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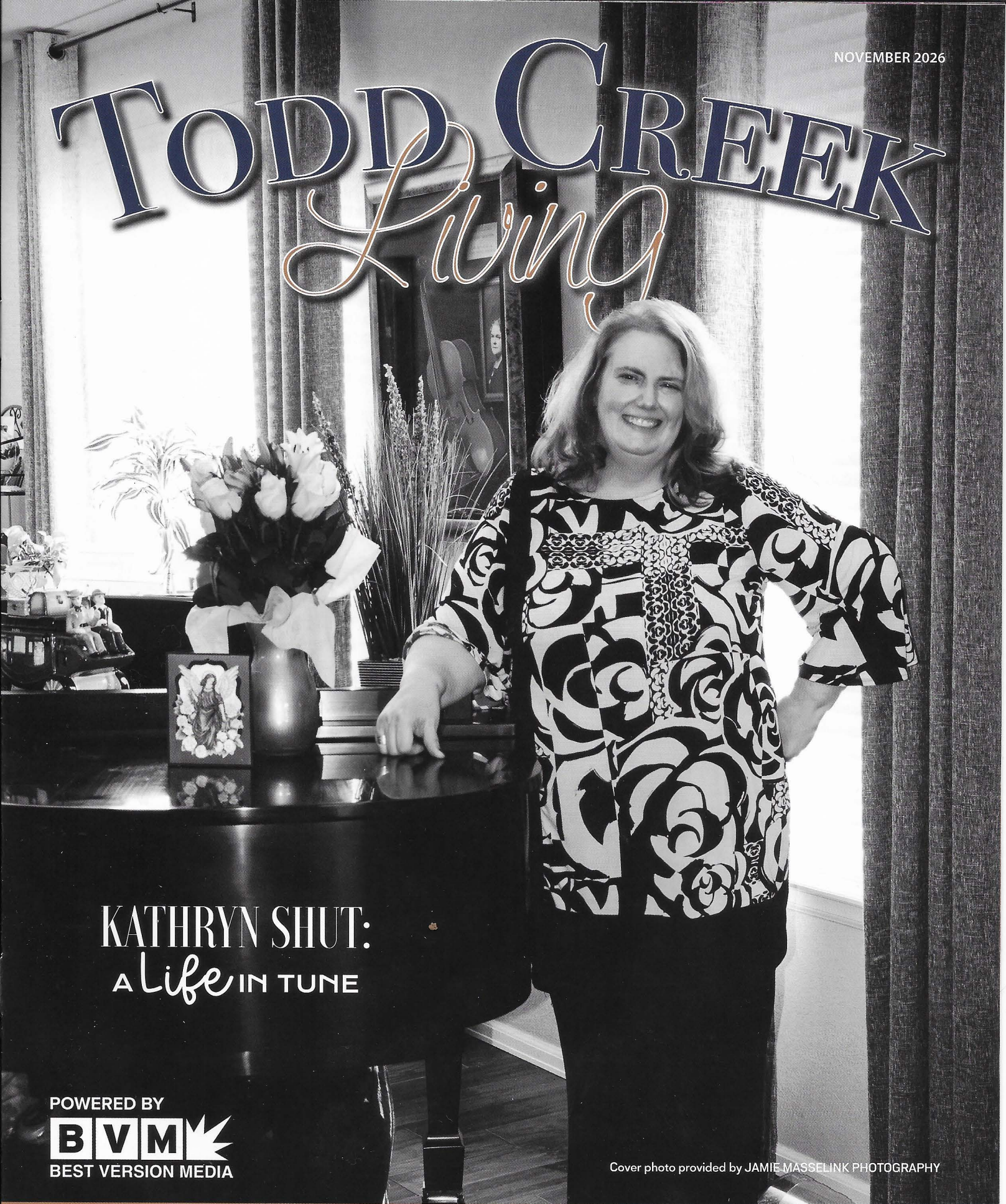
Todd Creek Living



KATHRYN SHUT: A Life IN TUNE

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An exclusive magazine serving the residents of Todd Creek
Todd Creek Farms, Todd Creek Meadows, Todd Creek Eagle Shadow North/South, Heritage Todd Creek, TC Riverside, Baseline Lakes, Riverdale, Fox Ridge Estates, Hawk Ridge, Silver Springs, Todd Creek Vistas, Todd Creek Estates, and Promontory



KATHRYN SHUT: A Life IN TUNE

By LAURA JEAN DAVIS
Photography by
JAMIE MASSELINK PHOTOGRAPHY
UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

For Kathryn Shut, music has always been part of her story.

She began playing piano at age eight and still plays today, decades later. At 10, she picked up the clarinet, and by 13, she had added the saxophone so she could join jazz bands at school. When saxophones were not welcome in orchestra, her dedicated spirit simply found another way. She joined the percussion section and learned to play timpani, chimes, and bass drum—anything that wasn't the snare drum!

Her willingness to explore, learn, and find the paths that work for her has become a theme throughout Kathryn's life. Her career has taken her from music and languages to information technology, data and, most recently, artificial intelligence. Along the way, she has earned two master's degrees, built successful businesses, and performed throughout Colorado. And through it all, Kathryn has centered her life on staying creative and curious.

Kathryn grew up in Kansas City, Missouri, but has called Colorado home since 2000. She met her life partner, Antoinette "Toni" White, online through a live gaming platform. Just a few years after they met, Toni also made the move to Colorado where, as a retired silversmith and leatherworker, she became well-known in the community for her beautiful jewelry pieces.



In September 2016, they moved from Westminster to Heritage Todd Creek, drawn to the quiet and the appeal of an active adult community. What they found was much more than peace and adventure. They found friends.

"Our neighbors are our best friends," Kathryn says. And it's a friendship that shows up in all sorts of ways.

Kathryn and Toni enjoy dinners, card games, and regular gatherings with their neighbors. Everyone on their cul-de-sac and the adjoining street has become a close-knit group, always finding an excuse to get together.

One of those biggest excuses is their annual end-of-summer celebration, affectionately known as "Grill, Swill, and Chill." What started as a neighborhood gathering now attracts roughly 50 to 75 people each year and continues to grow. Live music has been a big part of the tradition, with performances over the years by Mo'Stax, The Vern Neeley Vibe, and Kathryn as a solo performer.

For the first time this year, Kathryn and Toni also hosted the "Summer Karaoke Kickoff" around Memorial Day, where friends and neighbors came to sing, snack, and enjoy the beginning of the season. In other words, if you live nearby, you probably have little trouble finding something to do.

Music comes naturally to Kathryn, not just because she has spent much of her life playing it, but because it's part of her cherished family history.

Her late father, Tim Ballard, was inducted into the Kansas Music Hall of Fame in 2008 as a member of the soul group Garry Mac and the Mac Truque. Her paternal grandmother, Velma, was an accomplished pianist and organist, while her great-grandfather Seldon played fiddle at barn dances in western Kansas.



Brilliant & Beautiful

Pieces of that history live in Kathryn's heart and in her home. After her father passed away, she inherited a custom display featuring his fiddle and photograph, now hanging beside her baby grand piano. She also inherited a Hohner Concertina, a small button accordion that belonged to her maternal great-grandfather, Bill. Music has always





been her passion, but it eventually made its way into the business side of things as well.

Since 2007, Kathryn has owned TIMKAT Entertainment, a music entertainment agency named in honor of her father and their shared love for music. She has performed throughout the Front Range with jazz, funk, and soul groups, as well as on her own, and has helped bring live music even to Heritage Todd Creek.

Kathryn has also produced music internationally, including work with Italian supergroup Camera Soul, and has co-written 13 songs with brothers Piero and Pippo Lombardo.

As much as she loved music, Kathryn's professional life took a turn after college.

She initially attended the University of Central Missouri on a music scholarship with plans to become a band director. After three years of carrying a 20-hour course load each semester, she decided it was time for a change. Her second love was languages, so she changed her major and ultimately graduated from Rockhurst University with a bachelor's degree in Spanish. She later taught Spanish as a graduate assistant at Marquette University.

Then came an unexpected opportunity in 1997. Kathryn was selected to translate a 130-page email manual from English into Spanish for John Deere. That assignment introduced her to the world of information technology (IT). It turned out to be a very good fit and changed the trajectory of her life.



A Pianist in the Making
Photo Courtesy of Kathryn Shut

Kathryn moved from freelance technical training into business reporting, data analysis, database design, and financial services. She also returned to school twice more, earning an MBA from Webster University and a Master of Legal Studies in Cybersecurity and Information Privacy from Drexel Law, both with honors.



Today, through her company Shut Enterprises LLC, Kathryn works at the intersection of data, technology, law and risk. She has served as the State of Colorado's Lead AI Architect (2024-2026) and recently accepted a new position as Senior Data Governance Advisor for Pathward Bank. Finally, Kathryn is a published author and speaker on both the opportunities and risks surrounding artificial intelligence.

Her professional focus is to help organizations understand how AI uses data and create safeguards around systems that can affect important areas of people's lives, from loans and insurance to employment, education and health care benefits.

It may seem like a long way from the little girl who sat down at a piano at age eight, but there's a common thread woven throughout Kathryn's life. She has followed her curiosity, learned what she needed to learn, and found a way to make things work—even when the obvious path wasn't available.

When the orchestra didn't have room for a saxophone, she picked up the timpani. When music education wasn't the right career fit, she turned to languages. When translating a manual opened a door into IT, she walked through it. And today, as technology continues to change, she is once again learning, exploring and helping others find their way forward.

She continues to bring that same spirit to her Todd Creek neighborhood. If we could take away just one thing from her beautiful example—let us stay curious, keep learning, make room for creativity, and most importantly, share it with the people around you.

And if there happens to be a piano nearby, even better.



Christmas morning, 1975
Photo Courtesy of Kathryn Shut



Flag Corps in High School
Photo Courtesy of Kathryn Shut



Kathryn's Father, Tim Ballard, 1971
Photo Courtesy of Kathryn Shut

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