

LAST PUFF Cosmetic surgery gives some patients motivation to stop smoking ■ E3



LEGAL MESS The wrangling continues over the estate of soul legend James Brown ■ E6

BOOKS ■ NONFICTION

‘Rose Bowl Dreams’ explores one fan’s holy trinity



Bret Gerbe FOR AMERICAN-STATESMAN

Rather than an official book about University of Texas football, Adam Jones (here at an open practice) has written a personal account of his passion, weaving together the trials of Longhorn fandom with those of his life.

# Faith, family, football

By Jeff Salamon  
AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

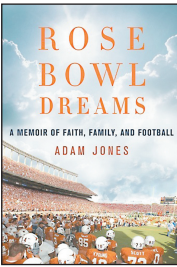
Two weeks ago, Tropical Storm Edouard went from a hurricane to a tropical depression to a major letdown for thousands of rain-starved lawns. But Edouard ended up offering something almost as valuable as a good soaking: a break from Austin’s string of triple-digit days.

The people gathered on the grassy slopes at the Frank Denius Fields for the University of Texas Longhorns’ first open practice of the year make the most of this respite. Middle-aged couples plant themselves and their water bottles in foldout chairs as close to the action as they can. Kids roll down hills until they’re dizzy. The Longhorns, running seven-on-seven drills, are an arm’s length away. It feels less like the public debut of one of America’s best football teams than like a grade-school scrimmage.

Adam Jones, the author of “Rose Bowl Dreams: A Memoir of Faith, Family and Football,” which comes out Tuesday, is at ease here; he knows who the players are, and he’s happy to see a few familiar faces among the fans. But he’s also a busy 41-year-old guy, father of three young kids, active in his church and chief operating officer for the state department of education. As much fun as he’s having, if he wasn’t helping a reporter get some color for this profile — first stop was the Posse East — he might not have shown up here this evening.

Jones has been a die-hard Longhorn fan since he was a kid in Amarillo. He was too young to appreciate the team’s 1969 and 1970 championships, and he waited, loyally, through the 35-year drought that followed, even starting up Jones Top Ten, a blog that has offered “The Truth about College Football Since 1995,” intermingled with personal ruminations. Yet

MEMOIR



Rose Bowl Dreams: A Memoir of Faith, Family and Football

Adam Jones  
Thomas Dunne/  
St. Martin’s,  
\$24.95

Adam Jones

**What:** Reading and signing  
**When:** 7 p.m.  
Thursday  
**Where:** BookPeople, 603 N. Lamar Blvd.  
**Information:** 472-5050; bookpeople.com

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GARDENING ■ ALTERNATIVES

## Authors tell us life goes on without traditional lawn

Several recent books mow down our old assumptions

By Bill Scheick  
SPECIAL TO THE AMERICAN-STATESMAN

I had a lawn once. It went the same way as my hair.

It was just a matter of time. About 13 years ago, I had a front yard entirely covered with buffalo grass. It was wonderfully eye-catching, especially when its thin blue-green blades waved gently like breeze-rippled water. Mine was an early type of buffalo grass, and it was doomed. It faced northward and was also easily invaded by weeds seeded abundantly from nearby wild areas.

Then over time my live oak canopies spread gloriously — a success story with an unhappy ending for the prairie grass below.

The real culprit, though, was my neighbor’s St. Augustine, which slowly but surely displaced all of my buffalo grass. My neighbor’s lawn annexed mine. Perhaps I should be grateful for the gift turf. I want to be, but I’m not. That’s why I speak of once having had a lawn. The new front yard turf doesn’t interest me.

As far as I am concerned, it’s on its own. It always looks as if it’s having a bad-hair day. There’s no way it will ever be “mown into a softness like velvet,” Andrew Jackson Downing’s 1840s description of the ideal American lawn.

Even if I had zoysia instead of St. Augustine, I simply don’t want to be the caretaker of a “proper” lawn. Conventional turf is just too needy.

Lawn owners are needy, too, and plenty of recent books could give them comfort — or challenge them — in their quests to have the perfect green carpet.



Cliff Cheney FOR AMERICAN-STATESMAN

Bill Scheick thinks grass is too needy, is inappropriate for the climate and always looks like it’s having a bad-hair day. Recent books suggest nontraditional and practical ways to use the same space.

I’m drawn to books delving into the “why” of standard lawns. I silently root for their authors. I’m hoping they will turn up something to reassure me that my turf-resistance is, after all, OK in a world where proper lawns tyrannically rule, often with the clout of local ordinances, homeowner associations and the raised eyebrows of neighbors.

Since I moved to Austin in 1969, I have been ambivalent about traditional lawns. They seem frustratingly inappropriate for our climate — even more so now, given Central Texas’ recent

high temperatures and prolonged droughts. It’s not that I’m critical of anyone who is obsessed with a typical lawn. Every gardener is prone to and perhaps entitled to an obsession or two. I have my own — more than two, in fact — but my gratis St. Augustine grass just isn’t one of them.

Usually when we purchase a house, voilà, there’s a lawn in front. Now we’re lawn-keepers. That this would happen must have been

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PETER MONGILLO  
QUESTION EVERYTHING

## Satellite dishes? No, solar-powered metal sunflowers

I live over by the Mueller development and noticed they have been putting up a bunch of blue metal structures that look sort of like satellite dishes along Interstate 35 behind Best Buy and Bed Bath & Beyond. Can you find out what they are?

—S.W.  
The blue structures collectively make up a public art project, “SunFlowers — A Garden of Energy,” funded by Catellus Development Group and semiconductor/solar technology firm Applied Materials. Designed by Mags Harries and Lajos Héder of the Harries/Héder Collaborative, the 16-foot-high, 14-foot-wide sculptures will contain solar panels that will power lights for the structures at night. They’ll also provide power to other parts of the development.

Are Pecos cantaloupes available in the Austin area?  
—M.R.

There was a late start to the season, but the popular melons have shipped and will

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