

# MidlothianNOW

M A G A Z I N E

October 2021

## Riding the Storm

**Mike Prendergast**  
chases tough  
weather

## Basics and Beyond

**Lauren Bannister**  
aims for good  
journalism

**In the Kitchen With  
Nikki Hyland**

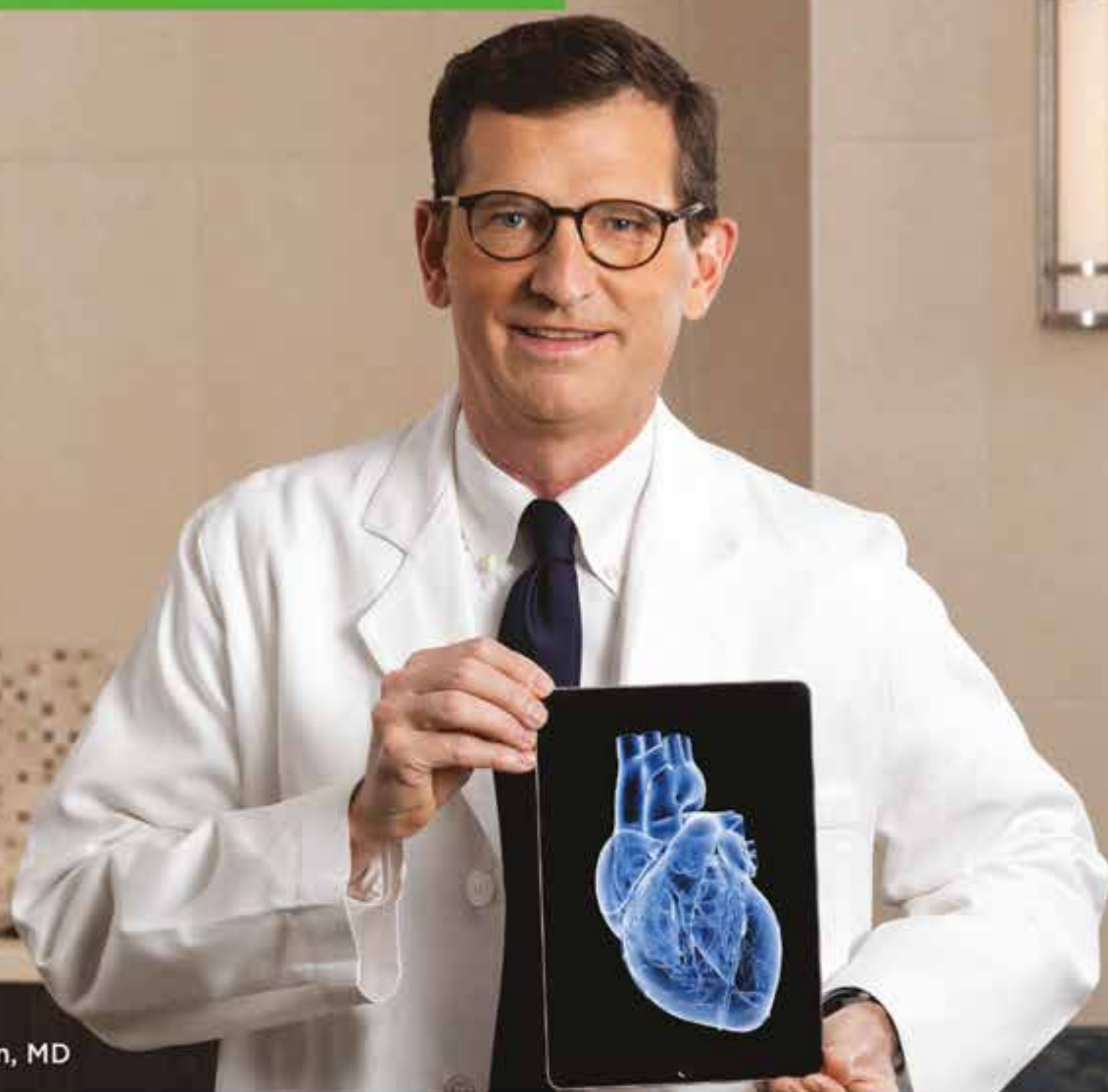
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*A meteorology background and radio career uniquely prepared a Midlothian resident for storm chasing.*

**Photo by**  
Kobbi R. Blair.

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*Angel*

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

*Endings are required ...*

There is a thought-provoking saying about the transition from summer to fall that goes, "Autumn embraces change, even as she is falling to pieces." I suppose it's either encouraging or disheartening depending on your perspective. The author credited with the saying, Angie Weiland-Crosby, is a former educator turned blogger/social media influencer, who partnered her love of nature with her desire to sooth souls, regularly sharing uplifting stories and images. She says tending your health and sharpening your mind must begin with a calm center.

I've always found this time of year soothing, with relief from Texas heat coming in the form of at least milder, if not always cooler, weather. While fall officially began last month, we all know October temperatures can linger well into the 80s or higher for us. But the leaves inevitably begin to turn and drop, solidifying summer's end. It is both a goodbye and a hello, as we let go of one season for another. The older I get, the shorter time seems between these greetings and farewells.

So, whether I'm ready to accept it or not, time marches on. I know there is no stopping — or even delaying — the forward progression. Sometimes, I manage a little exercise of my body and my brain, while chasing that calm center encouraged by Mrs. Weiland-Crosby. And I'd like to think I've gotten better at being still, even as the world spins and tilts around me — better at acknowledging and embracing the beauty of change.

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# RIDING





# THE STORM



— By Adam Walker

*Growing up in Texas, it's common to learn what measures to take when a tornado is coming: Parents tell us to hide. Teachers tell us to hide. The weather man tells us to hide. Good sense tells us to hide. But some were born to be storm chasers, and hiding is the last thing on their minds. Mike Prendergast is one of those.*

"I always loved all things weather, especially the extreme weather. When I was 9, we lived on the south side of Houston. We were in the process of moving to Duncanville. The beds were already gone when Hurricane Alicia hit. I remember when we were inside the eyewall. It was fantastic, the calm. I walked out. It was dark all around, but there was the sun above us. I was fascinated. I grew up reading every book I could find about weather, learning all I could."

When Mike went off to college, he started out studying meteorology. That seemed like the natural course to take. But being so far away from his family, and his girlfriend, was difficult, so he moved back home and changed colleges. "I switched majors, because none of the schools around here had a meteorology degree. I thought I'd be practical and do something business related."

"Then a friend convinced me to take a class on radio, because it was easy. I fell in love with it and switched my degree to radio. That was an ironic choice, because I grew up with a stutter, but it goes away when I'm on air with 94.9 KLTY. It was the right decision, because I love radio, but can still do my passion as well. And I've been married to my 'girlfriend' for 24 years now."

With all the modern technology available today — Doppler radar, dual-polarization radar and increased predictive abilities — you might think the days of storm chasers would be passing away. You'd be wrong. "The National Weather Service radars can't see what's happening at ground level. They can tell that there is a probable tornado, but you still need ground-level confirmation to know the specifics of where it is and whether it is on the ground or not," Mike noted.





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“Even though it shouldn’t be true, people feel more urgency when something is confirmed. They don’t pay attention to the warnings, but when they hear a spotter’s report, they say, ‘Oh, that’s my neighborhood!’ People don’t take action until it affects them.”

Mike is certified through the Spotter Network to report to the National Weather Service. “You get better with practice. After a while, you just know where to be on certain days. It’s easy to be a storm chaser in this part of the country, because we have so much severe weather. You learn everything you can about weather and what it does, so you can be safe. You don’t take this lightly. Ignorance is what gets you killed.”

Mike has tales to tell. “About 98 percent of the time is just boring, driving around. The other 2 percent is pure adrenaline! Seeing a tornado up close is something else. There’s wind racing at your back. You see the lightning and the clouds moving. You hear the rumbling. When you’re on open ground, the sound is like a waterfall. Then there’s the smell. When a tornado rips through the woods, there’s a fragrance like fresh-cut wood.”

Mike has witnessed some dramatic storms. “There was one storm, I was driving my buddy’s four-wheel drive. We were on this muddy road, and I was trying to get us ahead of the rain, so we could see the tornado. When we came out of the rain, there was the tornado, about a quarter of a mile away — way too close!

“I backed into a ditch and got stuck. This satellite tornado whooshed by us about 40-50 feet away! Then the parent tornado turned and came toward us. It all happened so fast.”







Mike's wife even sometimes gets in on the chase. "She keeps me from making dumb mistakes. If she's in the car, I have to be extra careful. She's very calm under pressure. She wasn't with me that day, but she was the day after Christmas in 2015.

"That tornado was especially dangerous, since it was at night and hidden in rain. I saw it hit Donald T. Shields Elementary and Harvest of Praise Church. I was on CBS 11 chasing that storm, telling viewers, 'It's on Hampton north of Ovilla Road,' and I kind of lost my composure," Mike admitted.

Mike doesn't just study the behavior of storms. Sometimes first on the scene when disaster strikes, he's trained in first aid. "When the May 3 tornado hit Waxahachie, I was at the interstate waiting for it to go by when the trailer truck was picked up and pushed into the barrier. The way it was crushed, I knew anyone inside had to be dead, but when I got over there, I saw his hand and called out. He was alive. I stayed and prayed with Mohamed. I don't know what happened to him after they got him out, but I was there to comfort him."

Despite plenty of dramatic storms near home, Mike likes to take a "chasecation" at least once a year. "One year, I took several days chasing a line of storms from Nebraska, through South Dakota and North Dakota, back to Nebraska. This year, I stayed closer to home and just went to the Panhandle and Oklahoma," Mike listed. "When I retire, I'd like to get an RV and tow two cars with all my equipment. I'd just chase storms. My wife doesn't see it that way. She asked me, 'Oh? Do you have another wife who's going to do that with you?' But I have a passion for alerting others to danger, and to see God's power in the storms." **NOW**

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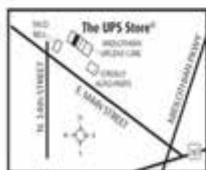
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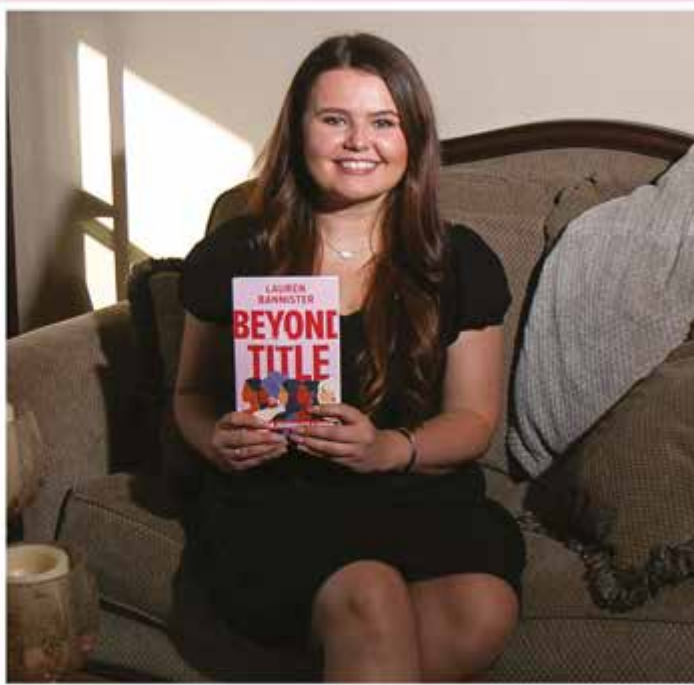


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# Basics and Beyond

— By Angel Morris

*As the only profession protected by the U.S. Constitution, journalism was intended to be a watchdog of government power. If Midlothian native Lauren Bannister has her way, future reporters will focus on honoring the founding fathers' intent. "Hearing former Dallas Morning News reporter Jeffrey Weiss at a 2017 conference secured my journalism interest. He told students to, 'Do journalism, and do good journalism,'" Lauren recalled. "Given how subjective the field has become, it was a lightbulb moment — to want to be part of a generation that stands its ground on truthful storytelling."*

Lauren grew up watching her father read the newspaper daily, prompting her to take high school journalism. "I love people, and find everyone's story so fascinating. Being able to combine storytelling and objectivity is what truly sparked my interest," she noted.

After graduating from Midlothian High School in 2018 — where she was a cheerleader, Student Council president and National Honor Society member — Lauren went on to attend The King's College in New York City. "The school is small, and the culture is strong. I knew if I wanted a great journalism education by gaining experience, I needed to be in the heart of it. So, I chose King's for the city. But, it won me over with the students and school culture," Lauren admitted.

"When picking schools, my dad challenged me to consider if I wanted to be a number within a program, or if I wanted to be a name. I chose a program that recognizes each student and offers opportunities to be involved from the minute you arrive."

Within a month of arrival, Lauren landed an internship at a start-up media company. "I worked at *D Magazine* at only 19 years old, and then at *American Salon Magazine* as well. I took the train to Grand Central multiple times a week during the holidays!" Lauren enthused. "I have worked for my school, published a book and, now, interned for CBS. All of that has been rewarding because each experience taught me so much about my career path, but I also developed as a person."

Lauren's book, *Beyond the Title: Women in Journalism and Media*, features the stories of publishers, entrepreneurs, CEOs and even students, sharing tips, tricks and insights toward media careers. "I have always loved the idea of being an author, but it came to life when a professor who taught a



class on book writing reached out to me after seeing my work online,” Lauren explained.

Georgetown University’s Eric Koester founded the Creator’s Institute, an intensive program introducing participants to manuscript drafting classes and a developmental editor, then connecting them with New Degree Press. “I took a chance on the program because how many people can say they wrote a book in college?” Lauren queried. “I realized all my experiences in high school and college had set me up to have the right connections to make the dream a reality. I’ve worked with or learned from most of the people featured in the book in some capacity.”

Ultimately, Lauren’s 40,000-word manuscript was cut to less than 22,000, to offer readers clear, concise perspectives. “The most valuable lesson in the book is to constantly be curious — curious about life and what you are passionate about. Chapter Nine covers the story of my former boss at *D Magazine*, Christiana Nielson. She always inspired me with her love of what she did, but also what she did outside of work. She loves to travel and explore,” Lauren described.

It will soon be time for Lauren to explore life after college, graduating a semester early this December despite the pandemic causing her to finish her sophomore year remotely. “I went home for spring break in March 2020 for what was supposed to be a weeklong trip and ended up not returning to the city full time until August that year. I didn’t see many of my belongings for months until I moved out in May,” Lauren reflected. “Thankfully, I brought my books home just in case.”

After graduation, Lauren will aim for a job in the public relations, marketing or social media realm, partnering the intent of the U.S. Constitution with the journalism realities of the day. “Jobs are changing in the field, and you need to be able to handle multiple duties. The idea of a multimedia journalist is key,” Lauren predicted. “In my opinion, the future of journalism is learning how to innovate with the digital space while trying to get back to the basics of journalism.” **NOW**

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Owen Schar samples a treat from Mister Softee DFW's stop in the Lawson Farms neighborhood.

## Zoomed In: Michael Denison

By Angel Morris

Recently Brittany Denison made a social media plea for kindness on behalf of her son, Michael, who has Treacher Collins syndrome and was starting kindergarten. "Would you please take a moment to talk to your children ... about being friendly and kind?" Brittany asked.

The post — explaining Michael has the same condition featured in the movie, *Wonder* — went viral, with more than 2,000 comments and shares. TV and print media covered the story, and Bikers Against Bullying organized a run on Michael's behalf. "It's reassuring to know we have friends all over North Texas who will make sure Michael is treated fairly," Brittany admitted. As for Michael's reaction to his first year at school? "He loves recess and the fact that they have two playgrounds at Mountain Peak!"



Josh McNamara and Tim Miller take first place in the Second Annual Mentors Care Charity Golf Tournament.



Midlothian Beautification Project participants spruce up the city on Labor Day.



Brothers, Adin and Alec Shaw, with their dog, Denver, head out on a Labor Day weekend family road trip.





Health Science student, Chedeline Polynice, gets hands-on medical training through MISD.



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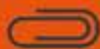
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## BusinessNOW

# Word Dermatology

— By Angel Morris

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info@worddermatology.com

**Hours:** Monday-Thursday: 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.  
Friday: 8:00 a.m.-noon

Word Dermatology is committed to addressing patients' comprehensive medical, surgical and cosmetic skin care needs from its Midlothian and Waxahachie offices five days a week. Texas-born, -raised and -trained, Dr. Andrew Word expanded his services from Waxahachie to Midlothian in July. "We're all very excited to open our new Midlothian office and expand our



services in Ellis County and surrounding areas. Hopefully, the new location will make it a little easier for us to help everyone with their dermatologic needs," Dr. Word said.

Medically, Word Dermatology treats acne, boils, burns, cysts, eczema, psoriasis, rosacea and shingles, warts, skin cancers, hair and nail issues and more. Surgically, Dr. Word and his staff are dedicated to optimizing treatment for basal cell carcinomas, squamous cell carcinomas, melanomas and other rare skin cancers. Cosmetic offerings include BOTOX, fillers, chemical peels and scar treatment.

"We strive to serve all patients' dermatologic needs in a compassionate and friendly environment. Our staff is experienced in assisting patients in the health and appearance of their skin and are dedicated to the care of each and every patient," Dr. Word promised.

Dr. Word is a board-certified dermatologist who received his Doctorate of Medicine from University of Texas Southwestern



in Dallas. He then completed his internship in Internal Medicine and Dermatology Residency training at UT Southwestern.

At UT Southwestern, Dr. Word served as chief resident, working at Parkland, Clements, Children's and Veteran Affairs hospitals. Today, he is a clinical assistant professor in dermatology at UT Southwestern and teaches medical students and residents at the Dallas VA Hospital.

A medical staffer at Methodist Midlothian Medical Center and Baylor Scott & White Medical Center – Waxahachie, Dr. Word is also a diplomate of the American Board of Dermatology and a fellow of the American Academy of Dermatology.

Reflecting on his past training and ongoing affiliations, Dr. Word mentioned, "I was so fortunate to have the opportunity to complete all of my training at UT Southwestern. It established such a great foundation for me. I still strive to add to my medical knowledge every day for the benefit of my patients. Staying involved in academic and inpatient medicine through UT Southwestern and our wonderful local hospitals helps me continually achieve that goal."

Dr. Word is joined by Amanda Krawietz and Michelle Shelton, both nationally certified as physician assistants (PA-C). Amanda received a Master of Physician Assistant Studies degree from the University of North Texas Health Science Center in Fort Worth and has been on staff with Dr. Word for more than three years. Michelle received a Master of Physician Assistant Studies degree from The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas. Michelle recently joined Word Dermatology and said, "Working as a part of the Word Dermatology team is a dream come true!"

Named the Best of Ellis County in 2020 by resident vote, Word Dermatology provides quality skin care to you and your family. "We're here to help with all of your dermatologic needs," Dr. Word expressed. "We look forward to seeing you at Word Dermatology in Midlothian and Waxahachie!" **NOW**

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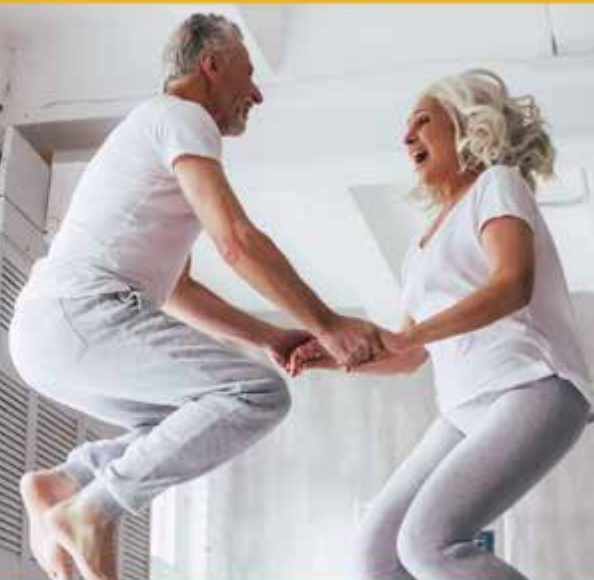
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A photograph of Nikki Hyland, a woman with blonde hair, smiling and leaning against a white countertop in a kitchen. She is wearing a light pink t-shirt and blue jeans. In the background, there is a vase with flowers and a sign that says 'BEE'.

CookingNOW

*In the Kitchen With*

NIKKI HYLAND

— By Angel Morris

Whether cooking classics or baking pies, Nikki Hyland enjoys it all. “Very seldom do I ever grab something in a box. I use recipes for a base, and then add my own twist,” Nikki noted. “My all-time favorite is cooking what other people are craving, and being able to satisfy them is kind of my kryptonite.”

Learning with budget-friendly Crock-Pot meals in college, then advancing to recipes garnered from her hometown Chinese restaurant (now more than 2,000 miles away), Nikki eventually began making her own dishes from scratch. Today, she challenges herself by creating new tastes for her coffee shop, Roasted Beanery. “When I can find time outside the new business, I enjoy anything outdoors, like being in the mountains, and everything involving water — lakes, beaches, pools — I am there!” **NOW**

## Pumpkin Pie

*Bake using your own favorite piecrust.*

### *Pumpkin Puree:*

**1-2 pie pumpkins, depending on how many pies you want to bake (I typically do two and freeze the remainder for a pie around Christmastime.)**

**2 tsp. olive oil**

**Pinch Himalayan salt**

### *Pie Filling:*

**2 cups pumpkin puree**

**3/4 cup dark brown sugar**

**1/4 cup sugar**

**1/2 tsp. salt**

**1 1/2 tsp. cinnamon**

**1/2 tsp. ginger**

**1/4 tsp. nutmeg**

**1/8 tsp. cloves**

**1 1/4 cups heavy whipping cream**

**1/2 tsp. vanilla**

**3 large eggs**

**1 Tbsp. cornstarch**

### *Whipped Cream:*

**1 pt. heavy whipping cream**

**2 Tbsp. powdered sugar**

**Vanilla, to taste**

**1. For puree:** Halve the pumpkin; remove the stem and all seeds. Rub the olive oil generously over the inside of the pumpkin. Sprinkle with salt; lay flat on a cookie sheet. I put aluminum foil down for easier cleanup.

**2.** Bake at 400 F for 40-60 minutes, or until the edges begin to caramelize and turn brown and the insides are cooked through. Let the pumpkin sit until cool.

**3.** Peel the pumpkin by pinching the skin while it is still sitting on the cookie sheet, or scooping out the insides with a spoon.

**4.** Place the meat of the pumpkin into a large food processor or high-speed blender. Puree to a smooth consistency. Feel free to add up to 2 Tbsp. of water while doing this, if needed.



**5. For crust:** Flour a working surface and roll out pie dough to a 13-inch diameter; fold the dough over the rolling pin, and place it in a 9-inch pie plate. Crimp and tuck the edges of the piecrust to create a wave look.

**6.** Place parchment paper over the pie dough; place pie weights on top of the dough. Bake at 400 F for 15 minutes. Remove the piecrust from the oven; remove the parchment paper and weights. Leave the oven on; start preparing the filling.

**7. For filling:** In a pot over medium heat, whisk together the puree, brown sugar, sugar, salt and spices. Bring the mixture to a simmer; reduce heat if necessary. Simmer for 5 minutes. The mixture will become glossy and fragrant.

**8.** Remove the pot from the heat; stir in the heavy whipping cream, vanilla and 1 egg at a time. Adding cornstarch, mix until well combined. Transfer filling to the partially cooked crust.

**9.** Bake the pie at 400 F for 15 minutes; reduce the temperature to 350 F for 40 minutes. Watch the crust to ensure it does not become overly done. You may need to add a piecrust shield or use aluminum foil to make a shield. The pie is done when the center jiggles slightly when shaken. Allow to cool to room temperature; chill the pie for an hour before serving.

**10. For whipped cream:** Add the heavy whipping cream (very cold), powdered sugar and vanilla to a large bowl. Beat on high until it starts to form large peaks. Serve on a room-temperature pie.

## Best-Ever Chocolate Chip Cookies

*My best friend's family recipe!*

**2 1/2 cups flour**

**1 tsp. baking soda**

**1/2 tsp. salt**

**1/2 cup butter**

**1/2 cup butter-flavored shortening**

**1/2 cup sugar**

**1 cup light brown sugar**

**1 1/2 tsp. vanilla**

**2 eggs**

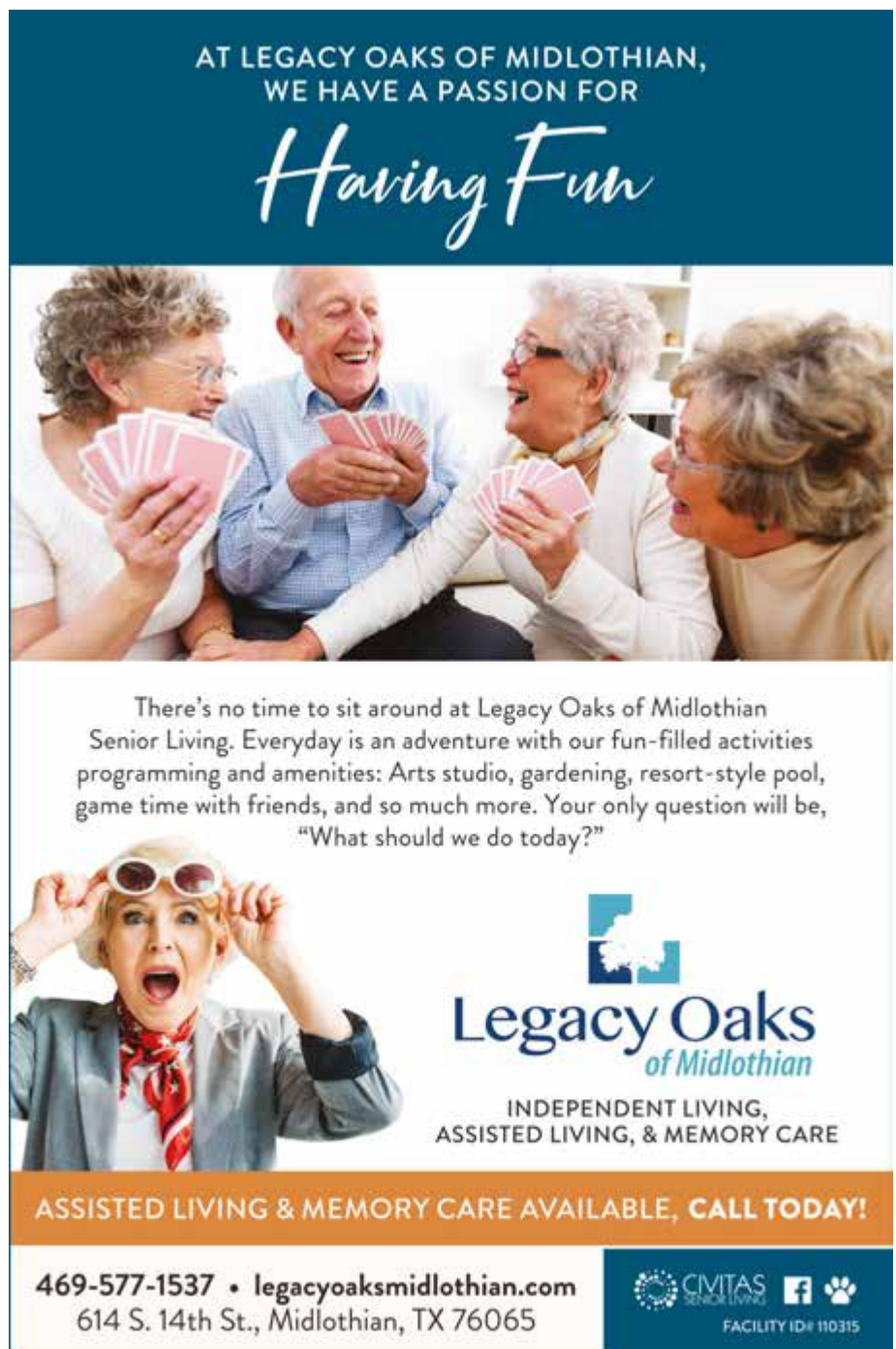
**1 12-oz. pkg. semisweet chocolate chips**

**1.** Preheat the oven to 375 F. Sift the flour, baking soda and salt into a small bowl. Mix the butter, shortening, sugar, brown sugar and vanilla in a large bowl until creamy. Add 1 egg at a time, mixing until creamy.

**2.** Slowly mix the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients until creamy. Use a spatula to blend in the chocolate chips. Using two spoons, place balls of the cookie dough on a cookie sheet.



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**3.** Bake for 8-10 minutes. Let cool for 5 minutes on the cookie sheet; transfer to a cookie rack.

## Apple Butter Pork Chops

**2** pork chop fillets  
**Salt**, to taste  
**Pepper**, to taste  
**4 Tbsp.** butter (divided use)

**2** apples, cored and sliced  
**15 oz.** apple butter (1/4 to 1/2 of jar)  
**3 Tbsp.** dark brown sugar, packed  
**1 tsp.** chili powder  
**1/3 cup** heavy whipping cream, plus  
 a little more (a nice flow over the  
 measuring cup)

**1.** Season the pork chops on both sides with salt and pepper. Melt 2 Tbsp. of butter over

medium-high heat in a large cast-iron pan (which is my preference, but you can use metal). Add the pork chops; cook on each side for 3 minutes. Place the pork on a plate; allow to rest.

**2.** Using the same skillet, combine the remaining butter and apple slices; allow to cook until soft, roughly 5 minutes. Pour in the apple butter, brown sugar and chili powder; stir to combine. Add the cream; continue to stir. Bring to a light boil.

**3.** Add the pork chops, pushing aside the apples to make sure the bottoms of the pork chops are touching the pan. Spoon the apple butter sauce onto the pork chops as they cook.

**4.** Cook each pork chop for 4 more minutes on each side, or until pork is cooked through to your liking. Serve hot with apple mixture spooned over the pork chop.

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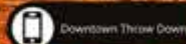
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*- Virginia Woolf*



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TravelNOW



# BACKYARD *Treasure*

— By Lisa Bell

*Looking for the perfect day trip or perhaps a nearby overnight getaway? North of Fort Worth, a world of nature waits to provide relaxation and a fantastic opportunity to spend time outdoors. The Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge includes forests, prairies and wetlands. When the city created Lake Worth in 1914, they purchased land around the West Fork of the Trinity River, protecting drinking water quality for the community. Local citizens and the Fort Worth Audubon Society convinced the Park Board to designate land in 1964, providing a wildlife sanctuary and nature preserve. FWNC&R became a reality, and in 1980, the U.S. Department of the Interior designated it a national landmark.*

The center holds various events such as field experiences, holiday and summer programs, canoe trips, hikes, walks and more. Start at the Hardwicke Interpretive Center. There, learn about the area and view aquariums that house a few snakes, turtles and a demonstrative alligator. Examine displays of tracks and other items to identify them later while hiking one of many trails.

Behind the Hardwicke, look for animals undergoing rehabilitation, like a young owl who peers at visitors, seemingly

bored by the intrusion. A 220-yard loop contains displays about the area. A simple walk, the loop is suitable for wheelchairs and strollers.

Although a few trails have steep steps, most have smooth surfaces, easy for guests to enjoy the trail. The prairies, marshes and forests each invite exploration. On the hottest days, trees shade the trails. Coupled with gentle breezes, it makes a fascinating place to break free from life's bustle.

For the less adventurous visitor, the boardwalk includes a





covered pavilion, perfect for a picnic. With sidewalks and literal boards, anyone can venture close to the wetlands. Fish from a covered area where water lilies provide beauty in the gentle movement of the water. In the distance, cranes pose for those who can see them without threatening their safety. Ample opportunities to view wildlife abound. Relax, watch and wait for turtles, frogs, fish, birds and others to welcome you to their home, or simply enjoy the cool breeze coming across the water.

While bison and prairie dogs shy away from visitors and heat, both make FWNC&R their home and appear at times. When hiking through the forest, expect to hear multiple sounds, and try to identify various inhabitants. With a dozen different trails, let adventure entice you to visit more than once, and try them all.

During your visit, don't forget to venture over to Greer Island. An easy walkway crosses the water, leading to two trails where you might spot an infamous creature. In the summer of 1969, numerous Fort Worth residents reported seeing a giant, hairy half-man, half-goat at Lake Worth. First sighted on Greer Island, rumors say he still calls the area home.

With bed-and-breakfasts, hotels and campgrounds in the area, visitors can easily turn a wondrous day trip into a multiple-day adventure. Also in the area, the legendary Hip Pocket Theatre offers another unique experience. The outdoor theater boasts its 45th season of actors portraying distinctive characters in original plays. While visiting FWNC&R, consider staying overnight, and take in a live play surrounded by the beauty and peace of nature. **NOW**

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TALES OF TEXAS



# AURORA'S ALIEN

— By Angel Morris



Photos courtesy of  
TuiSnider.com.

A legendary western town, the city of Aurora, Texas, is located about 30 miles northwest of Fort Worth. For almost 125 years, the Wise County location's claim to fame has been an alien named Ned.

Ned's voyage to Aurora was reported in *The Dallas Morning News* on April 19, 1897. The report tells of a cigar-shaped spaceship sailing over Aurora's public square before making its crash landing a few hundred feet north of what is now Texas 114.

*"About 6 o'clock this morning the early risers of Aurora were astonished at the sudden appearance of the airship which has been sailing around the country. It was traveling due north and much nearer the earth than before."*

*"Evidently some of the machinery was out of order, for it was making a speed of only 10 or 12 miles an hour, and gradually settling toward the earth. It sailed over the public square and when it reached the north part of town it collided with the tower of Judge Proctor's windmill and went into pieces with a*

*terrific explosion, scattering debris over several acres of ground, wrecking the windmill and water tank and destroying the judge's flower garden."*

*"The pilot of the ship is supposed to have been the only one aboard and, while his remains were badly disfigured, enough of the original has been picked up to show that he was not an inhabitant of this world."*

Townsfolk reportedly buried the alien pilot in Aurora Cemetery, but the story was not buried with it. While some residents prefer not to associate with unproven lore, many have embraced "Ned" — as the alien has come to be called — and all things space-creature related.

It's not unusual for alien-themed haunted houses to attract visitors to Aurora this time of year. Conferences commemorating the alleged crash have taken place in the city, and the Aurora website even features a photo of Ned's tombstone.

Etched with a cigar-shaped aircraft, the tombstone was stolen in 1972 shortly after an investigative story about Ned's crash landing was published on the Mutual UFO Network. In 2012, the marker that replaced the original was stolen as well, and now a boulder reportedly sits in its place.



A state marker outside the cemetery notes it may be the home of an alien grave, reading, in part: "This site is ... well-known because of the legend that a spaceship crashed nearby in 1897 and the pilot, killed in the crash, was buried here."

Trinkets and gifts can regularly be found at the site, where visitors come after learning of Ned through various sources. *Time* magazine published an Aurora alien-based article in 1979, and in 1986 a film, *The Aurora Encounter*, was shot in Ferris, Texas, based on the legend of Ned.

More than one book has been published surrounding Aurora's mysterious guest, and a few TV programs have focused on alien investigations in the town. The FOX network and two TV series, *UFO Files* and *UFO Hunters*, covered the story, as did an episode of History Channel's *Ancient Aliens*.

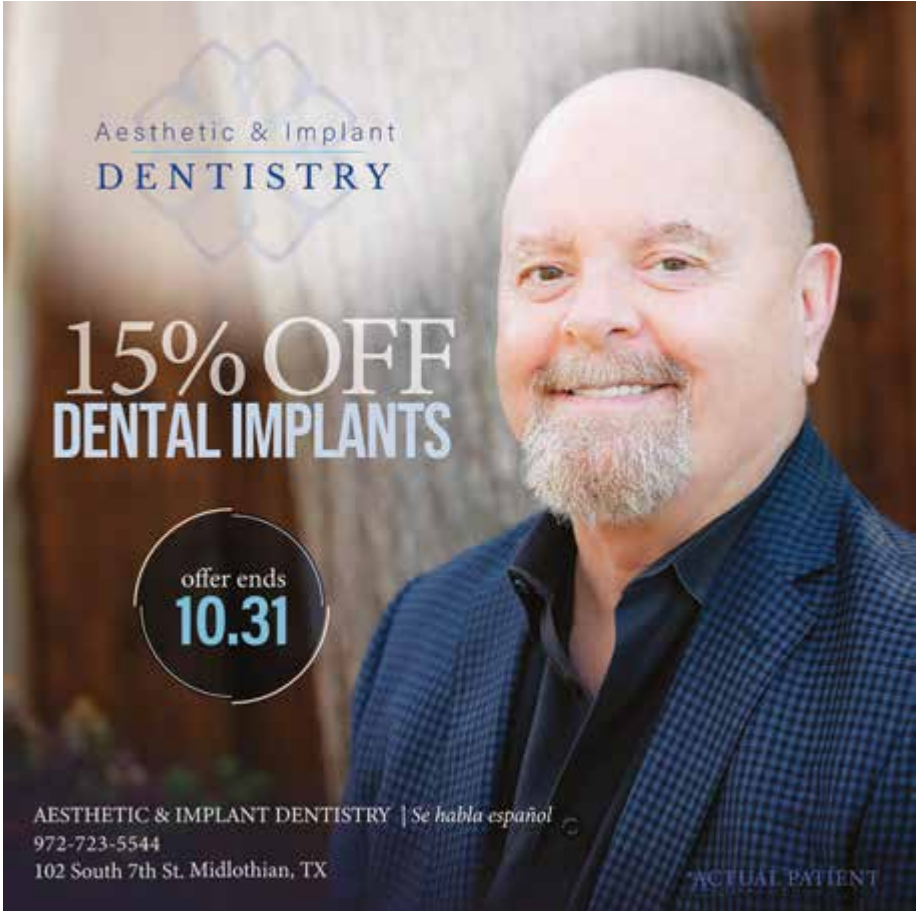
Earlier this year, *D Magazine* reminded folks of a \$5,000 reward offered by a Dallas lawyer interested in the return of Ned's tombstone, no questions asked. And, today it's easier than ever for people to learn about Aurora's famous alien through online news articles, YouTube videos and social media sites like @auroraned on Instagram and NedAlien on Twitter.

While not linked to Aurora's alien, a 2020 Jim Henson Disney series coincidentally features a blue-skinned creature, *Ned the Alien*, who was sent to earth to prepare for invasion. Becoming obsessed with the planet's pop culture, however, Ned abandons his mission to host a talk show instead.

Current Aurora residents may take the town's alien legend with a grain of salt, but a spacecraft and the windmill it destroyed, can be found on city gear including cups and T-shirts, and even the official town logo. Believe it or not, it seems the story is here to stay, and Ned will likely forever be Aurora's most famed resident. **NOW**

#### Sources:

1. <https://www.roadsideamerica.com/story/13501>
2. <https://www.star-telegram.com/news/state/texas/article207085784.html>
3. <http://www.auroratexas.gov/board-of-commissions/historic-preservation/ned/>



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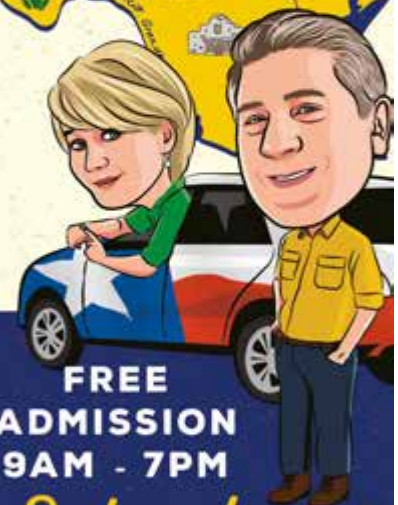
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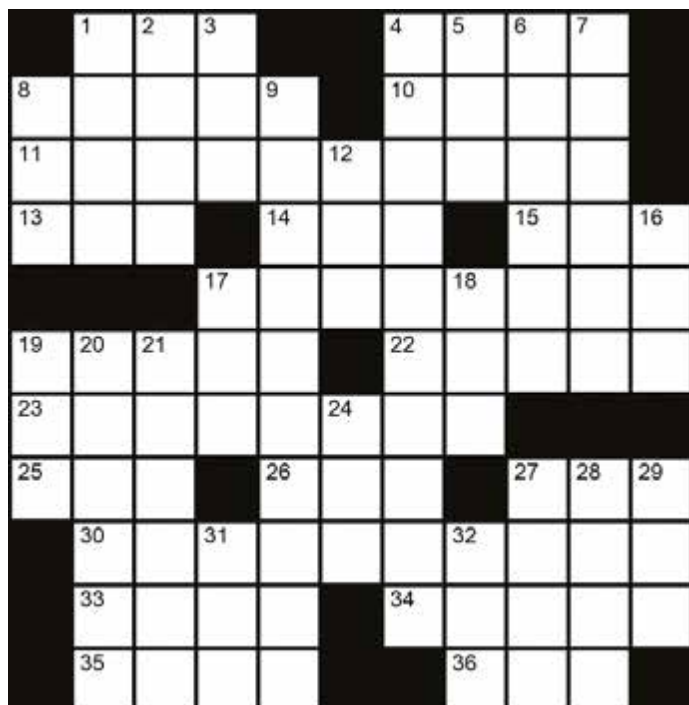
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# Crossword Puzzle



## Across

- 1 Swivel joint?
- 4 Old you
- 8 Rattle on about nothing in particular
- 10 Wreck
- 11 On the fritz
- 13 Cushion under a saddle
- 14 Horseplay
- 15 Gaping mouth
- 17 Capital on the Congo
- 19 Quarrel
- 22 Turnpike sections
- 23 "You could say that"
- 25 Brooch
- 26 Wrestling area
- 27 Free
- 30 Show signs of interest
- 33 "New World" symphony key
- 34 Cow's stomach
- 35 Place in the House
- 36 Every river has one

## Down

- 1 Tennis champion --- Mandlikova
- 2 Mobile music machine
- 3 Soda
- 4 Interpreter
- 5 From which spokes radiate
- 6 Crude worker
- 7 Discomfort
- 8 Big wheel
- 9 Civility
- 12 "Logan's ---" (1976 movie)
- 16 Used to be
- 17 Flesh and blood
- 18 Hit this at night
- 19 Gravestone letters
- 20 Consolidates
- 21 Generic
- 24 Pasty
- 27 Frosty coating
- 28 Hit
- 29 Cozy room
- 31 --- Ora (Maori greeting)
- 32 Stout roomy boat

Solutions on page 44

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# Sudoku Puzzle

Easy

6		8	7				9	
7			1	4			6	
			5					
		4	6		8		2	1
3	7							
		6		9				
4				6	3	9		
		9					1	
8						4		

Medium

	1	2		3				
								8
4			8				9	6
	4		7				3	
3							2	4
		5	6					
2		8					7	
	5		1		9			

Solutions on page 44

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Due to COVID-19, some events may have been cancelled or rescheduled while we were at press. Check with individual organizations or your city or Chamber websites to verify dates and times.

### 10/1-11/10

#### Scarecrow Festival:

Scarecrows created by community members. Winners announced by the Downtown Business Association Nov. 6. On display in Heritage Park, 234 N. 8th St. Learn more at [www.midlothiantxdba.com/scarecrow-festival](http://www.midlothiantxdba.com/scarecrow-festival).

### 10/10

#### Rise Up In Prayer:

Featuring Midlothian's Pastor Mac, musical artists and prayer warriors, this free Ellis County event encourages unity and healing between everyone

regardless of race, faith or politics. 6:00-8:00 p.m., Lumpkins Stadium, 200 Indian Dr., Waxahachie. [ChristiansRiseUp.net](http://ChristiansRiseUp.net).

### 10/16

#### Walk-a-thon:

Benefiting Ellis County Homeless Coalition. Nonprofit booths, food trucks and live music, along with walking on nearby trails. 8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Railyard Park, 455 S. College St., Waxahachie. or call (469) 428-7320.

#### Mockingbird Nature Park Wildflower Walk:

Learn about the native plants and animal life of the park. Wear closed-toe shoes. 9:00-10:00 a.m., 1361 Onward Road.

### 10/17

#### The Signature Dish:

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#### Texas Country Reporter Festival:

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### 10/29

#### Downtown Trick or Treat:

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8	V	A	P	O	R		10	R	U	I	N
11	I	N	O	P	E	12	R	A	B	L	E
13	P	A	D			14	F	U	N		16
						17	K	I	N	S	18
19	R	U	N	I	N		22	L	A	N	E
23	I	N	O	N	E	24	W	A	Y		
25	P	I	N			26	M	A	T		27
						31	T	A	K	E	N
33	E	M	I	N			34	R	U	M	E
35	S	E	A	T						36	B
											E

Easy

6	4	8	7	3	2	1	9	5
7	3	5	1	4	9	2	6	8
1	9	2	5	8	6	7	3	4
9	5	4	6	7	8	3	2	1
3	7	1	2	5	4	6	8	9
2	8	6	3	9	1	5	4	7
4	1	7	8	6	3	9	5	2
5	6	9	4	2	7	8	1	3
8	2	3	9	1	5	4	7	6

Medium

8	1	2	9	3	6	4	5	7
5	6	9	4	2	7	3	1	8
4	3	7	8	1	5	2	9	6
9	4	1	7	8	2	6	3	5
3	8	6	5	9	1	7	2	4
7	2	5	6	4	3	1	8	9
2	9	8	3	6	4	5	7	1
6	5	3	1	7	9	8	4	2
1	7	4	2	5	8	9	6	3



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