

A close-up portrait of Samantha Armbruster, a woman with dark, curly hair, looking upwards and to the left. She is wearing a red top with a white polka-dot pattern. The background is dark and out of focus.

SAMANTHA ARMBRUSTER

MAIN STREET PROGRAM MANAGER

"We [San Marcos] like to party with pretention, abandon and on the move. The best events aren't committed to one location, but instead allow you to see and experience several spots and atmospheres."

SMHS GRADUATE AND PROUD RATTLER, FORMER TEXAS ROLLER DERBY MVP, AX-THROWING CHAMPION (WHILE 9 MONTHS PREGNANT) AND NOW, PROTECTOR OF A GOODTIMES AND 'WHAT NOW' TO DO IN DOWNTOWN SAN MARCOS.

The City of San Marcos' Main Street Program Manager, Samantha Armbruster, aims to keep the future of downtown events vibrant and exciting.

If San Marcos were a party, what kind would it be?

I think of San Marcos as the beachiest town in Central Texas and beach life is following the “what now” lifestyle. You float the river, meet some new friends on the way then ask each other “what now?”

That leads to a meal and some drinks downtown and the “what now” question continues til you end up at some spontaneous rager having the time of your life still wearing your swimsuit.

Roller Derby TV Star? Please tell us more.

I skated as ‘Chola’ for the Puntas del Fuego from 2002-2008. I was featured in the reality show “Rollergirls” on A&E for a bit which was a trip. I started when our league was the only all-girl roller derby league and now there are hundreds all over the world. It was an exciting time in my life and taught me as much about business, leadership and media than I learned in college.

What is the best part of your job?

Taking in the creativity and passion of the community and local business owners and making it happen. It’s also a dream come true to get the chance to promote a place I love and that’s dear to my heart as a career.

So, what is the number one draw to downtown?

Downtown is the #2 visited spot in San Marcos. It’s not one business but the collec-

tive experience that makes us such a draw. And while it’s not there quite yet, the City has put priority in creating a liveable and walkable environment downtown that we know aligns with how the next generation wants to live.

Downtown San Marcos has the opportunity to be the urban center near amazing greenspace and we are on our way

How do you see the future of downtown San Marcos?

Crowded sidewalks, bustling bike lanes, commuter rail and a zip line from Old Main to the Courthouse lawn. Ok, maybe not the zip line but a girl can dream.

The Wine & Wassail Walk this November, how much wine and walking are we talking?

We are talking at least 16 stops and as much walking as you feel up to before jumping on the horse drawn carriage for a historic tour to the next stop.

How happy do large crowds make you?

I love large attendance to events but I only like large crowds on dance floors. I like parties and events that have room to roam and chill out.

During Main Street’s Coffee Talks, what is the most popular question asked?

Coffee talks are more about

ideas and gabbing than questions, but everyone is always interested in learning about what new businesses are moving in.

Speaking of businesses downtown, what is the best part about the construction?

Seeing the strength and positivity of our businesses throughout the process, the unexpected treasures found along the way; for example, a horseshoe found under the sidewalk in front of SM Hair Company.

What was life like growing up San Marcos?

Ideal, although I didn’t know it then. I grew up a river rat in a community where everyone knew each other

and where ‘strange’ was tolerated and sometimes celebrated. We were free range kids.

Why the University of West Florida?

My senior year, I was full of teenage angst and ready to get as far as I could from my hometown. But of course, I had educational priorities so it had to be near the beach.

What is the history of Social Media Sisters and where did you come up with that name?

I started the business in Northern California with a friend, and it fit the culture up there. Everyone is a sister/brother, and the business was for small business so we wanted to make it personal.

What brought you back to San Marcos?

After living in Florida, Austin and Northern California I couldn’t imagine raising my daughter anywhere else. I believe any kid who grows up in a place where they can dive under water with their eyes open and see to the bottom will have a different outlook on life and that’s what I want for my Dottie.

So...how addicted to the Square are you?

Addicted is a strong word; I’d like to think of my use as recreational, lol. That said, I will admit I think about downtown more than my home, and it’s the first place I think of when I want to drink, eat or shop.

What is your favorite memory of downtown?

This moment!

Kelly Franks ran the Main Street Program for 25 years. On her last day, Mrs. Franks rang back in the tradition of the Great Old Bell in front of the Courthouse.

I’m a sucker for traditions and love that this one dates back to the early 1900’s. This day and the ringing of the bell signified a passing of torches from her leadership to mine and realized a dream come true for me.

The bell rings 6 times M-F at 5pm to mark the end of the work day and to welcome staff and customers to downtown for the evening.