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OCTOBER 2026



Light and Shadow

Painter Samantha Hart uses darkness to bring out the happy

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Calendar

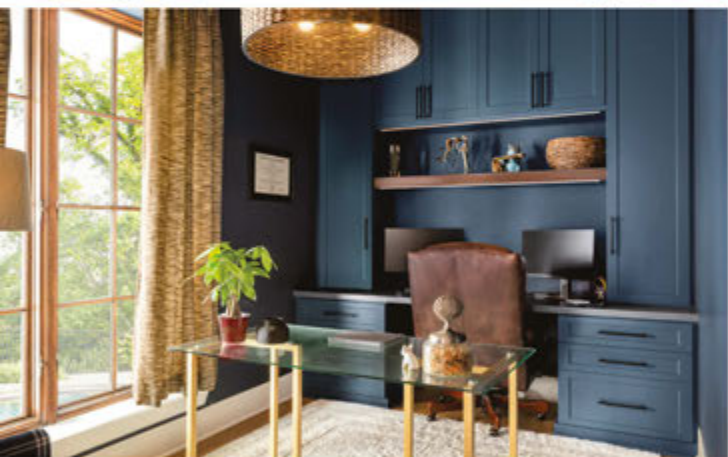
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Samantha Hart's artwork is inspired by her emotions.

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Light and Shadow

— By Becky Walker

Five-year-old Samatha Hart stood gazing at the artwork of Vincent van Gogh, Salvador Dalí, Edvard Munch and Georges Seurat. The elementary school she attended in San Antonio wanted to instill art appreciation in its students. With Samantha, it worked. Fascinated, especially by van Gogh, she began making her own art. "I'd tape all my artwork up in the hallways at our house and sell tickets to my parents to see my exhibit," she remembered.

Samantha and her biological brother, Greg, were adopted by Lloyd and Karla Hart at the ages of 6 months and 2 years old. All five of the Hart children were adopted. "I love all four of my siblings equally," Samantha said. "I'm just so grateful for the mom I got, who healed hearts she didn't break."

Samantha's mom, who enjoyed arts and crafts herself, encouraged Samantha's interest. "I remember, as a kid, making foam gingerbread houses with Mom. She had a whole tool box full of craft supplies and acrylic paints in a tub. We'd get ceramics from Michaels to paint together," she said. "My dad is crafty in his own way, too. He built us a popcorn machine for Christmas. My brother has it



now for his kids. Dad has always been very supportive of my art," she said. In fact, he kept all of her childhood art projects.

By the time Samantha entered high school, the family had moved to Carmichaels, Pennsylvania. While there, she continued to hone her abstract painting skills. "I got a C in art! How do you give a C in an art class?" Samantha mused. "I mean, it's self-expression, right?" But she remembered that same art teacher sitting down with her to help with shading and contrast, while she worked on a painting of Heath Ledger's version of the Joker. "I still have that painting," she said.

Those lessons on light and darkness would take on deeper meaning in her future. Samantha was bullied in high school. When she turned 18, she started drinking with friends. After her family moved to Waxahachie in 2016 and she began working for 911, Samantha began drinking heavier. "It's how I coped with it all," she said.

In 2020, right before COVID, she moved to Washington State where her biological brother had relocated. From there, she moved to Montana because of a relationship. During this time, she continued her art — and substance abuse. Then the relationship she was in turned into a domestic abuse situation that almost cost Samantha her life. "I told God, 'I'm done,'" she said. That led to her return home to Waxahachie and leaving substance abuse behind.

"I quit painting for about six months after I got sober," Samantha shared. "I was afraid it wouldn't be good if I was sober." But she found the opposite to be true. "I feel like a lot of my art was messier when my mind was messier. The longer I'm sober, the more clean and polished my art is."

Samantha primarily paints with acrylics on canvas, and her favorite color palette includes pink, blue, teal and black. "There's always



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black in there, a touch of the darkness, but it always brings out the happy," she said. Her studio is her spare bedroom. "I use paint knives, paint brushes, makeup wedges or my finger, but splatter painting or a paint knife are my favorites," she explained.

Samantha's art is inspired by her emotions. "Whatever is going on in my life, I have to paint about it," she said. Painting was therapy for her when she was working through the pain of a miscarriage.

"Four paintings came out of that experience," she stated. "The most important one is of an angel. I named my baby Cooper, and that painting is *Cooper's Angel*."

She also painted a Snoopy for her mom and a pig for her sister-in-law. The ideas for her more off-the-wall, Salvador Dalí-type paintings just pop into her head and eat at her until she finally goes for it. Some paintings take about two hours to complete; others might take an entire day. "I have to paint the whole painting in one sitting. If I walk away from a piece before it is finished, it usually ends up in the trash because I just don't know what to do with it. I can't get back into that mood. The painting is finished when I can breathe."

In addition to her parents, Samantha is surrounded by a network of family and friends who cheer her on. Her best friend, Mikki, sometimes helps her get past creative blocks. Her sister-in-law, Jessie, posted pictures of Samantha's work on Facebook

Group pages. "My Auntie is right alongside my mom, healing a heart she didn't break. I give credit to God first, and my mom second," she said. "If my PapPap was still here, I'd have to say he and my mom would be tied. The rest are a close third!"

One of her more recent paintings is of a sunflower. "The sunflower is me. I bloomed out of the chaos. I wouldn't have any of the things I have now without my faith. Sobriety is amazing! I showed up here two years ago totally broken, and now? There is light, and it all started with me saying, 'God, I'm done.' If just one person can see one of my paintings and think, *I can do it, too. I can try something new. I have a purpose* — then everything I've been through is worth it," she said.

"This is my dream. Kindergarten me is living her best life." **NOW**

Editor's Note: To view more artwork by Samantha Hart, visit <https://the-hartless-artist.square.site>.

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"Our goal is to give people access to medical care and wellness services in one place and help them be proactive about their health," Dr. Sylvia Flores Bugarin said.

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IV therapy, weight-loss programs, hormone health, functional lab testing, pain-management injections, natural aesthetics, and chiropractic care. The center also offers wellness experiences designed to complement medical care and physical therapy, including Hydromassage, Power Plate and EMS workout sessions. Whether someone is looking to improve energy and wellness, support healthy weight management, explore hormone health, recover from an injury or simply make self-care part of their routine, Central Medical Center aims to make those services easier to access in one convenient location. The practice accepts insurance for eligible medical services, while also offering wellness and aesthetic options for patients looking to invest in their overall well-being.

For John Bugarin, DC, founder of Central Medical Center, opening in Waxahachie is about more than expanding the business. It is about becoming part of a community that is growing quickly and investing in its future. Many members of the Central Medical Center team already live in Waxahachie and Ellis County, and the Bugarins are also in the process of relocating to the area. "We see the growth happening in this community, and we are excited to grow alongside it," he said.

The Waxahachie center marks the third location for Central Medical Center. The organization was established in Dallas 28 years ago and expanded to Irving three years ago. Today, its team includes physicians, nurse practitioners, chiropractors and other health care professionals. Central Medical Center Waxahachie is designed around a simple idea: Your health should be something you actively invest in — not something you only think about when something goes wrong. By combining medical care, wellness, preventative health, aesthetics and lifestyle-focused services, Central Medical Center is creating a destination for patients who want a more modern approach to taking care of themselves. **NOW**



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Zoomed In: Shamonica Adams

By Becky Walker

Patrol Officer Shamonica Adams was on duty during the Ellis County Home & Garden Show. She's been with the Waxahachie Police Department for 12 years – four in dispatch and almost eight on patrol. "I've always wanted to be in law enforcement to just serve and protect," she said. "Law enforcement sees people on their best and worst days."

As a female in a male-dominated field, she takes being a role model seriously. "Overall, it's about serving and showing our youth that they can be anything they want to be. There are a lot of females coming into law enforcement and making a difference," she said. "You just have to put others before yourself."



Walt Friis, Elizabeth Green, Gayle Johnston and Jane Rowland man the Ellis County Master Gardeners booth at the Ellis County Home & Garden Show.



Frank Hegar, Jasmin Beza, Riki Smith and Noah Smith of Cub Scout Pack 681 participate in the This is Our Story event.



Volunteer Madison Peterson greets visitors at the Ellis County Museum.



Thomas Johnson of T&S Ministries poses with members of Fire Station 1 while dropping off cases of water, Gatorade and a large tray of cookies as a thank-you to those working in the extreme summer heat.



The Waxahachie Chamber of Commerce holds a ribbon cutting for HOLT CAT.

MEDICARE'S ANNUAL ENROLLMENT PERIOD IS HERE — HERE'S WHAT EVERY BENEFICIARY SHOULD KNOW

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The Annual Enrollment Period (AEP) runs from October 15 through December 7 each year. During this time, Medicare beneficiaries can review their current coverage and make changes for the upcoming year — including switching between Original Medicare and Medicare Advantage, changing Medicare Advantage plans or updating a Part D prescription drug plan. Any changes made during AEP take effect January 1.

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Zoomed In: Jackie Wray

By Becky Walker

Friday night lights are nothing new to Waxahachie High School Class of 1968 graduate Jackie Wray. She’s a lifelong Indians fan, and she was in the band during her high school days. So, when the Texas Theater on Main Street opened its doors to host a watch party for the Battle of 287 game, she was all in. “Once and Indian, always an Indian!” she said.

“I’ve lived in Waxahachie all my life,” she informed. “There’s a whole lot more people now than when I was in school! I went to high school over on 2nd Street in the building that was Wilemon.” (The building is currently home to Global High.)

“We’re gonna win!” she enthused. She wasn’t wrong in her prediction, as the Indians decisively won 72-14 and brought the sign back home.



Coach Sergio Valera with Impact City FC gives brothers Nain Montoya Jr. and Axel Montoya a private training session.



Gabrielle Tranel celebrates that the Greater Literacy Foundation, the nonprofit arm of Paper Leaves Shop, donated over 500 new books, including 100 Bibles, during the This is Our Story event.



Charlsie Starkey celebrates her Sweet 16 on the courthouse steps.



Five 49 at River Oaks holds its ribbon-cutting ceremony.



Nicole and Christopher Rollins join Phil and Graham Luna to build memories one brick at a time during LEGO Club at Sims Library.

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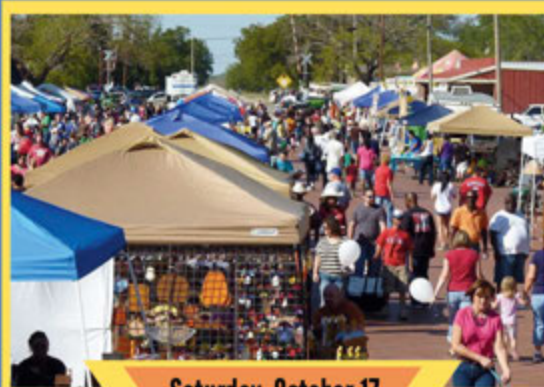


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Things to do in Waxahachie!

OCTOBER

WaxahachieNOW

Some events may have been cancelled or rescheduled while we were at press.

M A G A Z I N E

Through 11/1

Scarborough's Hollow

Entertainment, artisan shopping, seasonal food, immersive experiences.

1:00-9:00 p.m., 2511 FM 66. For more information, visit <https://srfestival.com/hollow/>.

10/3

Walk to End Alzheimer's

Check-In: 8:00 a.m.; opening ceremony: 9:00 a.m., Getzendaner Park, 400 S. Grand Ave. For more information, contact Ashley Burr at asburr@alz.org.

OddFest

Festival showcasing great

artists and musicians from Texas who lean toward the odd. 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., Singleton Plaza, Downtown Waxahachie.

WindSync With Jon Kimura Parker

Presented by Waxahachie Symphony Association. 7:30 p.m., Nelson University-Hagee Center, 499 E. University Ave. For tickets, visit <https://www.waxahachiesymphony.org/>.

10/4

Farm Heritage Day

Outdoor games, hayrides, living history activities. Free. 2:00-5:00 p.m., Ellis County

Rural Heritage Farm, 30 Cunningham Meadows Rd.

10/15

Stampede of Speed Fan Fest

Meet NHRA and JEGS All-star drivers and get free autographs. 6:00-9:00 p.m., Railyard Park, 455 S. College St.

10/17

Think Pink Stand Purple

Women's wellness event. 8:00 a.m.-noon, Railyard Park, 455 S. College St.

Oktoberfest

10:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m., St. Joseph Catholic Church, 600

E. Marvin Ave.

10/23-10/25

Mary Poppins

Presented by Waxahachie Community Theater.

Friday and Saturday: 7:30 p.m.; **Sunday:** 2:30 p.m.

For details, visit <https://waxahachiecommunitytheatre.com/>.

10/24

Crossroads of Texas Go Texan Country Festival

Enjoy Texas' largest one-day arts, music and food festival. Free. 9:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m., Downtown Waxahachie.

For more information, visit <https://www.waxahachiecvb.com/events/>.

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Cozy Pumpkin Recipes



Pumpkin, warm spices and hearty ingredients take center stage as we embrace comfort food season. These recipes capture the essence of fall, bringing warmth and nostalgia to your table. [NOW](#)

Creamy Pumpkin Pasta

- 1 lb. penne pasta
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup pumpkin puree
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1/2 cup chicken broth
- 1/2 cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- 1 tsp. dried sage
- 1/2 tsp. nutmeg
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. black pepper
- 1/4 cup toasted pumpkin seeds

1. Cook the pasta according to the package directions until al dente; drain and set aside.
2. Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the garlic; sauté for 1 minute until fragrant.
3. Stir in the pumpkin puree, mixing well.
4. Pour in the cream and chicken broth, stirring until smooth.
5. Add the Parmesan; stir until melted and incorporated. Add the spices.
6. Simmer for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally, until slightly thickened.
7. Add the pasta; toss to coat evenly.
8. Serve hot, garnished with toasted pumpkin seeds.

Pumpkin Soup With Bacon

- 6 slices bacon, chopped
- 1 medium onion, diced

- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 cups pumpkin puree
- 3 cups chicken broth
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 tsp. dried thyme
- 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. black pepper
- Sour cream, for serving
- Fresh chives, for garnish

1. In a large pot, cook the bacon over medium heat until crispy, about 5-7 minutes.
2. Remove half of the bacon with a slotted spoon; set aside for garnish.
3. Add the onions to the pot with the remaining bacon; cook until softened, about 5 minutes.
4. Stir in the garlic; cook for 1 minute until fragrant.
5. Add the pumpkin puree and chicken broth, stirring to combine.
6. Bring to a simmer; cook for 10 minutes.
7. Stir in the cream and spices. Use an immersion blender to puree the soup until smooth, or transfer to a blender in batches.
8. Simmer for an additional 5 minutes to heat through.
9. Serve hot, topped with a dollop of sour cream, reserved crispy bacon and fresh chives.

Pumpkin Spice Muffins

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1/2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 2 tsp. pumpkin pie spice
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, melted
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup pumpkin puree
- 1/4 cup milk
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract

1. Preheat the oven to 375 F; line a 12-cup muffin tin with paper liners.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together the first 5 ingredients.
3. In a large bowl, combine the melted butter and both sugars, stirring until smooth. Beat in the eggs, one at a time, until well incorporated.
4. Add the pumpkin puree, milk and vanilla extract, mixing until smooth.
5. Gradually fold the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients until just combined.
6. Divide the batter evenly among the muffin cups, filling each about three-quarters full.
7. Bake for 18-22 minutes until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.
8. Let the muffins cool in the pan for 5 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack.
9. Serve warm or at room temperature.



MIDLOTHIAN, TX | NOVEMBER 5 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM

The Governor's Small Business Summit – Midlothian aims to help Texas small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs reach new heights by connecting them with the resources and information needed to start, strengthen and grow a business. This event offers a variety of sessions bringing together local, state and federal resource partners to provide key insights on critical business topics.



Register Now!

WHEN: November 5 | 8:00am - 2:00pm

WHERE: Midlothian Conference Center,
1 Community Dr., Midlothian, TX 76065



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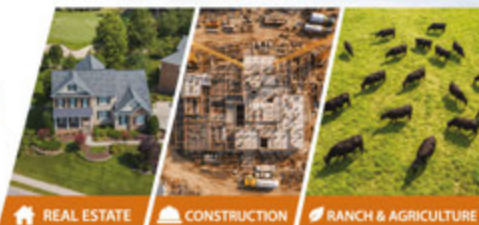
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October 10: Movie Night: "Coco" - 7:15 PM
October 24: Autumn Daze Festival & Carnival - Noon-9 PM
October 25: Autumn Daze Festival & Carnival - 10 AM-8 PM
October 29: Haunted Maze - 7:30-9 PM
October 30: Haunted Maze - 7:30-10 PM
October 31: Haunted Maze - 7:30-10 PM
October 31: Ennis Chamber Trunk or Treat - 6-9 PM
October 31: Bluebonnet Market: Día de los Muertos Edition - 6-9 PM
October 31: Bluebonnet Market: Mariachi Performance - 9-10 PM

Pumpkin Patch & Maze: All October (Thurs-Sat- 9 AM -9 PM &
Sun: Noon - 7 PM)

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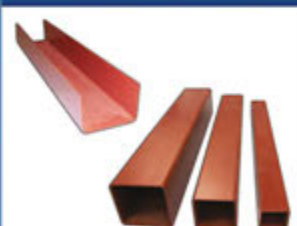


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