



With One Accord

Siblings come together through a shared love of music

KEELYN, KAYLEE AND KELLY SWOAPE WERE BORN INTO A MUSICAL family, and each claims a birthright and predisposition to musicality. Their mother, Sherri, became a church pianist at the age of 9 and is an accomplished organist. Their father, Ralph, plays piano, bass and drums, and he's working to master the guitar.

Open Door Church, where the Swoapes first sang three-part gospel songs and where their parents once led the music, also deserves some credit for helping swing wide the doors to the siblings' shared love of music, harmonizing and performing.

But such passion wasn't always the case. Keelyn, 30; Kaylee, 28; and Kelly, 26, laugh together as they remember their parents making them practice in the car on the way to church. At one point, Kelly, the shyest of the three, wasn't feeling cooperative and purposefully soured some notes.

"Our band was almost reduced to a two-person band before it started," Kelly says, giggling at the memory with his siblings.

"But that's actually one of the reasons we didn't really start singing as a band until about two years ago," Keelyn adds.

It took the right timing for each to come into their gifts and to have the inclination to work together.

At one time or another, Kaylee says, each of them had to work through shyness or other roadblocks and really push beyond their comfort zones. Time, practice and the confidence that results from both, combined with an affinity for music, are the fulcrum for what's transpired since. Together, they've spent years leading what they call Tuesday Church, a weekly youth and college ministry in Golden first organized by Keelyn. Even so, it took perfect timing and a special phone call for them to take the purposeful step to form a band.

A family friend with his own band, the Pancakesters, called Kelly and invited him and his siblings to play a gig. In response, the band Swoape was formed. Since then, the siblings have been writing and producing original songs and have performed at venues locally in Tyler and at the Espinoza Music Academy in Mineola and Golden Homestead, as well as gigs in Austin and Waco. They've also had a live guest appearance on Tyler's CBS 19 Music Mondays segment, and one of their songs has been played on a radio show in Austin.

The siblings continue to work day jobs, but the possibility of making music a full-time job seems ever closer.



“Honestly, I’ve been dying to try this, but waiting a few years has helped us be more responsible and more realistic,” Keelyn says. “None of us are in it to be rich and famous, but we’d like to be able to do this full time. Maybe travel a little and to share the gifts we’ve been given with as many people as possible.”

Cutting their teeth in the church and on worship music has influenced every aspect of their music. But when asked to describe their genre, they struggle to pinpoint a specific one.

“Our church life and our relationship with the Lord influences everything that we write, but our music is not really meant to be played in the church,” Kaylee says.

Each member has written title songs for the band, driven by what is moving them at the time—love, heartbreak, nostalgia, nature or other subjects. The intent of all their output, Keelyn says, “is to provide good, positive, encouraging music that the general population will want to listen to.”

Individually and as a group, they’ve written hundreds of songs. Influences include gospel, blues, bluegrass, classic country, soft and alternative rock, folk and Americana. “We have

different styles amongst ourselves,” Kaylee says.

But the driving force behind their music has even deeper and more established roots.

“The reason why I like older music so much is because it was more real back then,” Kelly says. “I think that’s what we strive for. To put out some music that is exactly what we felt, and how we feel, and what inspires us. We’re not thinking about what’s hot right now or what’s popular. We’re going to write what we feel, and I think that will speak to people.”

What elevates Swoape, no matter the genre, are the vocal harmonies. “Sibling harmony” is a recognized term in the music industry. It describes tight harmonies generated by members of the same family. Some say genetic similarities make it possible. Others attribute the results to having listened to parents, and each other, sing for many years. Whatever the cause, Swoape has it, and it’s one of the group’s defining traits.

Another distinguishing feature of Swoape is their lack of a dedicated lead singer. Each member takes turns at the microphone and in supporting roles. They all play multiple instruments. Keelyn plays fiddle, bass and keys. Kaylee plays



Gigging when they can, Swoape is recording a full-length album to be released sometime this fall. To hear some of their music check out their four-track demo on Spotify, iTunes and all other major streaming services. Upcoming concert dates and current news can be found on [Facebook.com/swoapemusic](https://www.facebook.com/swoapemusic) and Instagram account [@swoapemusic](https://www.instagram.com/swoapemusic).

Swoape will be the entertainment at Wood County Electric Cooperative's annual meeting, **October 11 at Governor Jim Hogg Park in Quitman.**

They plan to cover a range of popular music and introduce some of their originals. **Entertainment will begin at 12:30 p.m.**, and the **business meeting will begin at 2 p.m.** Come and give them a listen!

acoustic guitar and mandolin. Kelly plays acoustic and electric guitars, bass and drums.

It's refreshing to see how supportive and grateful each sibling is of the others' songwriting, wordsmithing and musical abilities. Each offers strengths to round out the band, and their impulse to have fun while sharing joy is contagious. They'll be the first to tell you they don't take themselves too seriously.

"We love having breakfast for supper, and we're always up for a midnight volleyball game," Keelyn quips in regard to the band's philosophy.

"And, roller skating will come back!" Kelly adds.

Then, more seriously, Keelyn segues into the heart of who they are as a band and as people. Their intent, he says, is to be deliberate about their music, which is guided by their mission

to "let Jesus be the center of everything you aim for."

In addition to their faith, they have a strong admiration for their hometown, Golden.

"We love that we were born and raised here and that we still get to call this home," Kaylee says. "The people of Golden are a big reason that we had that encouragement to keep going when we started and did not know what to do. We're really grateful for that."

They also received encouragement from their entire extended family, Keelyn says, and they are most grateful for the unwavering support from their parents.

The outpouring of community support heartens the members of Swoape, Kaylee says. "In some way, it feels like we've already made it." With one accord, her brothers smile and nod.

Stay Back and Stay Safe

WORKING WITH ELECTRICITY CAN BE A DANGEROUS JOB, ESPECIALLY FOR LINEMEN. In fact, *USA Today* lists line repairers and installers among the most dangerous jobs in the U.S. That's why, at Wood County Electric Cooperative, safety is our No. 1 priority. This is not an empty slogan: Over time, we have created a culture of putting our crews' safety and that of the community above all else.

Yes, we strive to deliver affordable and reliable electricity to you, but more important, we want our employees to return home safely to their loved ones. This requires ongoing focus, dedication, vigilance—and your help!

Distractions Can Be Deadly

While we appreciate your kindness and interest in the work of our crews, we ask that you stay back and let them focus on their task at hand. Even routine work has the potential to be dangerous, and it takes their full attention and that of their colleagues, who are also responsible for the team's safety. Distractions can have deadly consequences. If a lineworker is on or near your property during a power outage, for vegetation management or for routine maintenance, please allow them ample room to work. These small accommodations help protect our crews—and you.

If you have a dog, try to keep it indoors while lineworkers are on or near your property. While most dogs are friendly, some are defensive of their territory and can't distinguish between a burglar and a utility worker. Our crews work best without a pet "supervising" the job.

We recognize that for your family's safety, you want to make sure only authorized workers are on or near your property. You will recognize Wood County EC employees by their uniforms and the co-op's logo on our service trucks. You may also recognize our lineworkers because they live right here in our community.

Slow Down and Move Over

In addition to giving lineworkers space while they are near your property, we also ask that you move over or slow down when approaching a utility vehicle on the side of the road. One work zone crash occurs every 5.4 minutes, on average, across the U.S., and 70 of those each day result in injuries. There is one fatality each week from these accidents. The lineworkers' focus is on the work at hand, not on the road, so we need you to watch out for them.

Also, never text and drive—around work crews or at any other time. That message can wait, and the momentary distraction can change lives forever.

Keep Poles Clear and Safe

Nails, staples and other attachments to utility poles not only get in lineworkers' way when they are trying to climb poles, but these foreign objects can also damage the workers' safety gear, exposing them to possible shock or electrocution. Never post signs or attach anything to utility poles.

Guy wires may occasionally be inconveniently located, but please leave them alone. The wires provide support for poles, and removing or modifying them can weaken the system, causing poles, power lines and possibly lineworkers to come crashing to the ground.

Wood County EC's employees are looking out for you. Help them stay safe by returning the favor.



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Thursday, Brookshire's, *Winnboro*
Friday, Economy Drug, *Grand Saline*

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