owner of The Flora Culturist, she energetically expresses her ever-evolving point of view with unexpected materials and unique combinations of botanicals. A lover of adventure, she travels as a freelance artist and speaker. Stacey's continued lifelong educational journey through various arts and horticulture are met with her experience as a second-generation floral designer. She is recognized for bringing a fresh perspective and strong voice to the visual arts community most recently as a feature artist at Art Basel Miami in 2019. Internationally published, her latest work is featured in the 2018-2019 International Floral Art Book by Stichting Kunstboek. Leadership is one of Carlton's strongest attributes which she demonstrates as the Marketing Manager for the the European Master Certification program, as a board member for In The Realm of Senses and as a member of the Floriology Education Team.

Strings Attached

STACEY CARLTON AIFD EMC

The Texas Floral Education Underwriters bring to Texas the absolute best in education. Stacey Carlton AIFD EMC will travel Texas in 2020. Her travels most recently took her to Miami where she presented *Strings Atatched. TEXAS in Bloom* is pleased to highlight this achievement from concept to completion.



Who contacted you to create a large scale floral design?

I was contacted by HGAB Studios to submit a proposal to be considered for an art installation to be featured at their Meet Your Muse, Art Basel Edition event. I was nominated by an amazing Miami visual artist, Tuto. Art Basel Miami is the annual city wide event. Meet Your Muse at HGAB Studios was the specific event within Art Basel Miami.

Please share a little bit about the history of these events.

Art Basel Miami, held annually and founded in 2002, is an off shoot of Art Basel Switzerland. It is the premier international art show in America connecting galleries, collectors, and artists. The entire city becomes a mecca of inspiration, a must experience destination for art lovers of every medium.

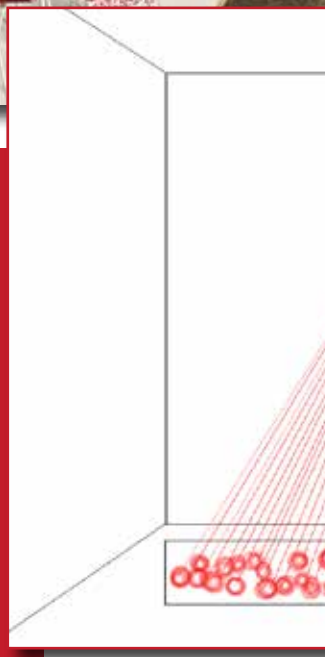
Meet Your Muse is an immersive playground of multidimensional sets and professional content creators all set to an energetic party atmosphere complete with a live dj, an open bar, and food trucks hosted at HGAB Studios, a creative workspace designed for the modern creator.

Did you develop the subject of the design or was the subject *Strings Attached* requested by those extending the invitation?

I developed the concept of *Strings Attached* in response to the invitation to submit for consideration.

Take a moment and share the process from proposal to completion.

I sent in my proposal which included a digital rendering, artist statement, materials list, and details concerning logistics. It is common that I deviate from an initial concept but not with *Strings Attached*. The message was imperative, the vision was clear, and the execution matched the rendering. It was more than just good planning though, all the stars aligned just so. The stellar support from Skyler Heck, my design assistant and the family - read family not team - at HGAB Studios was unparalleled. The energy was fully conducive to the production of the best possible outcome. It takes a village, a very genuine, supportive, self motivated, and trusting village.



A satirical visual and olfactory expression representing conditions that humans place on one another in relation to love, affection and commitment. A fragrant modern garden featuring an army of fresh red garden roses, the iconic universal messenger of the language of love will grow from a custom wooden base. Bound by a bold network of tense red strings this love gesture will make a strong visual impact. The olfactory experience adds to the transcendent and nostalgic journey for the viewer. The focus of impermanence in life, love, relationships, botanicals and the fleeting art of scent encourages the all important and increasingly rare appreciation and consciousness of the now.

Artist Statement
Stacey Carlton AIFD EMC

A gathering of products for such an event can often be a daunting task. How did you proceed to be certain you had all that was needed?

A huge heart felt shout out to Alexandra Farms for their unwavering support of the advancement of flowers as art. Every beautiful 500+ stem of 'Tess' Garden Roses was generously supplied by them. I am continuously in awe of not only the consistent quality of their exquisite product but also by the integrity that accompanies it. I am so blessed to work with their roses and their amazing team.

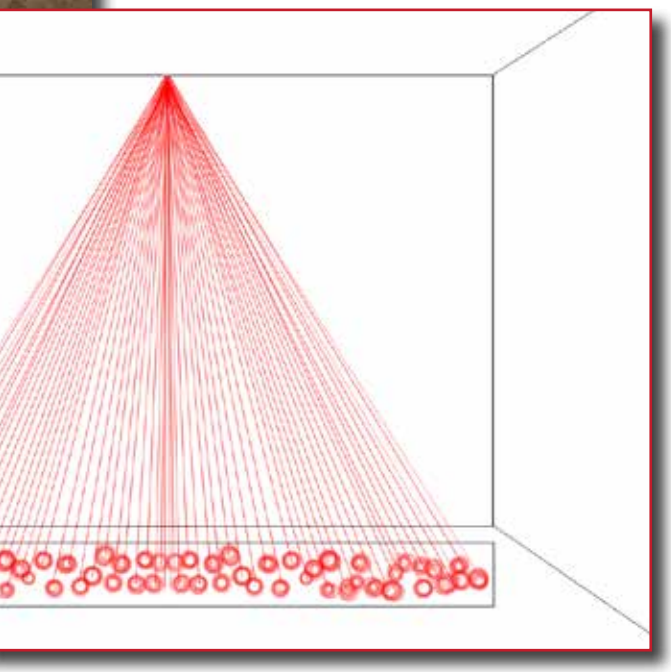
Share a few highlights of the development process.

I knew I must tell a great story and tell it boldly. Red was the only choice for this project as it screams love, passion and is representative of the human condition. Once I discussed the space with HGAB, the overall approach was clear. The execution of the installation was very straight forward. Complete each tedious preparatory task fully before moving forward. The result was so satisfying.

Design stands strong based on good mechanics. Share your tips in creating this statement.

UGlu on the water tubes assisted in securing the dowels, string, and zips. Allowing the cable ties to serve as both form and function added to the design.

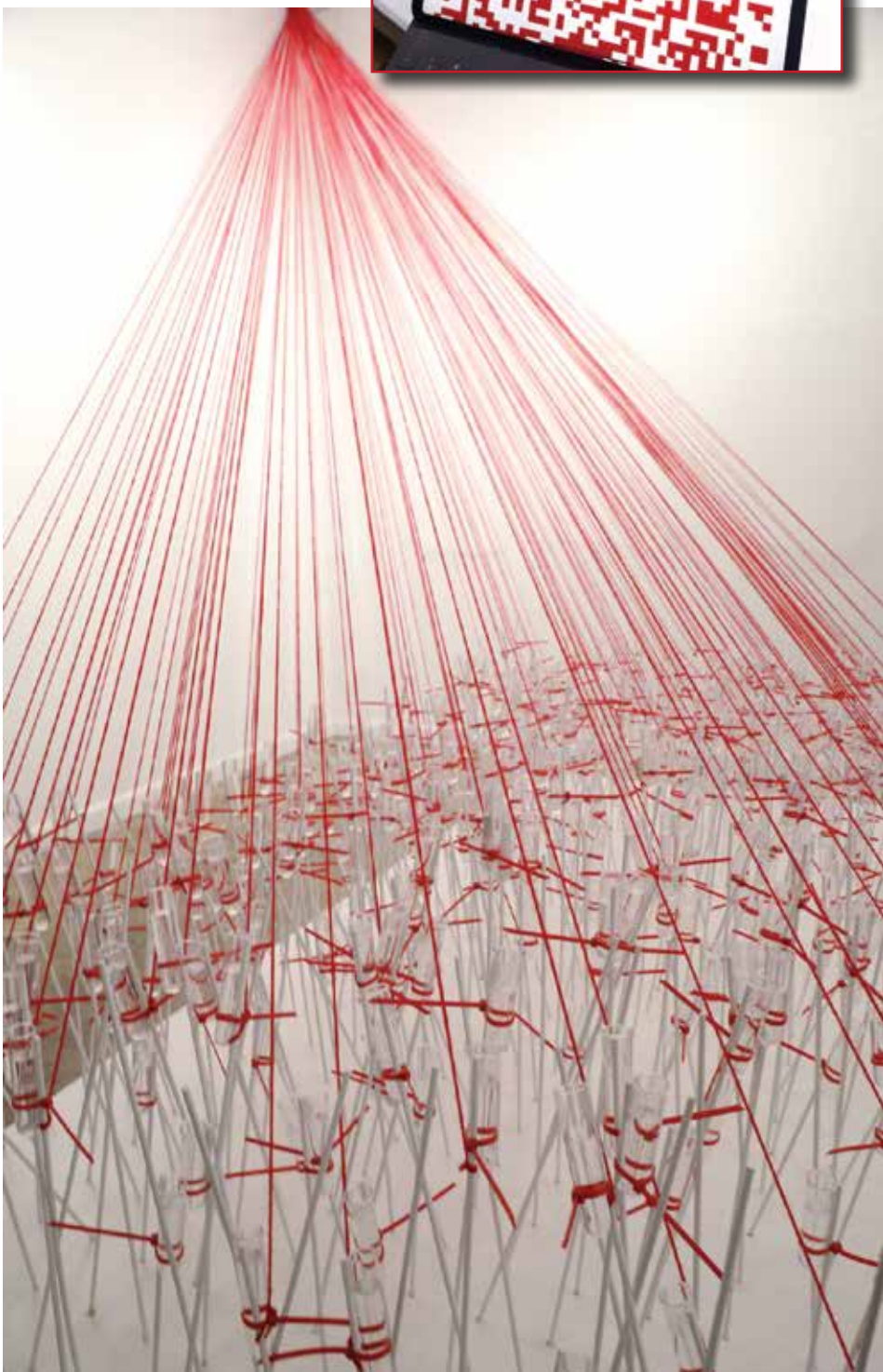
Pro tip: Trim the ends of your cable ties at a 45 degree angle to encourage the dialogue of purposeful form.



Strings Attached Digital Rendering

A few words about community.

I'd like to express my gratitude to not only the above mentioned supporters but also to Jenna Sleeman AIFD and to the entire team at Ornatus Events led by Alejandro Figueira AIFD. My global network affords me the opportunities that I pursue. I am forever grateful.



RIO ROSES

CONSTANT INNOVATION FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL

For the past three decades, Equiflor - Rio Roses has managed the growth, importation, distribution, and marketing of roses, carnations, and specialty flowers from the major growing regions of the world. As a leader in independent flower growing and importing, we are constantly innovating, with the goal of bringing the highest quality and the most value to every customer.

INDUSTRY-LEADING BARCODE IMPLEMENTATION

To make the entire distribution chain more seamless, we recently introduced GTIN barcodes to all our bunches. GTIN, or Global Trade Item Number, has been used in retail for decades, but has not been widely used in floral distribution—until now.

We purchased over 10,000 GTIN barcodes in order to create barcodes for each individual product. Each unique barcode provides an identity to individual flower type, variety, grade, and stem length. With the implementation of GTIN barcodes, we are now the only grower and distributor with these barcodes in place: All bunches now arrive directly from our farms labelled with the barcodes.

There are many benefits to having GTIN barcodes on all bunches coming from our farms: fast, accurate data capture at every point on the supply chain; the ability to automate warehousing; less waste; the ability to store historical data; better control over distribution and storage; and improved communication all along the supply chain. This is a massive upgrade and a major shift in the floral industry, all to the benefit of our customers.

EXPANDING PRODUCTION TO MEET HIGHER DEMAND
With the continued high demand for new rose varieties as well as the increasing demand for other specific flowers, we are continually expanding production on our farms.

As one example, the demand for Ranunculus is growing daily, and this product is notoriously difficult to produce. To meet the increasing demand, Rio will produce over 70,000 Ranunculus per week in ten different colors—and we have plans for even greater expansion.

Additionally, we are expanding the planting of sky blue, dark blue, and white Delphinium, and are testing new varieties as well. This couldn't be more timely, since Pantone just announced Classic Blue as their 2020 Color of the Year. All of our Delphinium, Ranunculus, and Anemones are now grown hydroponically on our Ecuadorean farm. As a result, we have increased our productivity and the number of stems produced weekly. By providing constant and readily available nutrition, hydroponics improves plant development and standardizes production. This has also reduced environmental impact.

As for rose production, we continue testing and growing many new varieties including Lynn, Candlelight, Frutteto, Tycoon, Country Home, Magic Times, Lighthouse, and our newest variety, the lavender Govinda.

At Rio, we also focus on sustainability as a key component of our production. Currently, many of our Colombian farms are Rainforest Alliance and Florverde Sustainable Flowers certified; additionally, all of our farms in Ecuador are certified by Flor Ecuador.

We at Equiflor - Rio Roses are determined to produce the highest quality branded products with the most stringent standards in the market. That's why we will continue to be at the forefront of innovation, both at the farm level and the supply chain level, to the benefit of every customer.

THE BUSINESS OF *Flowers*

Jodi McShan AAF CFD TMF

Build Your Brand

Branding is important, and I am not just talking about branding cows! But… it's relatable. Especially for those florists not in a large metroplex, I bet you can recognize the brands of major ranches in the area. Why? It is consistent. It is everywhere. It is recognizable. It stands out. It identifies.

For all of these reasons, other businesses spend millions of dollars on branding – whether its through radio ads, internet marketing, free pens, koozies, mousepads, etc. Whatever the medium may be, everyone is reaching to get his/her name out there. You want to claim your product. Claiming your product is an extension of yourself and what you represent. If something is not up to your standards or not your style, you do not want your name (read: brand) on it. If it meets your personal standards, then you definitely want others to identify that product with you.

Some of you are thinking… of course, Jodi, you have caladium leaves. Remember, that did not come about in a day. Additionally, building your brand is not a one-time feat. You are building or destroying your brand on a day-to-day basis. This can be through your products, your customer service, or even how your driver is driving the delivery van with your name (read: billboard) on the side. People remember how you make them feel. They need to associate your brand with happiness, love, comfort, peace – positive emotions.

You can build your brand as a designer as well – it's not just a brick and mortar thing! Many of you can look at a design and think "oh wow! Stacey Carlton created that!" That comes from years of branding. You don't think oh that blonde girl did something. She has spent the time branding herself and her designs.

While you can reinvent the wheel (and some of you may want to reinvent yourself at some point), keep in mind that brand is fluid. While you can build a strong brand that is easily recognizable, it can change with time. Look at your flower shop's designs from the 80's or 90's and what you are doing now – or even look at the wire service's featured items and how they have changed with time. Our consumers change, your designs may update; but be sure that you are staying true to yourself and your brand. How you hold yourself out to your customer defines how they view you, why they call you, and what they will say about you.

The most valuable thing you have is your name and your brand. It takes years to build and minutes to destroy. Be sure that you are taking the time to cherish and grow your brand and not jump at the next quick money-maker that may destroy what you have worked so hard to establish.

If you have this strong brand, look back through your *TEXAS in Bloom* magazines and check out the article on trademarking. If you are proud of your brand and want to make sure you are protected from others stealing your hard work, be sure you trademark yourself!

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Gina Waters, AAF, TMFA
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DALLAS

Happily Ever After

Wedding of Morgan Ethridge and Chase Schuessler
Wedding Florals and Decor by Lisa Schuessler

Wedding designers connect with a Bride and bring forth her vision with information drawn from one or two consultations. How fortunate one is when the Bride has been in her life for over ten years and is marrying her one and only son. TSFA member Lisa Schuessler shares just how years of wedding dreams and well planned ideas translate into one evening and a decade of memories for a life happily ever after. Here's her story.

How did Chase share the news that he was proposing to Morgan? What was your first reaction?

He stopped by the house and asked me to go shopping. My response was "What are we shopping for?" His response "For an engagement ring!" ....and so off to Jared's we went with a wad of cash rolled up and stuffed deep in his pocket. I was excited! Because they had dated for 10 years, had both graduated from universities and were on their respective career paths, the announcement was not a total surprise.

When did you first start thinking of just how you hoped the wedding would be?

The day after he gave her the ring! Well, honestly before that! Morgan had a Pinterest board going for quite sometime. She had shared her thoughts, ideas and dreams with me over the years. She was all about romance, even shopping from time to time to find the little touches that would add her signature when the day came to be.

How did the planning process begin?

To start the very first discussion, Chase said to me "We need to call Ms. Lynn!"... and we did! I knew we needed to find a venue to set the date. Securing the venue is always #1. Until a venue is selected and a date set, the other details simply have to wait! Lake Travis had long been one of Chase's favorite places to be. It soon became one of Morgan's. We were most fortunate to find a fairly new venue, five minutes from the house. Many have asked why we did not decide to have the wedding at our home. The property certainly provides more than adequate space, however slopes to the lake would perhaps present challenges for tents and limit the number of guests. All of Morgan's images were of outdoor venues. Even though she wanted the ceremony on the lake, she wanted the setting romantic and bridal. Putting a pencil to it, we knew a venue made sense. So instead, we held the rehearsal dinner at our home.

Photography Credit | Elisha Kelch Photography

From left to right: Father of the Groom Chuck Schuessler, Mr. and Mrs. Chase Schuessler and Mother of the Groom Lisa Schuessler

You mentioned that Morgan is a romantic. What design style did you feel would best represent the wedding of her dreams?

The Farmhouse setting is on trend. With candlelight and flowers on numerous levels, the surroundings were romantic. Farmhouse tables and chairs with floral accented garlands, complete with vintage china and glassware, offered a personal touch. Glass chargers elevated the place settings. Garlands enhanced the windows and the staircase. There were 1001 details and as I had been taught, it is the details that make the difference.

As an event planner and floral designer who knows thousands of available products and hundreds of directions to take such an event, how did you approach the selection process?

From the images Morgan shared with me, it was truly no different than planning for a client. The wedding must always reflect the Bride. This approach was much the same. The only difference were that the consults were often held in our jammies with coffee or sitting at the boat dock having a glass of wine.

How did you approach the selection of the color palette?

Morgan is fair and is a blond and I wanted it to be her wedding, centered around her, being certain that every decision made brought out her beauty. I knew if the girls wore dark dresses or dresses with a lot of color, that the attention would be drawn from her. I shared images with her so that she could see the effect of strong color on the overall appearance. Also, we both wanted to see the people, not the dresses. From blush to sage to taupe we considered these softer options. Morgan selected the bridesmaids dresses, even before finding her gown, and without me. The blush toned taupe was perfect!

Did the dress selection lead to finalizing the flowers?

Flowers were talked about from the beginning. Morgan pulled pictures and shared these with me as to what she liked and also what she did not like. From there I knew what she wanted and what needed to be done. She trusted me with the color palette. With thoughts in mind I was off to Southern Floral Company in Austin to blend the varieties of roses that would set the tone for the perfect combination.

The world of flowers is your oyster. How did you begin to decide on the placements and the florals that would complete all that made up the overall setting?

The pictures that Morgan showed me and keeping in mind that she is blonde and fair. With the Bridesmaids' dresses selected, I went on to select flowers that I loved. Round forms were dominant. I reflected on the people in this industry that influenced me… Joe Smith, Lynn Lary McLean, Matt Wood. I had been taught "to just make it pretty." With the Rose varieties selected, Hydrangea to complement, Hypericum to add a texture and pop of color, Stock to expand the visual space, gray green foliages such as seeded eucalyptus and silver dollar eucalyptus to stay true to the overall design and Garden Roses to bring fragrance and that oh so special touch.

I often say that there is a jumping off point, a place to start, in planning decor for a specific space. What was your jumping off point in planning the ceremony?

For the ceremony, the first items purchased were milk jugs. Double doors, adorned with floral wreaths, provided an entry to the aisle where Baby's Breath filled the milk jugs that banked the rose petaled aisle leading to a structure shaped like a home. To

4

2

adorn the structure, roses were attached to Southern Smilax, as if the roses were growing.

Why baby's breath?
I loved the openness of it. I knew that it would appear like a cloud of white color. It is on trend and offered a twist from the bouquets of roses.

You mentioned a rose petaled aisle. Share a little more about this.
Needing 1,000 roses to petal the aisle was certainly a topic of discussion. Is it necessary? Will it make enough difference to justify the expense? Can we do without it? I had always wanted it, but truly how important is it? I am so happy that I stayed true to something that I had thought about for a long in that it turned out to be my son's favorite part, his special memory. A detail that will forever be remembered.

How did you accomplish the day?
With a nine page timeline and friends! I will forever be grateful to Maria and Donny Barrows, Krista Bergman Williamson, my sisters Amy and Tracy, and Tracy's friend Karen, my neighbor Tamra, Susan Weatherford, Roy Holt, Becky Burt and the entire staff at Southern Floral Company and Lynn Lary McLean. I was totally calm all week which I know was in relationship to the nine page timeline. The week was scheduled with assignments made and all was flawless. I was hands-on and there throughout the day. Once I returned for pictures, I felt like I stepped into a fairytale. I know that the fairytale will end happily ever after. If I would have had a daughter, I would not have done a single thing different.

3

6

5

1

Thoughts, Tips & Techniques
Noted by number are the corresponding images.

1. Permanent Botanical foliage can easily substitute a fragile element.
2. Pre-made garlands saved hours and were fabulous.
3. The Arbor did not have a lot of wood to it so we added chicken wire to the structure to create a roof and to provide dimension. Otherwise, the design would have been flat with roses only on the front.
4. To save time, Garlands were placed on the guest tables, followed by the equipment and then top dressed with the flowers. Paying attention to the structure in a venue can make such a difference. Window adornments and staircase enhancements provided quite the appearance and gave height to the space with minimal product for those placements. A diagram of the settings provided the design team a plan that was easily followed. This also provided an easy way to double check that the correct amount of equipment was available.
5. To create the tall placements and expand visual space, the Accent Decor Sculpture Stand elevated a Lomey tray with floral foam secured with chicken wire.
6. Stones filled the inside of the milk jug to provide the necessary weight so that Texas wind did not compromise the design. Texas heat dictated that the baby's breath needed to be in water. A Cylinder vase was placed inside, resting on the stones in place.
7. To adorn the candelabras, a ring of seeded eucalyptus was created with roses later secured with Smithers-Oasis floral adhesive.

Member Spotlight

Debbie knew that she wanted to be a florist in the ninth grade following a chapter on careers in Mr. McGinty's civics class. She thought being a florist sounded romantic and exciting. Shortly after graduating high school, Debbie started her training at the Platt College School of Floral Design and fell in love with flowers. Here is her story.

My first job in the industry was at LeVan's Flowers in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Although I started out as a bucket girl, Mary Lee Evans, the owner, showed me that a flower shop could be a fast-paced whirlwind of chaos and creativity. It was all I could do to hold on and survive. After my start, I have been fortunate to serve in many roles in the floral industry. I have worked in a dingy garage, rolling gas station roses in cello for six cents a stem and managed the floral department in a high-end boutique grocer. I have designed at several brick and mortar florists and have worked as a wholesaler. In 2017, I hit a high point in my floral adventure winning the Texas Cup and named the Texas Designer of the Year.

The highlight of my floral career has been winning the 2017 Texas Cup and becoming the 2017 Texas Designer of the Year. Participating in a competition takes courage. It is not easy to create, standing alone before your peers. Then allowing your creation, and yourself, to be critiqued by unknown judges. It was difficult, but I am glad I competed, because it changed me. I have more confidence in myself and my abilities. I also love the inner workings of the competition. While I will surely participate in other competitions to stretch my abilities and creativity, I enjoy working behind the scenes, to make an event the very best it can be. Setting the goals, preparing the products and assisting the participants is exciting. I love to see what my peers create with the products and vision I have set before them. I am astounded by the creativity of my fellow florists and moved by their interpretation. The people in our industry have the most amazing outlook. I feel very fortunate to be a part of these many opportunities.

Debbie Lyon with her former Southwest Division President at Kroger, Marlene Stewart and Store Manager, Shaneka James, after winning the 2017 Texas Designer of the Year.

Working as a mass market florist for many years, I enjoyed the structure of the grocery store floral shop, with a continual flow of customers and the support of the larger corporation. I managed a Kroger Marketplace floral shop in Tomball, Texas and served as a floral mentor for twenty-two shops in District 6. In my newest floral adventure, I have joined Mary McCarthy's amazing team at The Blooming Idea. I can not wait to see what the future holds.

I believe strongly in education. Texas State Florists' Association has strengthened my love for our industry and enriched my life, by offering me several opportunities to learn and grow. I earned my Texas Master Florist Certification in 2017 and have served on the TSFA Industry Relations Committee. I am currently serving my second term as Secretary for Allied Florists of Houston. When I'm not playing with flowers, I live in Spring with my husband Kenn, three adult children, and two beautiful granddaughters five year old Braelyn and five month old Eleanor.

Debbie's grandaughters. Braelyn Ray Bauer holding Eleanor Ray Lyon.

My husband and I met on our junior high school bus. We may have started out as adversaries, but became best friends and high school sweethearts. We married and had three amazing children, Gabriel, Julie, and Matthew. Thirty-four years later we have added two precious granddaughters; Braelyn Ray and Eleanor Ray. Braelyn loves nothing more than spending her day with Nene and Pop. She is always ready for an adventure. Little Eleanor arrived early and spent her first 31 days in NICU displaying courage and fierce determination. She is a happy girl with a big smile, who no doubt will be joining us on her own adventures as soon as she can walk. Our sweet girls hold our hearts. We are beyond blessed.

My mother, Betty Jean Clarke, began her real estate career at 56. For the next 24 years, through shear determination, she made a name for herself in an industry dominated by younger agents. She taught me, by her example, that you are never too old to renew yourself. It's never too late to begin again. If I have a life motto it is "She designed a life she loved." The life I have "designed" is rich in family, friends, and work that is exciting, demanding, and ultimately fulfilling. As I learned long ago, "The floral industry is a fast paced whirlwind of chaos and creativity," and so is my life. I wouldn't have it any other way!!

Image to the Right: Debbie's mother, Betty Jean Clarke and her little dog Pablo.

One of the many designs I created for a Wine Flight Event at the Viking Cooking School.

SIMPLY *Social*

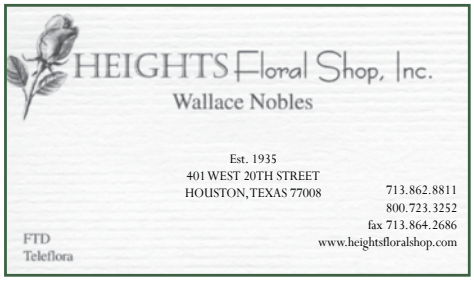
REACHING PROSPECTIVE BRIDES ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Coming up with new ideas to keep your social media wedding content fresh can be challenging. Besides sharing current projects, what else can you post to attract brides? This month, we will explore options to help keep your social media fresh and attractive to your bridal market.

1. While quotes can sometimes be overused, love or marriage quotes paired with beautiful wedding photography can provide inspiration for brides and grooms.
2. Providing resource lists of amazing wedding songs, favorite wedding books, colors, etc. is a great way to provide value to brides and can lead to more shares of your post.
3. Take advantage of trending hashtag days on Instagram (like #weddingwednesday and #tbt for throwback Thursday) by participating each week. You #weddingwednesday could be a helpful tip, inspirational wedding photo, while #tbt could be a photo of a past event (don't forget to tag the bride as well).
4. Treat your Instagram page as art, carefully curating content, keeping in mind texture and color to give your page an overall feel or theme.
5. Create an Instagram promotion or giveaway where the rules require brides to like the post and tag two friends. According to data from Tailwind, 91% of Instagram posts with more than 1000 likes are related to a contest. Meanwhile, accounts that run contests regularly grow 70% faster than those who don't. Contests are a great way to increase visibility of your profile and spread the word among brides.
6. Host an AMA (ask me anything) on your Instagram stories. This is a great way to educate and increase engagement with your audience and to answer questions from brides.
7. Use the power of video! Video gets exponentially more shares and likes than pictures. Sharing video content of brides with their bouquets from the wedding day can be inspiring and attractive for other brides.

Coming up with new ideas is often the hardest part of social media campaigns and having multiple ideas for fresh content in your back pocket will hopefully help you stay fresh and attract new business in 2020.

For more information, contact
ashley@simplifiedsocialmedia.com



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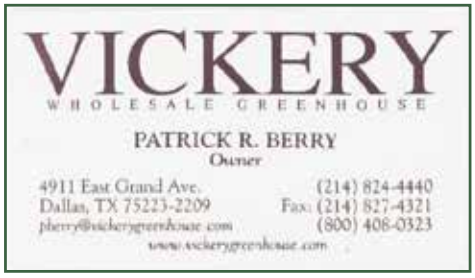

DALLAS

DENTON

AUSTIN

TSFA *Calendar of Events*

Design Credit | Lisa Schuessler
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FEBRUARY

2 Groundhog Day
14 Valentine's Day
17 President's Day
25 Texas Floral Endowment Annual Meeting | TSFA Headquarters 10:00 AM

MARCH

8 Daylight Savings Time Begins
9-10 Society of American Florists Congressional Action Days
17 St. Patrick's Day
18 TSFA Finance Committee Telephone Conference | 3:00 PM

APRIL

1 April Fools Day
1 Ingenuity Regional Design Competition
Organic Structures Hands- on Workshop
State of the Art Interactive Demonstration | Dinner | Product Gallery
Baylor Club | Waco, TX
2 World Autism Awareness Day
4 Ingenuity Regional Design Competition
Organic Structures Hands- on Workshop
State of the Art Interactive Demonstration | Dinner | Product Gallery
Dallas Arboretum | Dallas, TX
9 HS Certification Testing
Region 17 | Visit tsfa.org
15 HS Certification Testing
Kline, TX | Visit tsfa.org
15 Tax Day
18 TSFA School of Floral Design
Introductory Classes | Leander, TX
Visit tsfa.org
20 Easter
24-26 TSFA School of Floral Design
Introductory Classes | Leander, TX
Visit tsfa.org
29 HS Certification Testing
Longview, TX | visit tsfa.org

LOOKING AHEAD!

Feature story to follow in *TEXAS in Bloom*

The Texas Certified Florist Program courses will be held June 5-7, 2020 with the National Certification Prep Class June 8-9, 2020 at the TSFA School of Floral Design in Leander, Texas.

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