

home/garden

Fall 2020



Pumpkin spice

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Stephen Gross/The Anniston Star

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Stephen Gross/The Anniston Star

Clancy Brown, left, holding Finn, and Colton Brown, holding Minnie.

PUMPKIN SPICE

Clancy and Colton Brown celebrate fall in a 100-year-old farmhouse

BY LISA DAVIS

ldavis@annistonstar.com

When Clancy and Colton Brown were house-shopping, they were drawn to a 100-year-old farmhouse on a road that linked the city where she grew up (Jacksonville) with the town where he grew up (Alexandria). The view from the front porch is of forests and fields — not too much changed, perhaps, from the days when the house was built.

The couple and their two toy poodles — Finn and Minnie — moved into the house in January, only a few months before the pandemic lockdown began. Colton works in data analyt-

ics at St. Vincent's East and also serves as a volunteer firefighter in Alexandria. Clancy teaches English at White Plains High School.

"After quarantine, I needed a change of scenery," Clancy said. "I love fall. It's my favorite season. I needed cozy and warm. I decided I was just going to buy all the pumpkins."

The Browns' house is decked out with pumpkins in just about every room, in a way that matches the understated, classic style of the house. Orange mini pumpkins fill a glass vase in the hallway. Creamy white pumpkins line up on the fireplace mantel. Silver, gold and glass pumpkins are arranged on the kitchen

shelves — with one blue pumpkin as an accent.

The Browns love the history and character of their old house. The front part of the house was built around 1900. It features a long, wide hallway with rooms off to each side. After renovations by the previous owners, those rooms are now a master bedroom, master bath, guest room, guest bath and home office.

A kitchen and living room were added to the back of the house in 1964.

The house was updated without losing its centuries of character. The shiplap paneling in the hallway is original to the house. "You don't get that with a new build," Clancy said.

The 100-year-old hardwood floors still bear dark stains of who-knows-what spilled who-knows-when. Colton and Clancy don't mind. "They add character — and you can't get that back," Clancy said.

Colton pointed out other features that were original to the house, some still in place, others creatively reused. The old farmhouse used to have three fireplaces. Two were torn down during renovations, and the bricks were used to pave a sidewalk.

The range hood in the kitchen is made from pieces of the home's original wooden siding. The kitchen shelves are made of wood salvaged from the old

Kitty Stone Elementary School in Jacksonville (where Clancy went to school).

Colton said he had come across some of the home's original wallpaper, as well as some old Bibles and evidence that the walls had once been patched with corn cobs.

After decorating for fall, Clancy is already thinking ahead. "I think we're going all out for Christmas," she said. "I just want to bring joy."

Lisa Davis is Features Editor of The Anniston Star. Contact her at 256-235-3555 or ldavis@annistonstar.com.



Stephen Gross/The Anniston Star

The 100-year-old farmhouse was updated a few years ago.



Stephen Gross/The Anniston Star

There is no separate dining room in the old farmhouse, so when guests come to dinner, the Browns open the drop-leaf table in the hallway and pull up nearby chairs and benches. They found the antique table on Facebook Marketplace.



Stephen Gross/The Anniston Star

The long, wide hallway was the center of the original farmhouse, built around 1900.



Stephen Gross/The Anniston Star

The kitchen was added to the back of the original farmhouse in the 1960s.



Stephen Gross/The Anniston Star

LEFT: The range hood in the kitchen is made from pieces of the home's original wooden siding.

RIGHT: The shelves in the kitchen are made of wood salvaged from the old Kitty Stone Elementary School in Jacksonville.



Welcome Home.



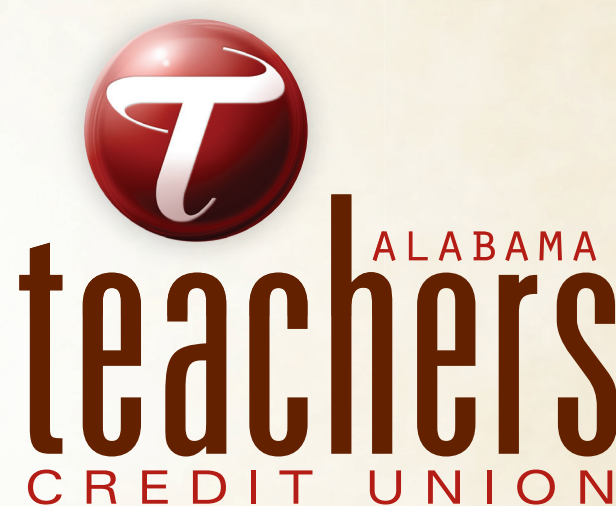
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Stephen Gross/The Anniston Star

Toy poodles Minnie, left, and Finn in the master bedroom. 'They know how to pose for photos,' Clancy Brown said.



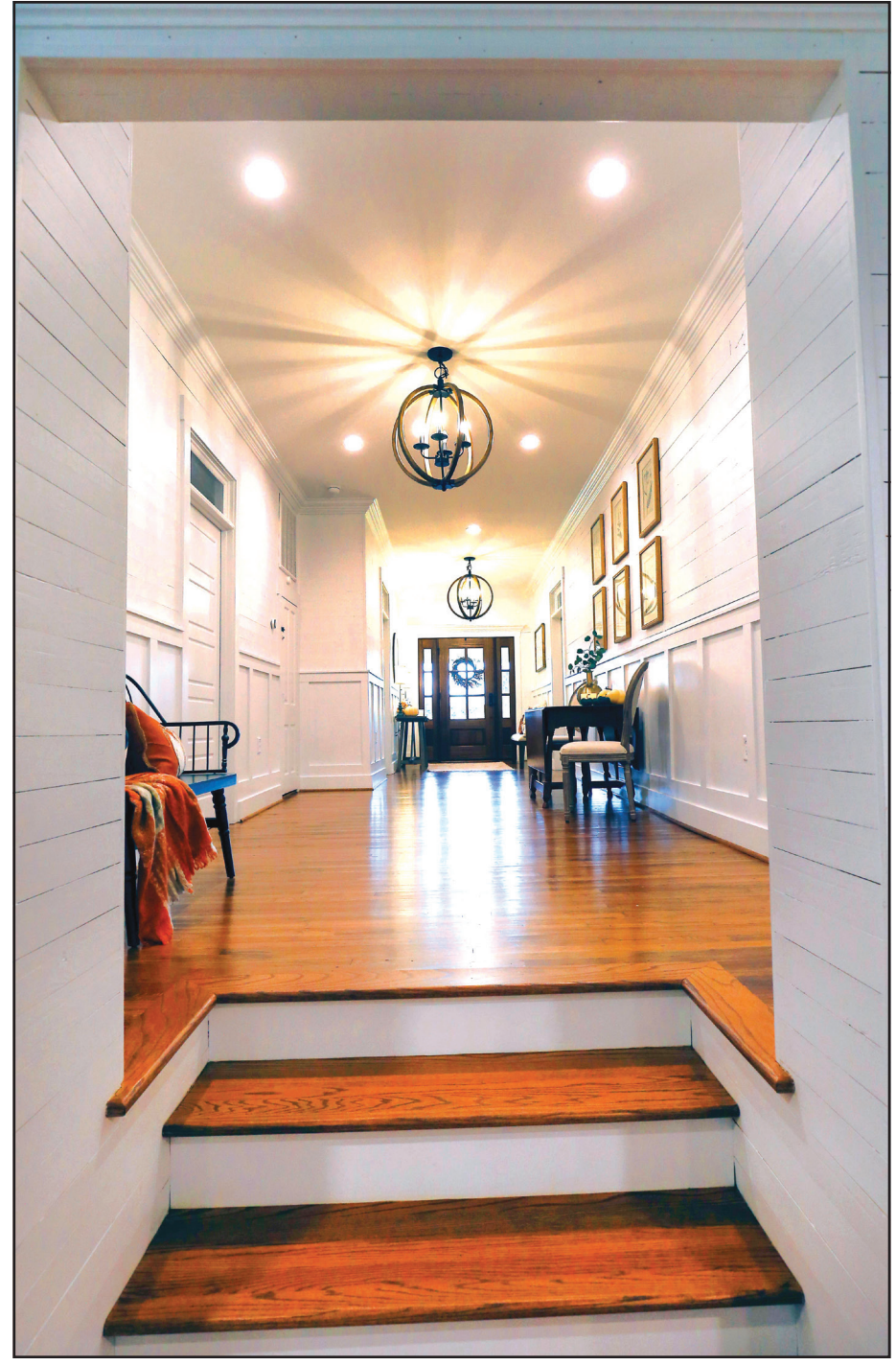
Stephen Gross/The Anniston Star

The fireplace in the living room has been updated with a coat of whitewash.



Stephen Gross/The Anniston Star

Renovations to the original farmhouse carved out a guest bathroom.



Stephen Gross/The Anniston Star

The shiplap paneling and the hardwood floors in the hallway are original to the 100-year-old farmhouse.

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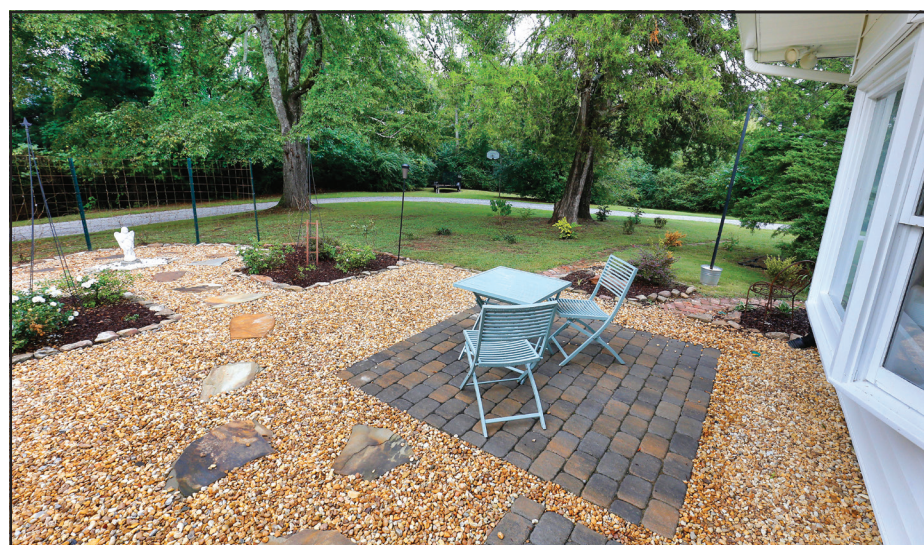
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“After quarantine, I needed a change of scenery. I love fall. It’s my favorite season. I needed cozy and warm. I decided I was just going to buy all the pumpkins.”

— Clancy Brown



Stephen Gross/The Anniston Star

Gravel, brick and stone are used effectively in the back yard.



Stephen Gross/The Anniston Star

The view from the front porch is of forests and fields — not too much changed from the days when the house was built.

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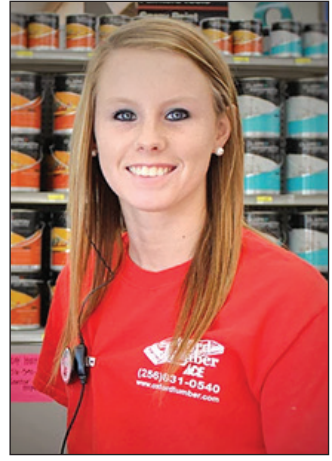
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THE SOUTHERN GARDENER



Dreamstime

Bird feeders stocked with seeds are important for times when our gardens cannot provide the sustenance birds need to survive.

FOR THE BIRDS

Create a garden that attracts fine feathered friends

BY SHERRY BLANTON

Special to the Star

Gardens are a gift to the birds, and the birds are a gift to the gardens and the gardeners.

These small feathered creatures have tremendous skills: flight, parenthood and food-gathering. Their songs delight us. Their beauty charms us. Our children learn from them.

Our goal should be to create a place the birds will gladly call home.

The benefits of birds

When birds are present, we do not need herbicides or pesticides. Birds are hungry little creatures and devour insects, including the pesky ones like the mosquito. They also enjoy seeds and will gobble up weed seeds, cutting down on the spread of weeds in the garden.

Like butterflies and bees, birds are excellent pollinators. They spread the pollen necessary for reproduction. They also scatter seeds, allowing for the growth of more plants.

Large scavenger birds act as street cleaners, eating the remains of animals who may have lost their lives on our roads.

Birds are a great stress reliever. Their beautiful voices are the garden's background sounds. Watching them at the feeder or building a nest can improve our sense of well-being.

There is satisfaction in feeding the birds. My husband heads out every morning, rain or shine, to fill our feeder. He gets a lot of pleasure from "his" birds.

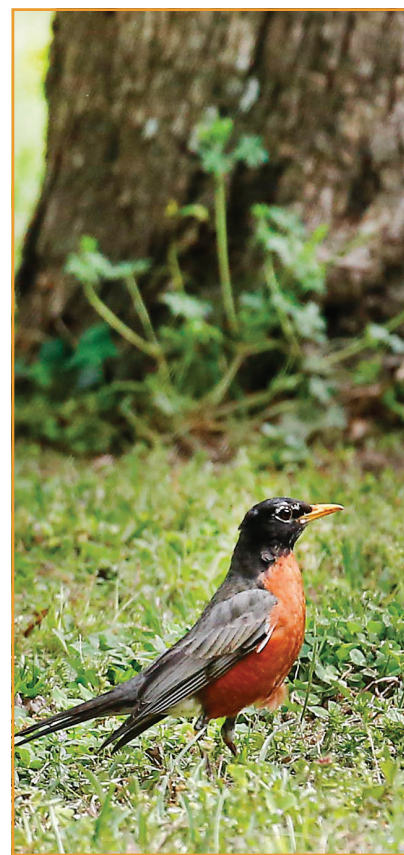
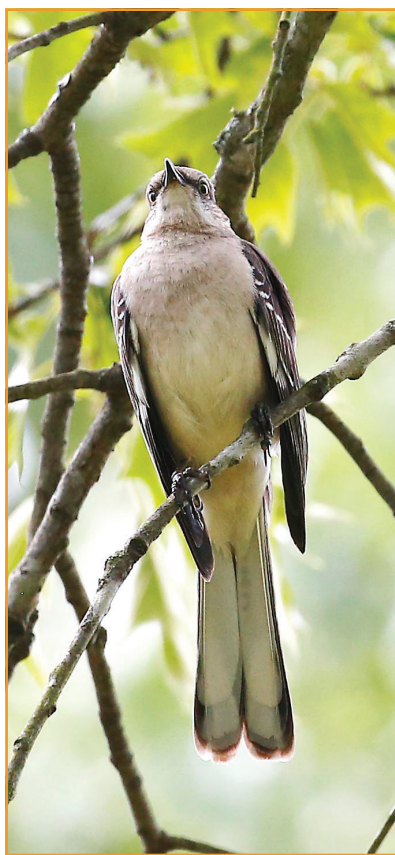
We placed our feeder so we could see it from the kitchen window and the front door. It seems the dog likes to watch the birds as much as we do. We hung up a small plastic cup to protect our hummingbird feeder from ants, and the birds decided that was their favorite place to have a drink (even though we have a bird bath). They line up to have a sip, much to our delight.

Last spring we spent hours watching a pair of bluebirds build a nest. They flew back and forth, carrying bits of straw in their beaks. They were terrific parents as they searched the garden for bites to feed the babies. Everyone who visited my garden was enchanted to hear the chirping of the baby birds. When they left us, we felt happy but we missed them.

Bird-friendly plants

Creating a place where birds feel secure and welcome can be accomplished with a bit of effort.

Install a diversity of plants to



Photos by Stephen Gross/The Anniston Star/File

appeal to a variety of birds.

Bird-friendly gardens include many native plants. Native plants require less work as they are adapted to our area and provide excellent food sources. An added plus is that many native plants are homes to caterpillars, whose soft bodies are the perfect food for baby birds.

Shelter and safety to raise their young are a top priority for birds seeking refuge. Trees provide an unending source of food and places to nest.

As you plan your garden, include tall canopy trees (oaks, maples) for birds who prefer to live in high places.

Plant smaller trees such as dogwoods for birds that do not venture high off the ground.

Shrubs are essential for birds to build their nests, seek shelter from the elements or hide from predators.

Food and water

A steady source of clean water 12 months of the year is necessary for the birds to get a drink or to bathe. They are especially attracted to moving water, as in a fountain. The water must remain clean and should not become a source for breeding mosquitoes.

Bird feeders stocked with seeds are important for times when our gardens cannot provide the sustenance birds need to survive.

We use hulled sunflower seeds; they do not sprout if they drop to the ground. Cardinals, woodpeckers and finches (among others) are constant visitors. There is also always a group of birds pecking on the ground picking up what the birds spill from the feeder.

We also offer suet during the colder months. The woodpeckers love it!

Bird feeders must be cleaned regularly to discard old food before it becomes rancid.

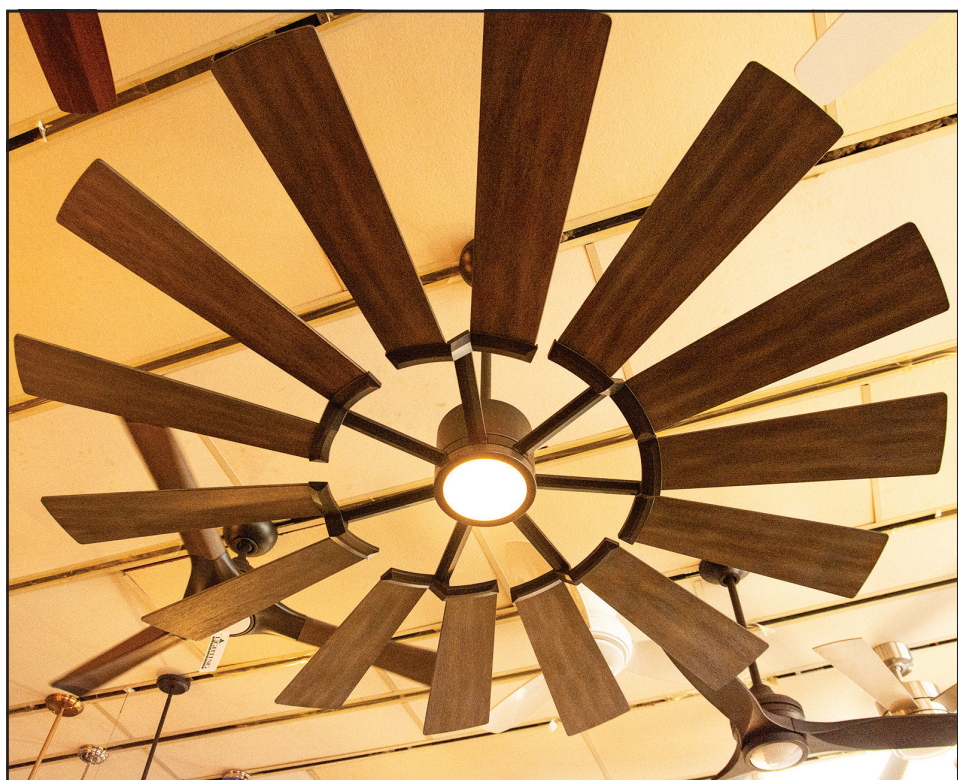
Keeping pests at bay

With a bird feeder comes another set of issues: squirrels. We just hung "an absolute squirrel-proof feeder." It is not. The squirrels' acrobatics trying to get to the seed are amusing and annoying.

Several years ago, a family of raccoons adopted our yard and routinely emptied the seed. We tried hiding the feeder at night (unsuccessful) and then finally bringing it into the house. That got old; as soon as we forgot, the raccoons emptied it. We finally had to have them removed from the property by someone trained to do so — not only because of their eating habits but because they are disease vectors.

I know I will step on some toes here, but cats are a bird's worst enemy and are responsible for the deaths of hundreds of birds each year. Cats should not be roaming outside preying on birds. One cat made frequent attempts to jump on our feeder. It kept missing, thank goodness.

Sherry Blanton, "The Southern Gardener," writes about gardening for The Anniston Star. Contact her at sblanton@annistonstar.com. Follow her on Facebook at Southern Gardener-Anniston Star.



Photos by Tucker Webb/The Daily Home

Different ceiling fan designs are on display at Lighting Showroom in Anniston.

You spin me right round: New trends in ceiling fans

BY FAITH DORN

Special to the Star

At first glance, the world of ceiling fans may not seem very diverse, but there are multiple new trends in the world of ceiling fans.

Indoor/outdoor

The newest trend among fan manufacturers is to make fans compatible for indoor and outdoor use. Something to keep in mind is if a ceiling fan is rated as “dry,” “damp” or “wet.” A ceiling fan rated as “dry” should only be installed indoors. A ceiling fan rated as “damp” can be installed outside. A ceiling fan rated as “wet” can be rained on or sprayed with a hose.

New styles

According to David Wingard, president of Lighting Showroom in Anniston, the newest style of fan that is growing in popularity is the fandelier. As you might have guessed by looking at the word, a fandelier is a combination fan-chandelier. Other popular styles of ceiling fans include cage fans and black fans.

Bigger is better

People are loving larger-sized ceiling fans. Ceiling fans used to max out around 6 feet wide, but now many fans are about 7-10 feet wide.

LED lighting

New fans with light kits are moving to LED-integrated light kits. That means there are no bulbs, and the fan lights do not get hot. These ceiling fans also operate at a fraction of the cost of non-LED-integrated ceiling fans.

Design plus function

There are several ceiling fan designs that are in vogue now. These include: thick, tri-bladed fans, two-bladed fans that look like a propeller on the ceiling, fans that have thinner, longer blades and different versions of the old standard and single-blade fans.

Although clear Lucite ceiling fans are becoming more popular, they are probably less than 5 percent of what Wingard sells.

Wingard explained that nationwide, ceiling fan trends are being homogenized. “Some Southeast traditional fans are hard to get,” he said.

“Design is very important because it is what you are

going to be looking at, but it also needs to be built well and have enough torque on the motor to move air,” Wingard added.

“If you get something that looks good but is not built well, you are going to have to replace it. The cheapest thing you can find is usually not good. At Lighting Showroom, we try to stock well-made, affordable fans that have a good look,” Wingard said.

‘Jewelry’ for the ceiling

Scott Skinner, owner and interior designer of STS Decorating and Design in Anniston, recommended installing a fan that fits your space and design area. He also encouraged creativity when selecting a ceiling fan.

“Just like picking out furniture or accessories, your fan is just as important. Be a leader in style versus a follower sometimes,” Skinner said. “Think outside the box when it works with the room style, and people will say, ‘Did you see that fan!’”

Skinner advised treating a ceiling fan like the “jewelry” of your ceiling. “A fan isn’t just a fan; it is an embellishment. In a traditional house, I’ve used a carefully selected modern fan when one might need a ‘punch.’”

Faith Dorn is a freelance writer in Anniston. Contact her at faith.h.dorn@gmail.com.



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SOUTHERN STYLE

BY LISA DAVIS

ldavis@annistonstar.com

Anniston native launches a design service

Alex Hechart, who grew up in Anniston, recently started a home design service with her mother, Donna Woodfin. Based in Birmingham, "Home with Hechart" offers design services as well as a shopping website for home goods.

The mother-daughter duo offer design services by the hour (for design ideas, party prep or holiday decorating), by the room or by the project.

The online shop, HomeWithHechart.com, features pillows, rugs, mirrors, fireplace screens, ottomans, dressers, lamps, linens, glassware, tableware, gifts and more.

The Star posed 10 questions to the design duo:

Why did y'all decide to start a design business?

Alex: We decided to start Home with Hechart because we've always loved decorating and playing around with interior design together. Growing up, we were always redoing our house or sprucing up a room. We would go to furniture stores, and we were always so excited about every project. We knew that we could have fun and bring value to people who want to improve their space.

When you're working together on a design project, who does what?

Alex: On a design project, I do most of the technical work like digital layout and design. Then, we work together on selecting pieces, colors, finishes and accessories for the room or home.

Donna: Alex will often give me several options and then let me choose which items I like best for a space. We collaborate closely on every project.

How would you describe your approach to design?

Alex: I would say that we approach design with an emphasis on traditional feel with modern touches. I'm drawn to more color, Mom is drawn to neutrals. Together, we can design spaces that feel complete and look beautiful.

Your latest project was designing Donna's new house. What was that like?

Alex: My mom's house was completely empty, and it was a newly built house, which gave us lots of freedom to update



Submitted photo

Alex Hechart, left, who grew up in Anniston, recently started a home design service with her mother, Donna Woodfin.

the space with everything you can think of — furniture, lighting, area rugs, paint, art, etc. We got to totally personalize the home to her taste. It was a top to bottom redecoration, and we loved it!

What trends do you see this fall in terms of colors and textures?

Alex: While we tend to be more classic and traditional, we love the colors coming back into design trends, and the great velvets and richer textured fabrics that we're seeing for fall. The best part about fall trends is that you can experiment with

natural textures and colors in your current space, like adding pumpkins and mums to your favorite front porch planters or benches.

Are we moving away from the "modern farmhouse" look?

Alex: We see the industry moving away from the modern farmhouse style, but we can still incorporate the best parts of that design trend into new styles and spaces. For example, if a client loves the rustic farmhouse table, we can give tips on how to make it look more modern and

cohesive in their current space. We always want to include elements that our clients love into any project — no matter the trend.

What are some of your favorite objects available on your website?

Alex: Some of my favorite things are our lighting options. We have awesome lamps and hanging lights, and it is a great way to update your room quickly and with big impact.

Donna: I love our glassware, because investing in new glasses or plates can make your kitchen look and feel more refreshed. It's also so fun to have them when entertaining friends and family.

If people want to give their home a quick update for fall, what would you recommend they do?

Alex: Something that would quickly elevate a front porch would be some beautiful planters with mums. They could pair it with a timeless boxwood wreath (we're about to get some for the website) that can be seasonal with colorful ribbon or even other greenery.

Also, we always recommend that our clients clean out closets and spaces to keep their home from feeling cluttered. A clean and fresh room is always a great place to start before a redesign.

Alex, what's your favorite thing in your house?

My favorite things are my antique Persian rugs. They were a bit of a splurge, but I love the way they tie together my home. We encourage clients to invest in items they love and build a room around them. I also always keep the camomile lavender LAFCO candle (available on Home with Hechart) burning in our house, and now it just smells like home.

Donna, what's your favorite thing in your house?

I have always treasured the oil paintings of my daughters. They have moved beautifully into my new space, and I love how they easily work with any room style. When we were decorating my new home, we loved finding a space for them with more modern pieces that we have on our website, like my dining room lamps.



Submitted photo

In Donna Woodfin's new dining room, she paired oil paintings of her daughters with more modern pieces.



Submitted photo

A sample design board for a project.

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SAFER AT HOME

Steps to improve your home as you age

BY FAITH DORN
Special to the Star

"Help! I've fallen, and I can't get up!"

Those of us who lived through those awkwardly acted commercials in the 1980s and '90s had the risk of a fall drilled into our heads.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, falls are the No. 1 cause of injuries and death from injury among older Americans. One out of four older people fall each year, but less than half of those people tell their doctors about their falls.

Eugene L. Evans Jr., president of Eugene L. Evans Manufacturing in Anniston, knows how real the lingering threat of a fall is. His father fell and broke his hip while watering his lawn.

"I am 60 years old now, and I need something to hold onto when I am going up and down steps. It did not matter to me five or 10 years ago, but now that I am older, I need something to steady me as I go up and down even just two or three steps," Evans said.

"I guess that is something we don't think about until we get older and wise up — or worse yet, have a fall," said Evans.

Handrails

Adding handrails to your steps can help improve your safety. In many cases, handrails are required by insurance.

"Our rails are made of steel and ornamental iron, and that makes them the strongest type of rails on the market, and with the state of the art powder-coated paint finish we apply, they will remain attractive and maintenance-free for many years to come," Evans said.

"The average cost of iron handrails down a set of steps ranges between \$1,500 and \$2,500, depending on the number of steps and design a customer chooses. We have over 10 designs and 30 colors to choose from."

Stairlifts

If you have a multi-level home and you have to use more than one

level, a stairlift can be an excellent addition to your home. Stairlifts can cost around \$2,000, but when you consider the potential amount you might have to pay in the event of a fall, they can be a great deal.

Exercise for prevention

There is always potential for an accident, but you can lessen your odds of falling by working on your balance and strength. If you qualify for the Silver Sneakers program, you may be able to find an appropriate exercise or yoga class to help you maintain your balance at no cost to you. There are also many YouTube videos that feature balance exercises.

Your doctors are a key component in helping you prevent a fall. Make sure your primary care physician and specialists know all the medications you are taking. Your doctor should also check your eyes and feet annually.

Faith Dorn is a freelance writer in Anniston. Contact her at faith.h.dorn@gmail.com.

TIPS TO PREVENT FALLS

One important step to take to avoid falling at home is to remove clutter from your path and stairs. Here are some other tips from the Centers for Disease Control to help prevent falls:

ON THE STAIRS

- Always keep objects off stairs.
- Fix loose or uneven steps.
- Have an electrician put in an overhead light and light switch at the top and bottom of the stairs. You can get light switches that glow.
- Replace burned out light bulbs. If needed, ask a friend or family member to do this for you.
- Make sure the carpet is firmly attached to every step.
- Or remove the carpet and attach non-slip rubber treads to the stairs.
- Fix loose handrails, or put in new ones.
- Make sure handrails are on both sides of the stairs, and are as long as the stairs.

ON THE FLOORS

- If you have to walk around furniture to cross a room, ask someone to move the furniture so your path is clear.
- Remove any throw rugs on the floor, or use double-sided tape or a non-slip backing so the rugs won't slip.
- Pick up things that are on the floor. Always keep objects off the floor.
- If you have to walk over or around lamp cords or extension cords, coil or tape them next to the wall so you can't trip over them. If needed, have an electrician put in another outlet.

IN THE KITCHEN

- Keep things you use often on the lower shelves (about waist high).
- If you must use a step stool, get one with a bar to hold on to.
- Never use a chair as a step stool.

IN THE BEDROOM

- Place a lamp close to the bed where it's easy to reach.
- On the path to the bathroom, put in a nightlight so you can see where you're walking. Some nightlights go on by themselves after dark.

IN THE BATHROOM

- Put a non-slip rubber mat or self-stick strips on the floor of the tub or shower.
- Have grab bars put in next to and inside the tub, and next to the toilet.

Home sellers asking more as national demand for housing soars

BY STEVE BROWN
The Dallas Morning News

With housing inventories at record lows, home sellers are asking more for their properties.

Median home sale listing prices in August grew by 10% nationally according to Realtor.com

While housing activity typically begins to cool in late summer and fall,

there's no sign of a slowdown in the fast-paced homebuying market that's fueled by record low mortgage rates.

"It's difficult to imagine that the housing market will be able to sustain the frenzied demand we are currently experiencing, but we have yet to see any signs of slowing," Realtor.com chief economist Danielle Hale said in the new report. "Buyer traffic on Realtor.com

is outpacing the record levels we saw earlier this year, suggesting that demand will continue to exceed the number of available homes for sale.

"Although demand is much more intense than it normally is this late into a buying season, the typical home asking price has likely peaked for the year at \$350,000," she said. "However, given the strong demand, sellers will remain in the driver's

seat for the foreseeable future."

On the national level, the biggest increases in home asking prices in August were in northeast and Midwestern markets, including Philadelphia (up 18.6%), Cincinnati (up 17.8%) and Boston (up 14.7%).

Miami was the only major U.S. market that saw a slight decline in home asking prices.

WINTER IS COMING

Prepare your home and garden for the colder months

BY FAITH DORN
Special to the Star

There is a chill in the air! Autumn is here, and winter is on its way. As we enter this new season, folks are beginning or continuing home and garden improvement projects.

"Business has been pretty busy in recent weeks," said Bill Newman, president of Oxford Lumber. "We saw a huge surge when Gov. Ivey issued the Stay at Home order. Consumers were doing lots of home projects like decks, painting, lawn and garden, and other projects around their homes," Newman said.

"Building is fairly strong right now, so we are busy even though most people have gone back to work. There is still a lot of home-building, remodeling and commercial projects, and homeowners are steady but not quite as frantic as during March and April."

Fall home improvement projects typically involve preparing your home for winter. They can range from cleaning and resealing your deck, to checking your smoke detectors and carbon monoxide alarms,

to checking your heating and air conditioning units, to handling pest control.

This is also a good time of year to inspect and clean roofs and fireplaces.

Oxford Lumber typically sees a lot of interest in replacement windows and doors and attic insulation in preparation for the winter.

Readying the yard for winter

People are also sprucing up their yards.

"Many people are getting the grills they want and making their decks and yards more appealing, or maybe building an arbor or gazebo," explained Newman. "We are selling lots of grills, plants, treated lumber for decks, paint and Stihl power equipment, as well as maintenance items."

"People are working outside in flower beds, cleaning, repairing and winterizing."

Even though the temperature is beginning to drop, the sun can still do damage, so wide-brimmed hats are recommended to combat harmful rays when you work in the yard.

Stooping, bending and

kneeling are all part of gardening aerobics, and kneepads or a kneeler can be a gardener's best friend to cut back on damage to knees. Several companies produce a combination kneeler-stool with an attachment to hold a few of your gardening tools.

Pine Tree Tools sells a line of bamboo gardening gloves that are "touchscreen-friendly," meaning you can answer your phone or skip to the next song in your playlist without having to remove a glove.

Oxford Lumber currently is seeing a boost in sales of herbicides, fertilizers and soils, as well as mums. Landscape blocks, rocks, yard decorations and birdseed are selling, too.

"I see people investing more in their homes because they are spending more time there in order to stay safe. This pandemic has created more do-it-yourselfers because it is more of a priority," Newman said.

Faith Dorn is a freelance writer in Anniston. Contact her at faith.h.dorn@gmail.com.

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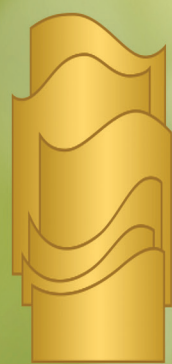
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