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M A G A Z I N E

November 2021

A Rare Rank

Jared Burnham
achieves Eagle Scout

2021 Holiday Shopping Guide

In the Kitchen With
Chaiden Rios and
Brendon Sayles

With Manes and Skirts Flying

Paula Alcalá rides for
pride and tradition

Also inside:
Scavenger Hunt

Crossword/Sudoku

Featured Business:
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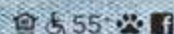
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ON THE COVER

Paula Alcalá loves horses and her Mexican-American roots.

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EDITOR'S NOTE



Angel

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Grow gratitude ...

Most of us, regardless of our background or beliefs, have at one time or another been advised to “give thanks in all things.” When life is rosy, being thankful is easy. But those times when the petals leave the bloom? When pests eat away at us? When the weeds exceed the flowers? How can we possibly give thanks for all those things poisoning our gardens? When everything that can go wrong does, and we’re left wilting in life’s dirt?

A wise former colleague of mine once clarified that during challenges is exactly when we should be most appreciative. With a series of hypotheticals, she reminded a roomful of fellow educators and students how opportunity lies in adversity and is, perhaps, the greatest teacher of all. She put a positive spin on the idiom, “A thorn in one’s flesh,” and reminded us that healing starts with pain.

If you are in the middle of a season of struggle, anecdotes may seem trite. Still, in this month of thanksgiving, I offer a few illustrations to remind you that gratitude may be just the nourishment you need ... House always a mess? You have a place to live! Children challenging you? You’re providing a place of learning and growth! Had a door closed in your face? You have a chance to evaluate where you really want to be! Financial worry? Learn who you can truly count on! Marital strife? You have loved someone with all your heart! Going to bed exhausted? You lived another day!

Life isn’t always a bed of roses, and sometimes the only thing you control is your perspective. If there’s any way you can, pick thanks.

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WITH MANE - and - Skirts Flying

— By Adam Walker

Everyone knows a “horse girl.” One who draws cartoon ponies in her notebooks and reads every horse novel she can find. Paula Alcalá was like that, but she didn’t stop there.

Paula’s family members are horse people on both sides, so she grew up around them, and learned to ride at a young age. “We lived in Irving until I was 9 or 10. Then moved to Midlothian. Mom and Dad both grew up on ranches — Mom in Texas and Dad in Zacatecas, Mexico.”

Paula’s mother, Christina Morrison, rode in horse shows and did presentations, but not competitions. Her father, Alfredo Alcalá, grew up in the world of *charros*, traditional Mexican cowboys. He has competed as a *coleador*, cow-tailer and has raced as a jockey.

“The *charros* have nine events they compete in, including horse reining, roping, cow-tailing and bull riding. The women only have one event, *escaramuza*, which means ‘skirmish’ in English,” Paula explained.

Escaramuza is high-speed, synchronized, precision riding done by all-women teams of eight riders, leading horses in various patterns that wheel and blaze into and out of the center of the corral, while riding side saddle in traditional Mexican clothing that can range from moderately simple outfits to riots of color that would do a *folklórico* dancer proud.

“We moved to Midlothian specifically to have horses. When I got my first horse, I remember going outside just to sit with her, before she was broke. I learned how to saddle and bridle, before I learned to ride,” Paula recalled. “Faith, my palomino mare, is retired now. We both learned to ride together. We taught each other. She’s 22 years old, and over 52 girls learned to ride on her! My sister, Amber, and a bunch of my cousins all learned to ride here.”

Paula was 10 when she started riding with a team of *escaramuza* riders who practiced in Alvarado. “It was a juvenile team. We were all under 15, but we were good. I was only 14 when we won the Texas state competition against all the big girls.”

Escaramuza is a distinctly Mexican sport, but it is practiced all over the U.S., too. “When I was a little girl, it was only Texas and California where you found teams in the USA, but now there are teams in over 14 states, including Illinois, Minnesota, Georgia and all over.”

The competition is fierce. “This year, at State, our team got third place. We missed first place by seven points. The difference between second place and first place was two







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points. You can get six points off by missing your mark by a fraction of a second,” Paula said, but their finish was good enough to take them to USA Nationals held in Houston.

Judging at an *escaramuza* event begins before riders even mount. “The whole team has to wear matching uniforms, which have to be handmade. “We wear an *Adelita* dress, like the women who rode for Pancho Villa during the Mexican Revolution and hid supplies under their skirts, delivering them to soldiers in need. Judges check the *crinolina* under the skirt to be sure it is starched hard, the *blusa* (blouse), our earrings, the bows in our hair — we all have to match and be within regulation,” Paula described.

“We have to wear boots, but only one spur, since we ride side-saddle. And we have a *rebozo*, a kind of shawl tied around our waist. The *sombrero* is like a helmet to protect our heads if we fall. You can’t be caught anywhere on the grounds during competition day without it, or you’re disqualified,” Paula continued.

“The final thing is a *vara*, a stick from a tree. It’s just a stick, not a riding crop, not decorated or anything. A good rider never uses it, but it’s part of the uniform. It’s all about pride and tradition. My mom’s American, and my dad’s Mexican. I’m proud to be Mexican-American. Being both is a whole culture in itself, Chicana. It’s such an honor and a privilege to be immersed in this culture, to be able to carry on the traditions of my people with pride.”

The team Paula competes with today, *Esacaramuza Tierra Azteca*, is largely a family affair. Amber is the team captain. Her cousins, Martha Alcalá and Cassandra Chavarria-Alcalá, also ride with her. Her father manages the horses’ trainings and upkeep, while her mother



manages the teams' trainings, event scheduling and the ladies in general.

A lot of practice goes into competing at this level, so girls and horses enter the family *lienzo*, the arena, twice a week to run through patterns together. They do warm up exercises, like follow the leader on horseback, to stretch their horses' legs and practice mirror image precision.

Then, they do movements like *giros* — tight, simultaneous turns in place. "We have to maintain perfect spacing between our horses, and move perfectly synchronized, or we lose points. It's all about 16 hearts beating as one, horses and riders," Paula reported.

"When we're out here practicing, it feels like a lot of work. It is a lot of work. But during a competition, I don't feel it. It's kind of euphoric. It's all so much, and so little. You almost feel like you black out. And it all happens so fast you don't have time to think about the details. It's this fleeting anxiety," Paula enthused.

"You either win, or you don't! We perform to music, but you don't even hear it. It's like tunnel vision, trying to hit the marks. This year, state competition was in Katy. It was over 100 degrees and very humid. We were on our horses for 12 hours. Amber ended up puking because she got dehydrated. Her horse had to have a shot of electrolytes because of dehydration! But when it's over we're just cheeasing from ear to ear, because we know we did good." **NOW**



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A RARE RANK

— By Angel Morris

Earning the rank of Eagle Scout is something only about 4 percent of those participating in Boy Scouts of America ever achieve. As the organization's highest achievement, it involves the earning of 21 merit badges and completion of an Eagle Scout project, among other requirements, plus a lengthy review process.

Midlothian Heritage High School junior, Jared Burnham, managed to achieve his Eagle Scout rank earlier this year. Starting in Midlothian Cub Scout Pack 962 in first grade, Jared has been involved in BSA for 10 years, with his final years with Ovilla Troop 524.

"I had heard that the scouting community in the Midlothian area was very close-knit. I wanted to be part of a team," he said of his decision to join BSA.

While BSA requires the Eagle rank be achieved prior to a Scout turning 18, earning it as young as Jared did is unusual for his troop. Completion of all Eagle requirements typically takes about two years. "I completed the process when I was 15, with the help of some amazing, tough leadership including a great scoutmaster, Mike Ferguson," Jared admitted.

Jared's dad, Dan, committed to helping Jared when his son first joined Scouts. "When I was 6 years old, he said he'd be with me every step of the way, and he was," Jared recalled. "He helped our whole troop achieve merit badges along the way."

An annual campout each December created particularly memorable scouting memories for Jared and Dan. "Through torrential rains while building our own shelter, cooking a six-course meal for 125 troops, their friends and family ... all with generators, fire and no on-site water. And it was always delicious!" Dan noted.

Experiences like that offered the greatest life lessons, according to Jared. "It taught me perseverance. The very tough weather conditions during campouts mean you can't say, 'No,' to whatever needs to get done, whether it's raining, terribly hot or waking up in your tent and it's 26 degrees out," he said.

Another memorable aspect of his scouting was a 12-day

trip across the U.S. in 2018. "There was a group of about 30 Boy Scouts and adults who toured 14 of the nation's most prestigious monuments and museums," Jared recollected. "A highlight was at the National Cemetery, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington, Virginia."

Jared was one of four Scouts selected to participate in the laying of the wreath ceremony, the once daily tribute honoring those who gave their lives in World Wars I and II and the Korean War. "It was a very sacred thing to be part of," Jared explained.

Touring the FBI building in Washington, D.C., is another standout memory for Jared. "Not many people get to go into the building. Usually, you have to have a 6-month advanced reservation, and our troop got in after meeting someone who made an exception and did very fast background checks for us," Jared explained. "It was a cool experience because we were able to see things like pieces of crime scene evidence including a boat with bullet holes in it. At 12 years old, that was really fun. We also got to see their gym and the museum."

While there were other highlights, the essence of scouting was found in the many week-long wilderness adventures. "While many students were at home resting, these boys were out in the wilderness becoming better leaders and citizens. They took their Christmas and spring breaks to mentor the younger boys as well as earn their own merit badges," Jared's mom, Judie, noted.

For example, one summer, Jared earned his Lifesaving badge by demonstrating how to save a grown man submerged at the bottom of a pool. He also met requirements in treading water and swimming strokes and laps. "There is an activity calendar for nine to 10 months of the year. Attendance is a big part of being a Scout, and so is showing up on time," Jared described.



Jared was the seventh person in 2021 from his district council who earned Eagle Scout this year. His final project involved cleanup of the neglected tree line between the city civic center, soccer field and cemetery. "I met with Billy King, parks operations manager, to see how I could give back to the city. There was a 160-yard fence line that desperately needed clearing," Jared described. "My troop of over 30 volunteers filled two 40-yard dumpsters and put in over 200 man hours."

Now that Jared has achieved scouting's highest honor, he is focused on his schoolwork and pursuing his interests in audio and media, as well as graphic design. "My hobbies are lighting design and live audio/visual production. At home, I've fully landscaped our backyard into a tropical paradise, including walkways and neon solar night lighting," Jared said. "Occasionally, I'll try my hand at cooking, too."

With an eye toward graduation in 2023, Jared said he wants to earn high enough grades to be accepted at whichever college he may choose. "I'll probably do two years of junior college before transferring to a university for my degree," he predicted. In his straightforward style, Jared encouraged those interested in Boy Scouts to pursue the organization's highest rank, saying, "Anyone can do it if they put their mind to it." **NOW**



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— By Angel Morris

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As Methodist Dallas Medical Center in Oak Cliff nears its 100th anniversary, its sister location in Midlothian completes its first year in the community. “The health system expanded to serve Dallas’ Best Southwest communities by opening Methodist Charlton, and then Methodist Mansfield about 15 years ago,” recalled Jary Ganske, administrator of Methodist



Midlothian Medical Center. “As growth in Midlothian and surrounding communities continued over the past decade, we were able to see how local residents came to our other campuses for care.”

Methodist Midlothian is the first full-service, acute care hospital in Midlothian. Located near U.S. 287, the five-story medical center features the latest technology and provides a variety of health care services, from emergency care and surgical capabilities to women’s services, with expansion plans in place. “We’re already working on ways to offer advanced cardiac care, as well as additional capabilities in robotic-assisted surgery,” Jary added.

Methodist Health System began investigating an access point to better serve Ellis County about five years ago. “The more we looked at projected growth patterns, the larger plans became to serve the health care demands in the area. Thus, we began a project to open Midlothian’s first community hospital and build

a \$175 million, 200,000-plus square-foot facility,” Jary outlined.

Years of planning and construction culminated in the opening of Methodist Midlothian last November, during the COVID-19 pandemic. “During our ribbon-cutting ceremony on the day we opened in November 2020, we only had five health system leaders and a photographer at the event due to COVID-19 safety protocols,” Jary reflected. “With the uptick of COVID-19 in the region, our first anniversary may be a similar affair, as we seek to protect the safety of our employees, medical staff, patients and those in our community.”

The pandemic forced hospital staff to hit the ground running. “Our team stepped up with passion and vigor as we began to see an influx of patients and started delivering trusted patient care for Midlothian residents,” Jary praised. “One of my favorite memories was during the early stages of COVID-19 vaccination efforts. Accessibility of the vaccine was extremely limited in Ellis County, and our health system was able to assist getting local law enforcement personnel and educators their COVID-19 vaccine early on.”

Methodist Midlothian built its staff with local health care professionals, the majority of whom live in the region. The hospital is one of the top 10 employers in the city, with 300 team members. In addition to employing locals, Methodist Midlothian benefits the community by allowing EMS to transport patients to care more quickly and get back to other calls faster.

Methodist Midlothian also gives back to the community and is proud of the relationships with Midlothian ISD, the city of Midlothian, the faith-based community, Chamber networks and others. “Not only do we support community initiatives through financial contributions, but our staffers consistently volunteer. Many serve on local boards, working behind the scenes to support the town,” Jary explained. “Likewise, a lot of the staff, including myself, are local residents, and we’re your neighbors. Methodist Health System is truly invested in the community, and we want to be good stewards in all the ways we care for Midlothian.” **NOW**



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CookingNOW

In the Kitchen With CHAIKEN RIOS AND BRENDON SAYLES

— By Angel Morris

High school freshmen, Chaiden Rios and Brendon Sayles, met in sixth grade at Walnut Grove Middle School. “Even though we didn’t start high school together because of MISD re-zoning, [Chaiden attends Midlothian High School and Brendon is in Heritage High School boundaries] we plan on being friends and cooking together for a long time,” Chaiden noted.

Chaiden’s entire family enjoys cooking, and Brendon likes to eat. “Chaiden made chicken alfredo one day, and I wanted to learn how to make it,” Brendon recalled. Ever since, the friends have been trying new recipes and different ingredients to see how spicy they can make meals. They like baking cupcakes for friends and also anticipate holiday cooking.

Chaiden said, “We’re already planning our contribution to Thanksgiving dinner!” **NOW**

Garlic Honey Butter Drummies

2 lbs. chicken drumsticks (about 8)
1/4 cup unsalted butter, melted
1/4 cup honey
2 Tbsp. soy sauce
4 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 tsp. kosher salt
1/8 tsp. black pepper, freshly ground

1. Preheat the oven to 400 F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil; place the drumsticks on the foil. In a small bowl, combine the melted butter, honey, soy sauce, garlic, salt and pepper; mix well. Brush about half of the sauce mixture on the drumsticks.
2. Bake the chicken for 20 minutes. Carefully turn the drumsticks over with tongs; brush with the remaining sauce mixture. Bake for

an additional 15 to 20 minutes, or until a meat thermometer registers 165 F.

Fettucine Alfredo

2 tsp. kosher salt, or to taste (divided use)
1 lb. fettuccine
1 1/2 cups heavy cream
6 Tbsp. unsalted butter, cut into cubes
1/4 tsp. nutmeg, freshly grated
1/2 tsp. ground pepper
1 cup Parmesan cheese, plus more for topping, grated

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the pasta; cook as the label directs. Reserve 1/2 cup cooking water; drain.
2. Meanwhile, combine the heavy cream and butter in a large skillet. Bring to a simmer over medium-high heat, whisking to combine. Whisk in the nutmeg and 1/2 tsp. each salt and pepper. Keep warm over low heat.
3. Add the pasta and cheese to the sauce.

Increase the heat to medium; toss to coat, adding the reserved cooking water as needed to loosen the sauce. Transfer the pasta to bowls; top with more Parmesan.

Garlic Parmesan Wings

Inspired by Wingstop. Makes about 20 wings.

- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. black pepper
- 1 Tbsp. Italian seasoning
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 2 lbs. chicken wings
- 1/3 cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- 4 cloves garlic, finely minced
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1/4 cup fresh parsley, chopped

1. Preheat the oven to 300 F. In a large bowl, mix together the salt, pepper, Italian seasoning and cumin. Pour the chicken wings into the bowl; coat with the spice mixture.
2. Transfer the wings onto a baking sheet; bake 20 minutes. Increase the oven temperature to 425 F; bake for 15 more minutes.
3. While the chicken is baking, mix together the Parmesan cheese, garlic, oil and parsley. When the chicken is cooked through, toss the wings with the garlic/cheese/olive oil mixture. Serve immediately.

Sopapilla Cheesecake Bars

- 2 8-count cans refrigerated crescent rolls (divided use)
- 2 pkgs. cream cheese, softened
- 1 1/2 cups sugar (divided use)
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1/2 cup butter, melted
- 1 Tbsp. ground cinnamon

1. Heat an oven to 350 F. Unroll 1 can of dough. Place it in the bottom of an ungreased 13x9-inch (3-qt.) glass baking dish. Stretch to cover the bottom of the dish, firmly pressing perforations to seal.
2. In a medium bowl, beat cream cheese and 1 cup of the sugar with an electric mixer on medium speed until smooth. Beat in vanilla. Spread over the dough in the baking dish.
3. Unroll the second can of dough. Firmly press perforations to seal. Carefully place on top of the cream cheese layer; pinch the seams together.
4. Pour the melted butter evenly over the top. Mix the remaining sugar with the cinnamon; sprinkle evenly over the butter.
5. Bake 30-35 minutes, or until bars appear set when gently shaken. Cool slightly, about 30 minutes. Refrigerate for easy cutting. Cut into 4 rows by 3 rows. Cover; refrigerate any remaining bars.

10

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Fettuccine Alfredo

Breakfast Pizza

1 tube refrigerated pizza crust
2 Tbsp. olive oil (divided use)
8 eggs
1/3 cup milk
Salt, to taste
Pepper, to taste
6 pieces bacon, cooked and chopped
2 cups cheddar jack cheese, shredded

1. Preheat the oven to 425 F. Unroll the pizza crust into a sheet cake pan; stretch to fill the pan, and curl up the edges to form

a crust. Brush the crust with the olive oil; prick with a fork to avoid bubbles. Bake until lightly browned, about 7-8 minutes.

2. Whisk together the eggs, milk, salt and pepper.

3. In a medium skillet, heat a little oil over medium heat. Add the egg mixture; cook until soft scrambled. Spoon the egg mixture over the crust; add the bacon and cheese. Bake for another 7 minutes, or until the cheese is melted.

Taco Roll

1 lb. ground beef
1/3 cup onion, finely chopped
1 packet taco seasoning
1/3 cup water
2 oz. cream cheese, softened
2 cans refrigerated crescent roll dough
1 cup cheese, shredded

Toppings:

Shredded lettuce, to taste
Salsa, to taste
Sour cream, to taste
Black olives, to taste
Jalapeños, to taste

1. Preheat the oven to 375 F. Brown the ground beef along with the onions in a large

pan, breaking the beef apart with a wooden spoon. Add the taco seasoning and water; cook until thickened, about 2 minutes.

2. Add the cream cheese to the pan; stir until melted and mixed in evenly. Remove from heat.


3. Unroll the cans of crescent roll dough; separate into triangles. On a lightly greased cookie sheet, arrange them overlapping in a sun pattern with a 5- to 6-inch opening in the center. The short ends will form the center in the middle, with the pointy ends facing out.

4. Spoon taco mixture over the wide section close to the center. Sprinkle cheese on top.


5. Bring each tip of the crescent roll dough up and over toward the center and tuck underneath. Bake 20 to 25 minutes, until golden brown. Top with toppings; serve with picante sauce.

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A quick look at the gift items and discounts available locally.

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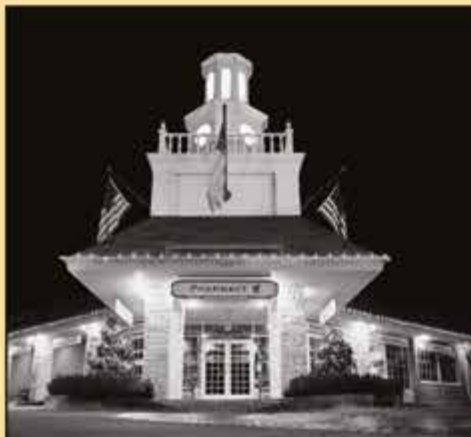
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BIGGEST SALE OF THE YEAR





Zoomed In: Jack Barnes

By Angel Morris

In his second year as the Frank Seale Middle School mascot, eighth-grader, Jack Barnes, recently earned the UCA All American Mascot award and will perform at the Citrus Bowl Jan. 1, 2022. "Jack is on the autism spectrum and doesn't always initiate social situations, but once he puts the suit on, he becomes Rowdy," Jack's dad, Casey Barnes, explained. "He's playful, high fives, gives hugs and performs in large crowds. He wants to please fans."

Meeting mascots from across the U.S. is a dream come true for Jack, who also enjoys NASCAR and baseball. "I can't wait to perform with the other mascots," Jack admitted.

Casey added, "It's a chance of a lifetime for this sweet boy who will represent Midlothian and the special needs community with heart!"



Brooklyn Coffman doesn't let rainy weather stop her from volunteering with a smile for Manna House.



Geri Salazar is inducted as a new Lions Club member by president Gary Vineyard Jr.



The children of Four Trees and Old Farmhouse Estates pose at a neighborhood event.



Jet Green enjoys Vintage Market Days of Ellis County.



Rylie Vargas discovers baby chicks at Shadow Creek Pumpkin Farm.



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—TALES OF TEXAS—

I ADOPTED THE WORLD

— By Adam Walker

Names of civil rights leaders like Martin Luther King Jr, Malcolm X and John Lewis are known to everyone nationwide, young and old. But here in Texas, much of the progress toward equality was spearheaded by an unassuming woman in old South Dallas. Juanita Jewel Craft helped change the face of race relations in Dallas and beyond.

Juanita Craft isn't the household name that the men are, but she should be. Born in 1902, in Round Rock, by 1925 Craft, as her friends called her, was living in Dallas. She earned a teaching certificate from Samuel Huston College, but worked as a maid at the Adolphus Hotel. In 1935, she joined the NAACP and found her life's work. As the membership chair of the Dallas branch, she hid the membership rolls to protect her fellow members from those who would have used the rolls to harass those fighting for change. She assisted in organizing 182 branches of the NAACP and worked hard to ensure that African-Americans paid their poll tax and secured their rights to vote. She herself had been the first African-American woman to vote in Dallas County. She was surrogate mother

to the young members of the Dallas branch, advising them on life choices and choosing the right brides and husbands, as they struggled to integrate lunch counters, schools and the State Fair. She would later be elected to the Dallas City Council for two terms.

Mrs. Craft owned a small house, on Warren St., near Fair Park, but she lived in the guest house out back, running the main house as a boarding house for young men who are leaders in today's NAACP. She welcomed important figures like MLK and LBJ to her house, when they came to talk to her about her work. But she also welcomed the neighbor kids. The girl who lived next door, named her daughter Juanita, for her, and called her Neet. "Mrs. Craft met a lot of people and had a lot of photographs. On one wall of her sitting room, she had a picture of herself with JFK standing behind her. On the opposite wall was a picture of Neet," Patricia Perez recalled.

Patricia was one of those youth who spent countless hours at the Craft house. "That was my house of power. You just felt it being around her. She showed us in word and deed. She was militant, but quiet. She knew what wasn't right and knew it could be changed. She had all these community connections, and she used them to enhance our lives. I felt empowered and special when I was with her."

Bob Lydia was one of those young men who received advice from Mrs. Craft. "I rented a room from her. She'd give

me and the other young guys advice on which girls to avoid. Craft was like a mother. She was also artistic. She'd buy wooden boxes and turn them into decoupage purses. She wouldn't accept any help making them, but she did take the leaves we'd bring her to use. She'd sit on her bed and put in all the screws and nails. She could sew anything. She kept a garden and canned and made jams and jellies. She was very frugal. She wanted to teach us young people how to behave and be respectful. If you wanted something done, all you had to do was sit down with her, and she'd figure out a way. She didn't have to scream and holler. I thought I was too young, but Craft decided I should be the first vice president for the Young Adult Council of the Dallas NAACP, and she made it happen."

In 1977, Mrs. Craft was interviewed for the Black Women's Oral History Project held at Harvard University. In the interview she discussed the hardships of growing up Black in the pre-Civil Rights era. Her mother died in 1935 from tuberculosis, because there was no state hospital for Black people. But she never let hardship stop her. And her reach extended far beyond South Dallas, or even Texas. She worked with Eleanor Roosevelt and other national leaders on important issues, and rallied support for Thurgood Marshall as he litigated cases eliminating whites-only primary elections and "separate but equal" education.

She was 73 when she was first elected to the Dallas City Council, where she served from 1975-1979. "When she won, she said, 'I showed 'em!' And a few other words," Bob Lydia remembered. She died in 1985, leaving behind a better Texas for all of us. Her house on Warren St. is now a Civil Rights museum. **NOW**

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5. Personal interviews with Bob Lydia and Patricia Perez.

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FURNITURE REFRESH

— By Angel Morris

Got a hand-me-down piece of furniture that's not exactly your style? Or a curbside treasure that needs a little TLC? Maybe there's an antique piece you'd like to modernize, or a beloved piece that's beginning to look worn. Whatever your furniture makeover goals, refinishing is an affordable approach.

Prep Work

Whether you're going to re-paint or stain, the first step is always a good cleaning. A tack cloth and warm water mixed with dish soap is a simple way to go. Wipe away any dirt or sticky residue with the soapy towel, then rinse with a damp sponge. Lastly, dry the piece completely.

Next, you'll want to inspect your furniture for damage, filling any mars or cuts with epoxy putty or wax filling compound. Once dry, remove excess filler with a fine grit sandpaper before proceeding.

Stripping

The most time-consuming part of furniture refinishing will be the removal of the original finish. Chemical strippers or sanding are both options for taking off old paint or varnish. Heat guns may be needed for difficult finishes.

Sanding

A power sander, which can be rented at some home supply stores if you don't have your own, takes the intensity out of varnish removal. You will need to sand until the surface shine is mostly gone, and the piece is smooth. (This can be done by hand with coarse sandpaper, but will require far more time.)

A medium-grit sandpaper can be used to finish removing any remaining patches of paint or stain.

Chemical Stripping

If you choose to apply chemical strippers (liquids, sprays or gels) instead of sanding furniture, you'll need eye protection, rubber gloves, a stiff paint brush for application and a well-ventilated space in which to work.

After following the manufacturer stripping instructions, you will likely still need to sand any remaining bits of varnish, and multiple stripper applications may even be needed prior to that sanding.

Keep in mind, many online tutorials offer no-strip options, particularly with modern chalk paint products. The decision whether or not to invest the time involved in stripping depends upon your goals for the final look of your piece and the time you are willing to spend on the project.

Cleaning Part 2

If you elected to use a chemical stripper, a second cleaning will be required. Mineral spirits or turpentine may be used, but your product's manufacturer will make recommendations, too. Once clean, allow the furniture to dry again.

Wood Sealing

It may be tempting to omit this step, but sealant better allows the new paint or stain to be evenly and smoothly applied. Before sealing, you'll want to fill any imperfections or holes with a filler that is as close to your wood color as possible.

Then, you can apply sealant generously over the piece, wiping away excess with a clean cloth. A fine grit sandpaper can be used to smooth the surface once the piece is completely dry. Remove any dust with another clean cloth.

Painting/Staining

There are many available paint and stain styles and colors. Consider the space in which you plan to use the piece when determining which product is best suited. Some products are easier to apply, less likely to show mistakes and/or more likely to withstand use. Choosing the best new paint or stain for your piece may be harder than the actual application!

Manufacturers may suggest the best type brush for application. Once applied, allow to dry before applying another layer as needed.



Finishing

This step protects your newly painted piece, offering a safety layer from moisture or damage. As with the last step, there are a number of options — lacquer, oil and polyurethane, to name a few.

Your selected finish can be applied with a brush or cotton rag. Allow to dry, and apply another layer, if desired.


While refinishing furniture is less expensive than buying new, it will cost you in time. However, if you have a weekend to spare, it is the most cost-effective option to giving your space a new look. Upcycling a thrifted piece or making over an existing piece in your home is good for the environment and your wallet! **NOW**

Source: www.homedepot.com/c/ah/how-to-refinish-furniture/9ba683603be9fa5395fab90140efad1a.




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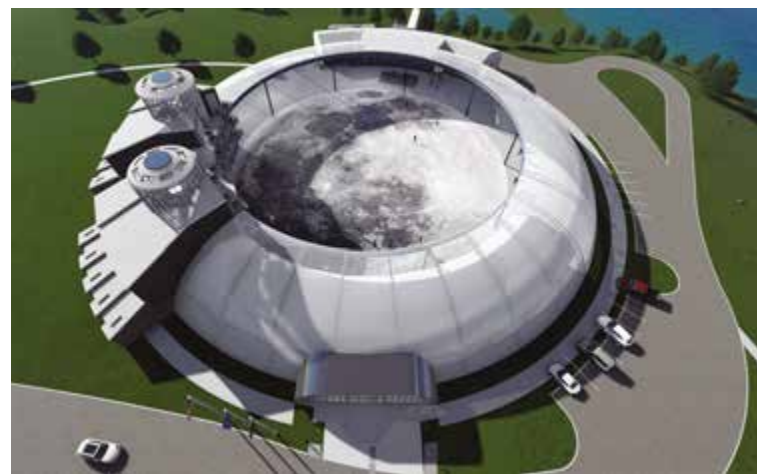
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TravelNOW

Historic Fort to Outer Space

— By Lisa Bell

Many hunters know about Jacksboro, but the small town offers an amazing adventure. From the historic Fort Richardson to the future site of Back to Space's Lunar Landscape Experience, this town northwest of the Dallas-Fort Worth area gives families an opportunity to experience history and nature.

Part of the Texas Forts Trail, the restored fort housed at Fort Richardson State Park carries a long history ranging from the mid-1800s to 1940s and beyond. A National Historic Landmark since 1964, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department acquired the property in 1968. Since then, the park expanded to over 450 acres, and several of the 55 original buildings dot the landscape as restored pieces of history. Visitors may arrange guided tours Tuesday through Friday, but on the weekends, the park opens the buildings with rangers available during self-guided tours.

In November, historical re-enactors take over Fort Richardson, presenting an authentic experience of the Civil War.

Visitors pay only the standard entrance fee and get to see how soldiers lived at the fort during the 1800s.

Besides the historical site, ample day-use spaces provide spots for picnics, including a playground and covered pavilion. Rustic cabins and campsites enable visitors to enjoy a full weekend of hiking, biking, fishing, swimming, paddling and geocaching. With 12 miles of trails, be sure to take one to the Rumbling Springs Area. An underground spring rises to the surface, with the gentle sound of water flowing along the trail. Quarry Lake lies behind headquarters for fishing, and the North Park offers a sandy beach for swimming, fishing, boating and kayaking on beautiful Lake Jacksboro.

Ironic to the historical nature of Fort Richardson, wind turbines dot the horizon overlooking the state park. Jacksboro has never been a stranger to innovation. That represents one reason Danielle Roosa, granddaughter of astronaut Stuart Roosa, chose

the small town for her brainchild of Back to Space's Lunar Landscape. When someone incorrectly identified their favorite astronaut as Lance Armstrong (the cyclist), instead of Neil Armstrong, she resolved to renew education and interest in space exploration.

Delayed because of the pandemic, BTS plans to open near the end of 2022. The Lunar Landscape experience will not only reacquaint kids and adults with historical events, it will also educate them on space travel's current and future exploration.

On 33 acres of land beside Lake Jacksboro, the facility will be a truly immersive experience. Chief Marketing Officer Heather Sisson shared her enthusiasm over this one-of-a-kind destination, describing what will become the new pride of her hometown.

On entering, full sensory virtual reality engulfs visitors, simulating a rocket landing on the moon, and certain to catapult fresh interest in space. In different rooms, the Lunar Landscape will offer game play and multiple exhibits that let each person experience the same thing astronauts did in the past. In a constantly changing environment, families may want to return for a fresh experience more than once or twice.

Beyond the sense of walking on the moon, they also plan to host concerts, festivals and numerous events. With the possibility of lakeside lodging, Lunar Landscape continues working with the city. When finished, Jacksboro truly will become a destination people visit to experience life from the past, present and future.

In the meantime, visit Jacksboro, get acquainted and plan many return trips. You can go camping or stay at one of the hotels, the Richards Ranch, or JR's Chophouse B&B while enjoying the hospitality of this quiet town. **NOW**

Editor's Note: For more information visit www.tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/fort-richardson and www.backtospace.com/lunar-landscape/.

Photo of Back to Space's Lunar Landscape Experience courtesy of Back to Space. Photos of Lake Jacksboro and Fort Richardson by Lisa Bell.



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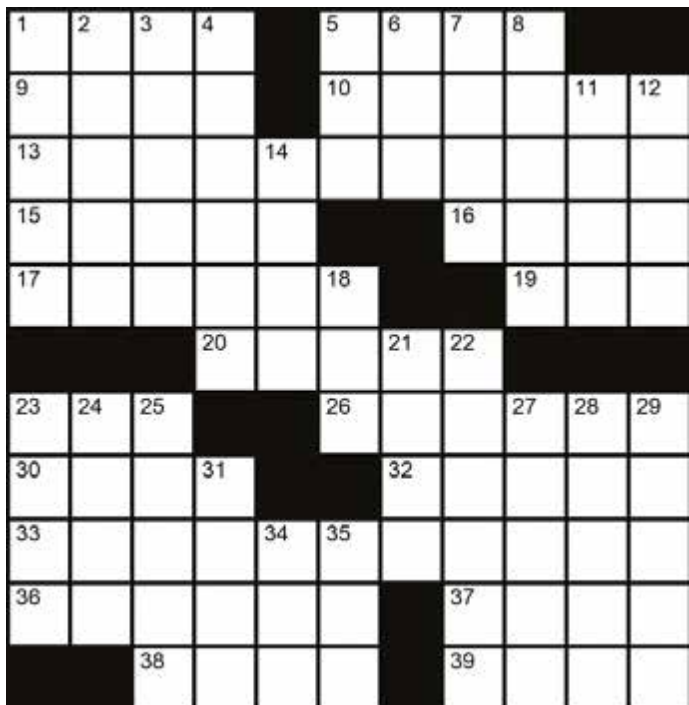
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Crossword Puzzle



Across

- 1 Feeling of hunger
- 5 "Four Weddings --- Funeral"
- 9 Operatic solo
- 10 Director of "Amadeus"
- 13 Unfortunate
- 15 Mournful ring
- 16 Great ideas
- 17 In peril
- 19 Fink
- 20 Coats
- 23 Going
- 26 Old capital on the Vistula
- 30 One way to hydrate in hospital
- 32 The first Mrs. Trump
- 33 A shared characteristic, if common
- 36 Inactive state
- 37 Diamond team
- 38 Kind of year
- 39 Where holes are started

Down

- 1 Arctic garment
- 2 --- you forgetting something?
- 3 It hangs near Chad
- 4 Vampire repellent
- 5 Toward the stern
- 6 A negative
- 7 Street
- 8 Fossil resin
- 11 Egyptian dancing-girl
- 12 Digs of twigs
- 14 "Born Free" lioness
- 18 Fearsome initials
- 21 Emerald Isle
- 22 Learned one
- 23 Chances
- 24 Erode
- 25 Last edition
- 27 --- Holmes, a Tom Cruise ex
- 28 One- --- (basketball defense strategy)
- 29 Merchandise
- 31 Sit for a portrait
- 34 "Mamma" follower
- 35 Web-connection co.

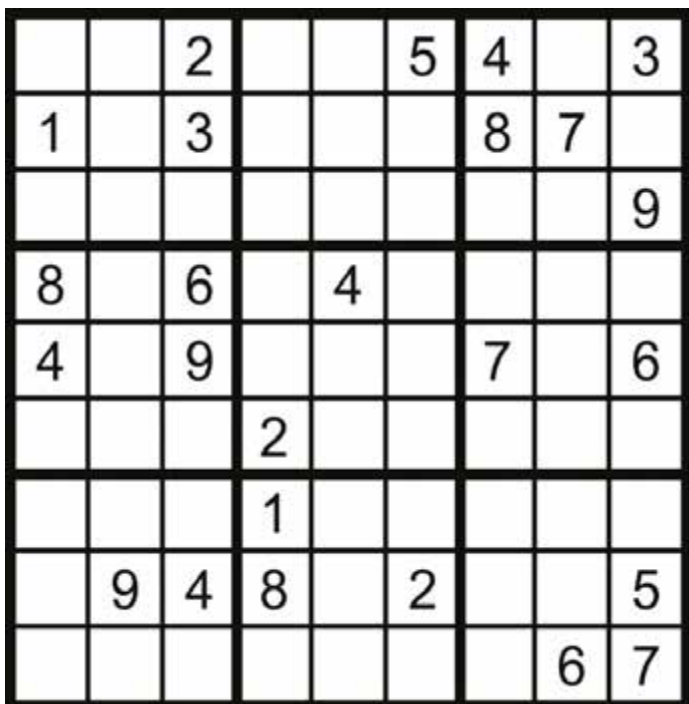
Solutions on page 52

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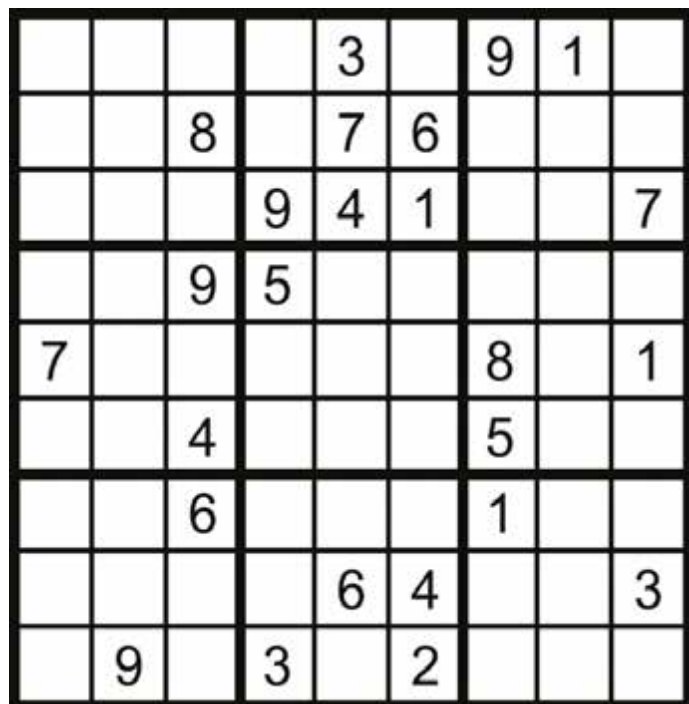
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Sudoku Puzzle

Easy



Medium



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Solutions on page 52

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11/6

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Chili Cook-off:

Midlothian Chapter #234 Order of the Eastern Star fundraiser event featuring auction, cook-off and jewelry sale. Adults: \$10; children 5 and under: Free. 11:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m., Masonic Lodge, 1414 N. 9th St. Call Judi

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The Midlothian Chamber of Commerce invites the business community to enjoy a fun evening while supporting business education and advocacy programs. 5:30-9:00 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center, 1 Community Circle Dr. Call (972) 723-8600 for ticket prices and reservations.

11/11

Veteran's Tribute Dinner:
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11/13

Pancake Breakfast:

Midlothian Lions Club fundraiser. \$3 in advance from Lions members; \$5 at the door. 7:00-10:30 a.m., Midlothian Civic Center, 224 S. 11th St.

The Big Christmas Expo:
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Conference Center, 1 Community Circle Dr. TheBigChristmasExpo on Facebook.

Guns vs. Hoses Game:

Annual Midlothian Firefighters against Midlothian Police fundraiser softball game. Ellis County Barbecue on-site. \$5 entry; kids 8 and under: Free. 5:30-6:30 p.m., Midlothian High School, 923 S. 9th St.

Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your current event details to angel.morris@nowmagazines.com.



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1	P	A	N	G		5	A	N	D	A	
9	A	R	I	A		10	F	O	R	M	A
13	R	E	G	R	E	14	T	T	A	B	L
15	K	N	E	L	L				16	G	E
17	A	T	R	I	S	18	K			19	R
						20	C	A	K	E	S
23	O	F	F			26	K	R	A	K	O
30	D	R	I	P					32	I	V
33	D	E	N	O		34	M	I	N	A	T
36	S	T	A	S	I	S			37	N	I
						38	L	E	A	P	
									39	T	E

Easy

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

Medium

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

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