

# WaxahachieNOW

M A G A Z I N E

JANUARY 2024



## Puppy Love

Cathy Le looks out for  
Hachie furbabies

## History of a Ghost Town

The cemetery is all that  
remains of what was once  
the largest city between  
Dallas and Houston

Also inside:

Scavenger Hunt

Crossword/Sudoku

Featured Business:  
Adventure Smiles Dental  
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In the Kitchen With  
Leah Lawless-Smith

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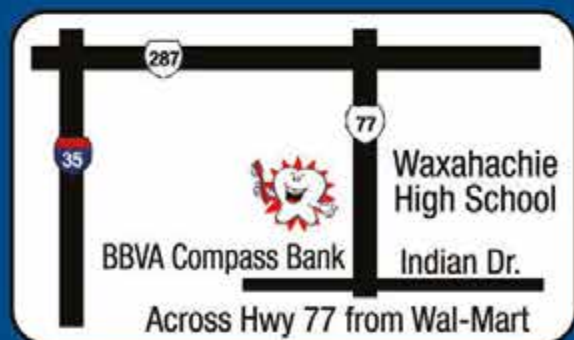
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ON THE COVER



Animal Services Manager Cathy Le shows off her own furbaby.

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General Manager, Rick Hensley

**EDITORIAL**  
Managing Editor, Becky Walker  
Waxahachie Editor, Adam Walker  
Office Assistant, Kristin Bato  
Writer, Bill Smith  
Editors/Proofreaders, Rachel Rich  
Virginia Riddle

**GRAPHICS AND DESIGN**  
Creative Director, Chris McCalla  
Artists, Kristin Bato . Martha Macias  
Anthony Sarmienta . Jennifer Spence

**PHOTOGRAPHY**  
Photography Director, Chris McCalla  
Photographers, Kobbi R. Blair  
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# EDITOR'S NOTE



*Adam*

Adam Walker  
WaxahachieNOW Editor  
adam.walker@nowmagazines.com  
(469) 285-2008

*A new year ...*

This is the time for resolutions we don't fully intend to keep (and statistically will break before even four months have passed). Surveys show that a *lot* of us make New Year's resolutions, and it is a very American thing to do. Most other countries don't bother with it.


Apparently, most of us make three or four resolutions, with the best of intentions. We focus on getting healthy — working out, dieting, stopping smoking — and getting our finances under control. Some few of us resolve to spend more time with family and friends, traveling and doing hobbies. We go in all gung ho, sure that this year we're going to crush it. People who really do work out consistently dread January, because they know the gym will be filled with all the people trying to keep their resolutions. But they also know that, by February, they'll have the gym back to themselves.

Some of us last a little longer than that, but surveys consistently show that, by April, there's almost no one left, still working on whatever their resolution might have been. Some of us throw in the towel way earlier. January 17 is unofficially "Ditch New Year's Resolution Day." Others observe the second Friday in January as "Quitter's Day." That could be as early as January 8! Clearly a lot of us don't take these resolutions very seriously at all.


Maybe that's why resolution making seems to drop off as we age. We know we won't keep them, so why make them? Who needs an extra source of guilt?

But maybe that's just surrendering. How do we ever change, if we don't ever resolve to change?

*... a new you?*




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# PUPPY LOVE

— By Adam Walker

*Cathy Le is the Animal Services manager for the city of Waxahachie. As such, her job puts her in contact with a lot of dogs in need, some cats, and the occasional surprise. “My degree is in biology. I always wanted to work with animals, but my previous job was doing library marketing for the Grand Prairie Public Libraries. I worked on community outreaches and programs, and I also volunteered at the Prairie Paws animal shelter, helping with their marketing, and taking pictures of their adoptable pets. So, when this job opened, a year-and-a-half ago, I was ecstatic and ready to move to Waxahachie to help the animals,” Cathy explained.*

“I want people to understand that we aren’t the dog catcher. We’re the people who pick up and assist pets who are in need of finding their forever homes. We’re Animal Services not Animal Control. We have capacity for 16 dogs and four cats, but sometimes we exceed capacity. We have a partnership with Pet Supplies Plus Waxahachie to help spread the word about pets up for adoption, and their continuous donations to the shelter,” she informed.

“When we pick up strays or bring in bite dogs, the goal is always to reunite the dog with its owner or rehabilitate them for adoption. Bite dogs must go into rabies quarantine first, but most of them are not vicious, just scared. They’re just trying to protect themselves from strangers. Many of the strays come in terrified of people. We work to rehabilitate them before adoption. Sometimes, the pets come in injured or sick. We work with them to get them healthy and adopt them out. Recently, we had a Shih Tzu-mix that was thrown out of a moving vehicle. We know because there were eyewitnesses who saw it.” This dog was recently able to go home with a caring lady.

“We are also a resource for pet owners who are struggling. If you’re having financial trouble, we can help find resources to get pet food, and we can give advice on how to handle some pet behavioral issues. We try our best to help people keep their pets.”

Animal Services sees a lot of big dogs looking for new homes. “We get a lot of Great Pyrenees, Pyrenees mixes and lots of Huskies. People get puppies for Christmas and then realize pets are living creatures that







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**Serena Aiwohi**

require attention, food and shelter. Once we had a pair of Alaskan Malamutes that were surrendered by a man who refused to pay for the cost of transportation, as he was planning on moving to another state. The female was 130 pounds, and the male was 150. When he stood on his back legs, he was taller than me! He was huge — the largest dog I've ever seen in my life. So sweet, but *huge!* I kept thinking, *Will he fit in my one-bedroom apartment?* Big dogs have big personalities."

In addition to dogs and cats, they also get calls about other kinds of animals. "We relocate a lot of possums. When calls about raccoons and skunks come in the daytime, we know we're dealing with possible rabies and must protect the community. Every once in a while, we get snake calls. One time, I got a call from a police officer. As soon as I answered the phone, she said, 'Cathy, I don't know what to do. I'm following a tortoise in my patrol car!' My first thoughts were, *What do I do with a tortoise? Where would I put it? What does it eat? Oh, I must go get cabbage!* I had to get my fiancé to come lift the turtle into the Animal Services truck. She was way too big for me and the police officer to lift. A few minutes later, we got a call, in the truck, from one of the teachers at Marvin Elementary. The tortoise was hers. One day, I was at the office alone and received a call from a woman who swore up and down that there was a tiger cub loose and laying on someone's porch. My mind was going 1,000 miles per minute. *How do I prepare myself for this? Do I call wildlife?* When I showed up, it was a fat raccoon — like really fat! It was trash day, so I knew he'd been eating well."



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Cathy is hopeful that in the next years, plans will work out for a new, larger facility and an increase in staffing so they can handle more pets. "Right now, we only have four employees to serve a community of 45,000 people. It's hard. We're a small staff serving a growing city. We're always looking for help. We welcome donations of hard food for dogs and cats, harnesses and leashes. We don't use collars. In the colder months, we need animal clothes to help keep them warm and to take fun pictures. One time, we had a donation of dog beds. I was so excited for the dogs. It was so sweet. But that didn't work out. We came into work the next morning, and they were destroyed! There was fluff everywhere. We spent the whole morning picking up fluff, because you can't wash that stuff down the drains!"

Cathy is working hard to make life better for the animals of Waxahachie. "I'm always trying to increase our communication with the community. I get city employees to come over and take pics with the pups. We coordinate with the city employees to take the pictures at different locations and post them on social media. We cooperate with rescue groups who help us with fostering and adoptions. We also take our dogs to adoption events in different cities in the Metroplex, even as far away as Trophy Club, to find them homes. Last November, we hosted a movie in the park event where we showed *The Secret Life of Pets* and invited animal groups from other towns to come set up booths." With Cathy at the helm, Waxahachie Animal Services is working hard to help our local furbabies live their best lives in loving homes. **NOW**

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Photo by Teresa Penny.



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# TALES OF TEXAS History of a Ghost Town

— By Bill Smith

*The Limestone County Historical Commission website indicates that the Springfield Cemetery, located within the boundaries of Fort Parker State Park, is the only visible reminder of the town of Springfield, the first county seat of Limestone County. The cemetery would be “in the middle of nowhere” today, were it not for its proximity to the park.*

Near Fort Parker is the 1830s cabin of one Mordecai Yell. A plaque on the cabin shows the house was originally located “near this site,” and it is probably the only remaining structure that may have been in the city of Springfield.

A photograph of another structure exists, known as Pleasant Retreat Plantation House or Stroud Ranch House. Built just 20 years after the first Anglo-American settlers came to the area and built Fort Parker, the house existed until 1944. For the time period, it was a significant house and was built for Logan Stroud and his father, Ethan Stroud, who came to the Republic of Texas in 1837. The family had considerable wealth and owned plantations in several counties. By the time of the Civil War, Logan was one of the largest slave holders in the county.

A *History of Limestone County* by Ray A. Walter records that The Emancipation Proclamation was read in Limestone County from the portico of Pleasant Retreat on Saturday, June 19, 1865. This was the same day the Union soldiers arrived in Galveston to first proclaim the news of freedom in Texas. This opened the door to former slaves for new opportunities, including property ownership, and they had new political and social influence in the community. Today, the significance of Juneteenth, as the day became known, has been nationally recognized, with the 117th Congress voting to make it a federal holiday in 2021.

The city of Springfield certainly had its share of ups and downs. By 1850, it was the largest city between Dallas and Houston, and according to the Limestone County Historical Commission’s website, it was home to five general mercantile stores, two taverns, two groceries, two blacksmiths, two tailors, a carpenter, a gunsmith, a hotel, a wagon maker, a teacher, four physicians, three Methodist preachers, a surveyor and three lawyers. George W. Baines was a Baptist preacher who traveled to Springfield and was later a president of Baylor University. He was also the great-grandfather of Lyndon Baines Johnson, the 36th president of the United States.

There was a racetrack on land just north of the town. Two log structures were built in 1844 and 1847 to house the school, and by 1856, a larger schoolhouse was built. In 1857, the first brick courthouse was constructed in Springfield’s public square. By 1860, more businesses and professionals called the thriving town home, and Springfield College was the pride of area residents.

When the Civil War broke out, more than three-quarters of Limestone County’s voting population served in the Confederate Army. Businesses closed — some temporarily and some permanently — including the college, which closed permanently in 1863.

After the war, many of the survivors returned, but Reconstruction was difficult. Former Confederates no longer had the power and privileges they had before the war, including the rights to vote and bear arms. There was much civil unrest in the county, and the governor placed the county under martial law for a time during 1871.

This was just about the time that the Houston and Texas Central Railroad was ready to come through after landowners had donated right-of-way in the early 1860s. Leading citizens in Springfield convinced the property owners to withdraw their offers and force the railroad to purchase their land. While the railroad was willing to negotiate for a fair price, most of the property owners asked unreasonably excessive amounts. The railroad obtained the right-of-way that they needed about three miles east of Springfield, leading to the demise of the community.



The last straw was when the county courthouse burned in 1873. Many of the county records were destroyed by the fire, and those that weren't were moved to another commercial building that also burned just five months later, destroying all of the records. Arson was suspected in both fires.

As white residents moved to Groesbeck and Mexia, people deconstructed the wooden buildings in Springfield and rebuilt them in their new locations. Little was left of Springfield, but a number of Freedmen remained, and the former county seat became one of the leading African-American communities in the county. According to the Limestone County Historical Commission, a Freedman named Ralph Long, who served as a delegate to the state Constitutional Convention of 1868-1869, "served on the committee for education and was later responsible for establishing a school for black children that operated in Springfield until the mid-1940s." By the time Fort Parker State Park was established in the 1930s, nothing remained of the town, except the cemetery. **NOW**

#### References:

1. [Thc.texas.gov](http://Thc.texas.gov).
2. HABS No. TX-3492 Historic American Buildings Survey, National Parks Service, U.S. Department of Interior.
3. [Limestonechc.com/cemetery-preservation/springfield-cemetery](http://Limestonechc.com/cemetery-preservation/springfield-cemetery).

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Lacy Rodgers of Living Right Designs shows off one of her kitchen updates.

Zoomed In:  
Brennan Ramirez

By Adam Walker

Waxahachie High School senior, Brennan Ramirez, capped off her high school volleyball career by signing to play with The University of Texas. “Five of my teammates also signed that day. I play libero. That’s the defensive player in a different jersey, who takes control when things get a little crazy — and talks a lot!” she explained.

“I picked UT because I wanted a team that feels like a family when you’re away from family,” she shared. “I’m going to study interior design, and my coach at UT is also an interior designer! This is 100 percent exciting!”

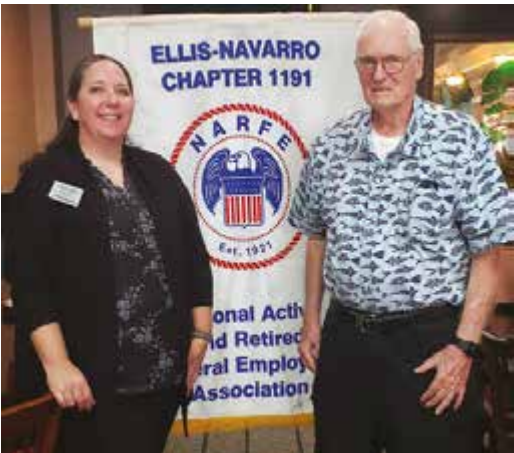
“I’ve played my whole life. I created a lot of friendships in high school. Indian Pride builds character. Learning to play better is important, but also learning to be a better person.”



WaxahachieNOW editor Adam Walker welcomes his newest niece, Saoirse, held by her proud daddy, Mark.



WHS students support Habitat for Humanity by entertaining at the Festival of Trees.



Cassie Street presents about the mission of Reach Council Prevention Services at the local NARFE meeting.



Coach Eddie Berumen wins his 400th game with the Life High School Waxahachie varsity boys basketball team.



David Ivy spends his eighth Christmas season as a Salvation Army bell ringer.



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# BusinessNOW

## Adventure Smiles Dental and Orthodontics

— By Adam Walker

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[AdventureSmiles@dfwtxdentalgroup.com](mailto:AdventureSmiles@dfwtxdentalgroup.com)  
 Facebook: Adventure Smiles Dental & Orthodontics

**Hours:** Tuesday-Thursday: 11:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m.  
 Friday: 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.  
 2 Saturdays per month: 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.  
 Mondays are for pediatric sedation patients only.



Even before you enter the doors, you know this is a different kind of dental office. The front windows at Adventure Smiles Dental and Orthodontics look like pages out of a comic book. Dr. Jared Schultz and his staff want to make a visit to the dentist as fun as possible. “This is an all-inclusive family practice,” he explained. “We have everything under one roof — all the specialties — orthodontics, oral surgery, endodontics. People don’t like dealing with referrals to other offices. We treat patients from 0 to 99. About 40 percent of our patients are adults. They love the lobby, too! And they enjoy the games as much as the kids.”

The lobby is not like any other dentist’s lobby you’ve ever seen. When you walk in, you’re greeted by larger-than-life statues of Batman, The Hulk, Spider-Man, Captain America, Iron Man, and, of course, Superman, who’s flying across the ceiling. The wallpaper features panels and covers from favorite comic books. There are six full-size arcade games,

and a couple of mini games. For seating, you can choose from ultramodern sofas, or a leather and carved walnut throne worthy of Dr. Doom's castle in Latveria! "We have a guy who's a great designer who planned the theme. I mean, who wouldn't want to go to the dentist with superheroes? A lot of the adults are Marvel fans and love the video games. It's fun and different. The kids are actually excited about going to the dentist. This way, they never develop a fear of going to the dentist, which means they'll take better care of their teeth. It's fun to see the kids' expressions. And when you bring them out of post-op, their parents are out there playing the video games!"

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While Adventure Smiles Dental and Orthodontics works hard to make the experience fun, they also focus on providing quality dentistry for their patients. "We have high-quality specialists here for whatever your dental needs may be. We have expert staff."

Dr. Schultz graduated from Western University of Health Science. "I like dentistry. It's fun. I enjoy seeing the patient outcomes and reactions. I continue adding to my knowledge of restorative, cosmetic and pediatric dentistry. I also do volunteer dentistry work in Guatemala. I enjoy being able to help people. I know that when a person comes to the dentist's office, it's not usually their best day. But I want to make it their best day by the time they leave. When you come here, you're going on a dental adventure. We want it to be enjoyable. But even more, we want to provide quality care."

Adventure Smiles Dental and Orthodontics takes Medicaid, PPOs, most dental insurance and offers payment plans through OrthoPayment. "We're a little different from the dental office next door. We have later hours, so you don't have to take off work to come here. Our dedicated assistants stay here until 7:30 to be sure the last patient of the day gets care as good as any other." **NOW**



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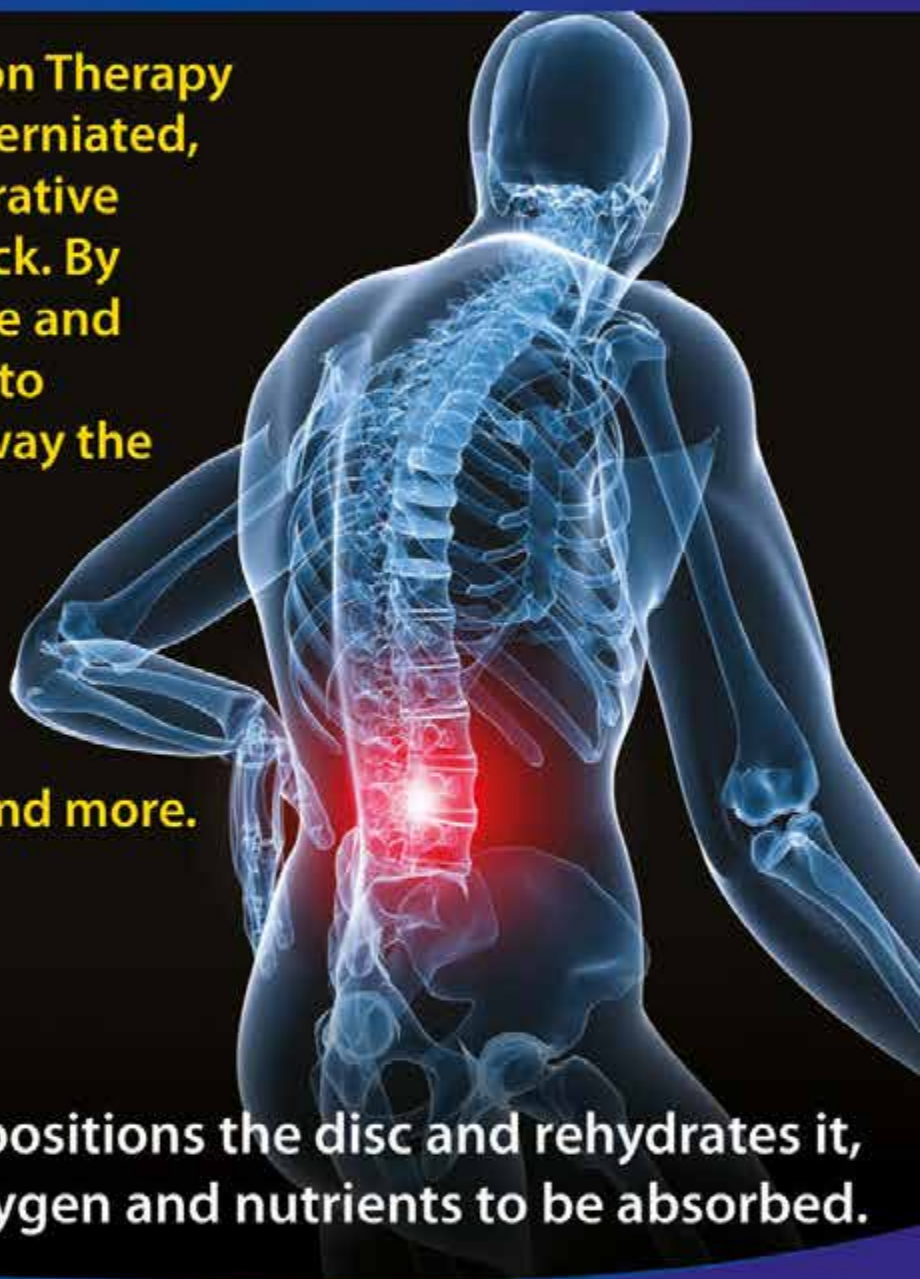
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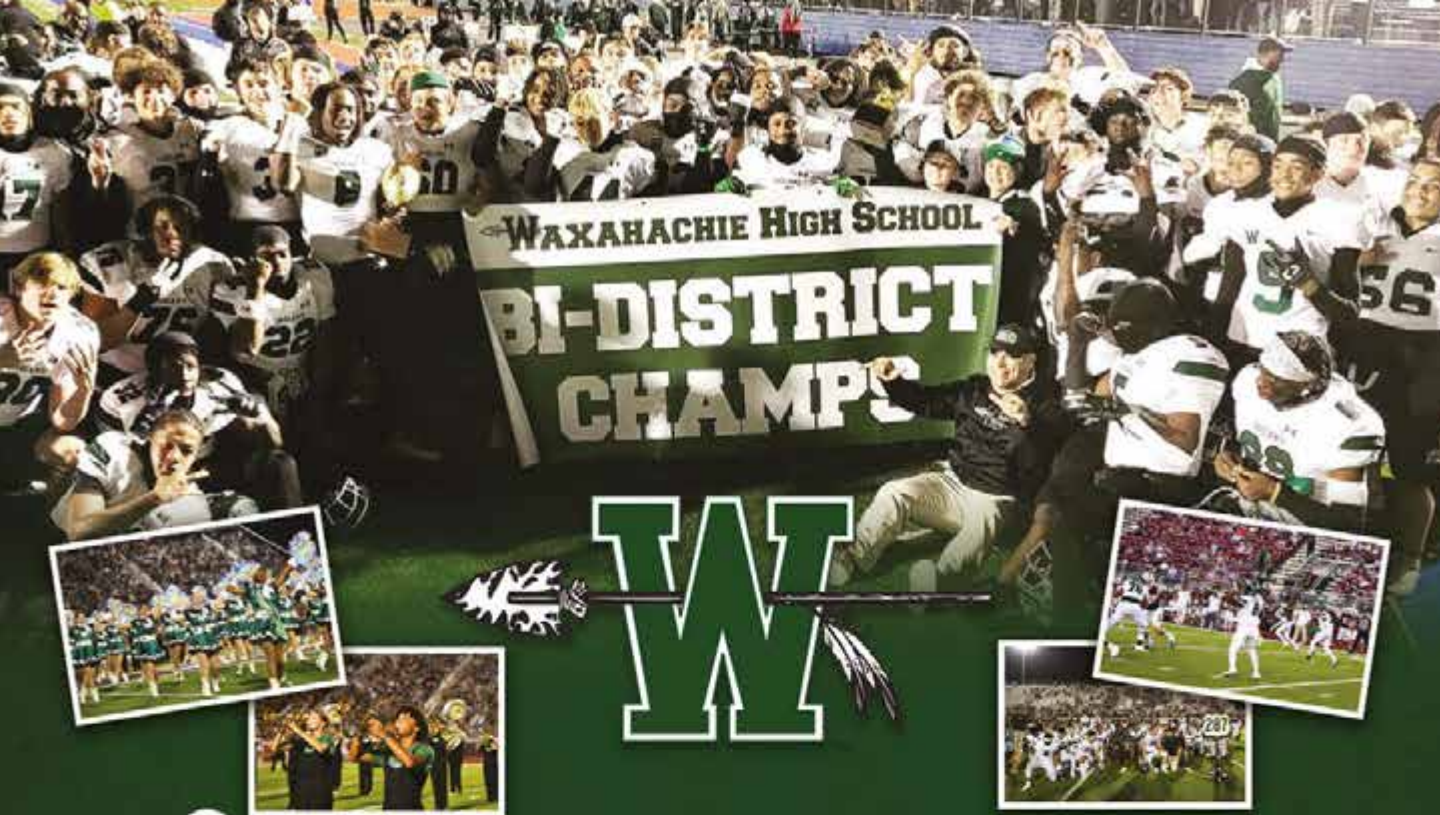
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# CookingNOW *In the Kitchen With* LEAH LAWLESS-SMITH

— By Adam Walker

Leah Lawless-Smith loves to collect recipes on her travels, but she has a cherished shoebox full of handwritten family recipes. “My mother taught me how to cook. I love those memories of us in the kitchen, especially since she is no longer with us. We made special meals in the kitchen together.

“I took a cooking class in Italy, and when we came back, I was very excited to teach others what I learned. Last Christmas, my husband and I traveled to Budapest, Hungary, for our holiday. We had goulash, which I am very familiar with, but only the American version. I was a little surprised by the Hungarian recipe, which doesn’t have noodles and is a stew. It was so delicious, I included the recipe here.” **NOW**

## Hungarian Goulash

**2 lbs. beef chuck, cut in 1-inch cubes**  
**1 3/4 tsp. salt or kosher salt**  
(divided use)  
**1 tsp. black pepper (divided use)**  
**1 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil**  
**2 Tbsp. unsalted butter**  
**2 brown onions, medium diced**

**5 garlic cloves, finely minced**  
**2 red bell peppers, large diced**  
**1 yellow bell pepper, large diced**  
**2 tomatoes, cut into 8 wedges and halved**  
**1/4 cup Hungarian-style paprika**  
**1 tsp. caraway seeds (optional)**  
**1 bay leaf**  
**4 cups low-sodium beef stock or broth**

**2 carrots, peeled and medium diced**  
**2 potatoes, medium diced**  
**1 Tbsp. parsley, finely chopped**  
(optional)

1. Preheat the oven to 350 F.
2. In a bowl, toss the beef with half of the salt and pepper.
3. In a large oven-proof Dutch oven over high heat, heat the oil and melt the butter. Cook the onions for 6 minutes, until the edges are light golden. Add the beef; stir until the outside changes from red to brown, about 2 minutes.
4. Add the garlic, bell peppers and tomatoes. Stir for 3 minutes, until the tomatoes break down. Add the paprika, caraway and bay leaf. Stir for 30 seconds. Add the beef stock. Stir; bring to a simmer.
5. Cover with a lid; transfer to the oven for 1 1/2 hours. When the beef is pretty tender but not quite “fall-apart,” stir in the carrots and potatoes. Return to the oven, covered, for another 30-40 minutes, until the beef is “fall-apart.”

6. Ladle the goulash into bowls; sprinkle with parsley. Eat as is, with optional bread for dunking!

Pizza Sauce

- 1/8 cup fresh oregano
- 1/8 cup fresh basil leaves
- 12 oz. tomato sauce (Use an Italian brand.)
- 4 1/2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 tsp. sea salt, or more, to taste
- 3 cloves garlic, minced

- 1. Finely cut the fresh herbs.
- 2. In a bowl, add the tomato sauce. Add the herbs and all the remaining ingredients; stir.
- 3. Taste and adjust the salt. The sauce should have a deep maroon color.

Pizza Dough

- 8 cups bread flour
- 1 1/2 tsp. instant dry yeast (or active dry yeast)
- 1 1/2 cups warm water (You may have to add up to 1 cup more.)
- 1 1/2 tsp. sea salt

- 1. Pour the flour into a large bowl.
- 2. Add the yeast into the water; use a wooden spoon to combine well. Add the yeast mixture and salt into the flour. Mix until a dough forms.
- 3. Sprinkle some flour on a work surface; dump the pizza dough. Sprinkle some more flour on top and, using your hands, knead the dough for about 10 to 15 minutes until a smooth ball forms, but it's still a little bit sticky on the bottom. Put the dough back into the bowl; cover for 1 hour to let it rise.
- 4. Separate the dough into 8 balls. Freeze any dough that you do not want to use now. The night before you want to make a pizza, pull out a ball of dough, and let it thaw for the next evening. It will be ready to roll out.

Pizza

- 1 ball pizza dough (See recipe in this article.)
- 3 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- Pizza Sauce (See recipe in this article.)
- 1 cup mozzarella, or to taste
- Toppings of choice, to taste

- 1. Sprinkle the counter with a little bit of flour. Take one ball of dough; press down on it with your fingers until you have a 1/2-inch-thick circle or oval. Using a rolling pin, roll the dough to 10 inches in diameter or larger.
- 2. Put parchment paper on a pizza pan; put your pizza dough on it. Pour 2 Tbsp. of



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Pizza

olive oil in the center; spread it around with the back of a spoon all the way to the edges. Add sauce on top of the olive oil spreading it around leaving 1 inch of space at the edges. Sprinkle with the mozzarella; add your favorite toppings.  
**3.** Bake in a 450 F (or hotter) oven, for 10 minutes, or until golden brown on the edges.

### Panna Cotta Italian Dessert

**2 tsp. unflavored powdered gelatin**  
**3 cups mixed nut milk (divided use)**  
**1/3 cup sugar**  
**2 Tbsp. honey**

**1/2 vanilla bean, split and seeds scraped**  
**Pinch of salt**  
**Vegetable oil, for brushing**  
**1/4 cup strawberry jam**  
**1 Tbsp. water**  
**5 fresh strawberries**  
**Hazelnuts, crushed and toasted**

**1.** In a small bowl, sprinkle the gelatin over 1/2 cup of the nut milk; let stand until softened, about 5 minutes.  
**2.** In a medium saucepan, over moderately high heat, combine the remaining 2 1/2 cups of nut milk with the sugar, honey,

vanilla seeds and salt. Bring just to a simmer. Remove the pan from the heat; whisk in the softened gelatin mixture until dissolved.  
**3.** Lightly brush six 1/2-cup ramekins with oil; set them on a baking sheet. Carefully fill the ramekins with the panna cotta mixture; refrigerate until set, about 2 hours or up to 2 days.  
**4.** Whisk together the jam and water. Cut the fresh strawberries into small pieces. Run a knife around each panna cotta; invert onto a plate. Top with crushed hazelnuts and chopped strawberries, and serve with the jam.

To search for more great recipes from any of the 9 NOW Magazines publications, visit [www.nowmagazines.com](http://www.nowmagazines.com).

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# A CROWN FOR YOUR ROOM

— By Bill Smith



*Trim carpentry is an acquired skill that may take years to develop fully, but like most home improvement projects, if one takes their time and can accept that there will be mistakes to correct, most of us are capable of some of the more complex tasks. Installing crown molding would have to fall under the heading of a more advanced skill, but with the proper amount of patience, a do-it-yourselfer will find success.*

There are a number of tools you will need to acquire for a crown molding project. One tool that will come in handy is an extra set of hands — that is, a helper to hold things in place while cutting and nailing. It is best to have the molding span the entire length of each wall to which it is applied, and a 12- to 14-foot board may be difficult for one person to hold in place, especially if you are trying to match angles and keep them tight. This is trim carpentry at its finest, and while gaps can be filled with putty, having an assistant will be a great help for keeping the gaps closed as the installation progresses.

In addition to an assistant, you will need:

1. Two ladders
2. Miter saw
3. Coping saw
4. Measuring tape
5. Compass to measure angles
6. Roller stand (or your assistant)
7. Stud finder
8. Pencil
9. Nail gun
10. 18-gauge brads, probably 1 1/2 to 2 inches long
11. Wood glue
12. Wood filler
13. Masking tape
14. Sandpaper
15. Crown molding in appropriate lengths
16. Crown molding jig (optional, but helpful)
17. Square corner blocks (optional, but helpful — especially if you aren't proficient with cutting angles)

Crown molding is relatively expensive, so avoiding waste is important. Choose lengths long enough to span each wall, if possible, so you can avoid making joints in the middle of the wall.

Start your project with the longest wall. Run a piece of masking tape along the wall near where the bottom of the molding will be, and use the stud finder to mark the studs on

the masking tape with the pencil.

If you can use the coping saw for the pieces that will go into place in the inside corners after the first piece is in place, the ends of the first piece can be cut square. If you are not going to cope the inside corner joints, cut the ends at the proper angle with the miter saw. Rooms that look square are not necessarily square, so use the compass to measure the corner to get a good, tight fit.

You cannot use the coping saw for the outside corners, so measure them with the compass, and cut them with the miter saw. Tack the molding in one side, then make sure the joint is good where you will join the next piece. If it lines up within an acceptable tolerance, place a small amount of glue in the joint and nail it in place. If the joint for an outside corner does not want to stay closed while the glue dries, pull it together with a couple of pieces of masking tape. Especially if this is your first attempt at installing crown molding, some angles may be difficult and require a little more wood filler and sanding.

There are some recent aids to simplify crown molding installation and produce very satisfactory results. Crown molding can be difficult to hold at the proper angle in a miter saw, and there is a jig that can be used for this purpose. Another very helpful aid can eliminate the need for the difficult angles, that is, using square corner blocks. These blocks are made for both inside and outside corners and can range from very plain to as elaborate as you would like for your crown molding to be. The blocks are placed in or on the corners at the beginning of your project, then the crown molding is cut to fit between the blocks, with all the cuts being square.

Take your time with crown molding. Patience is your friend. Watch a couple of videos before you start. After you finish the project, call some friends over and listen to them say, "Wow, you did this yourself?" **NOW**

Sources:

1. [www.familyhandyman.com](http://www.familyhandyman.com).
2. [www.house-improvements.com](http://www.house-improvements.com).



**2024**  
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One entry per person.

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# THE THRIFT Shift

— By Angel Morris

*As prices on just about everything continue to creep up, visiting your local thrift store may become more enticing. While prices at those, too, are on the rise, there are still great deals to be had on everything from clothing to home decor. When thrift shopping, keep in mind there will be good days — when you find things you had in mind — and bad days — when all you seem to find is junk. Of course, one man's trash is another man's treasure. For the complete newbie, to “thrift” is to shop for reduced-price items at flea markets, garage or estate sales, second-hand or discount shops and, of course, thrift stores. Here are some tips to keep in mind if you're new to the thrifting game.*

**Keep a running list of items you are hunting.** The thrift store is unlikely to be the place for picking up things you must have in a timely manner. Successful thrifters have in mind items they don't necessarily need now but would like to have at some point in the future. When they hit their local thrift shops, they are always on the lookout for these things but are not disappointed when they don't find them. Think of things you know you'll need at a later date, like larger size clothing than what your toddler currently wears or toys for them as they grow up, furniture pieces for a room you want to gradually update or seasonal decor for an upcoming holiday.

**Get to know your discount stores.** Do they restock shelves on a particular day? Mondays are often a good thrifting day, as all the items that folks donated over the weekend will begin to get shelved, and typically a new discount will begin within the store. This begs the question: Is one day of the week set aside for additional discounts? Can you get a store credit if you donate items to them before shopping? What stores offer what products: clothing, decor, toys, furniture, etc.? Do certain stores support a particular charity that is dear to you? Knowing these things can make your thrifting experience more successful by saving you not only money, but also time.

**Get creative.** If you find an item that is close to what

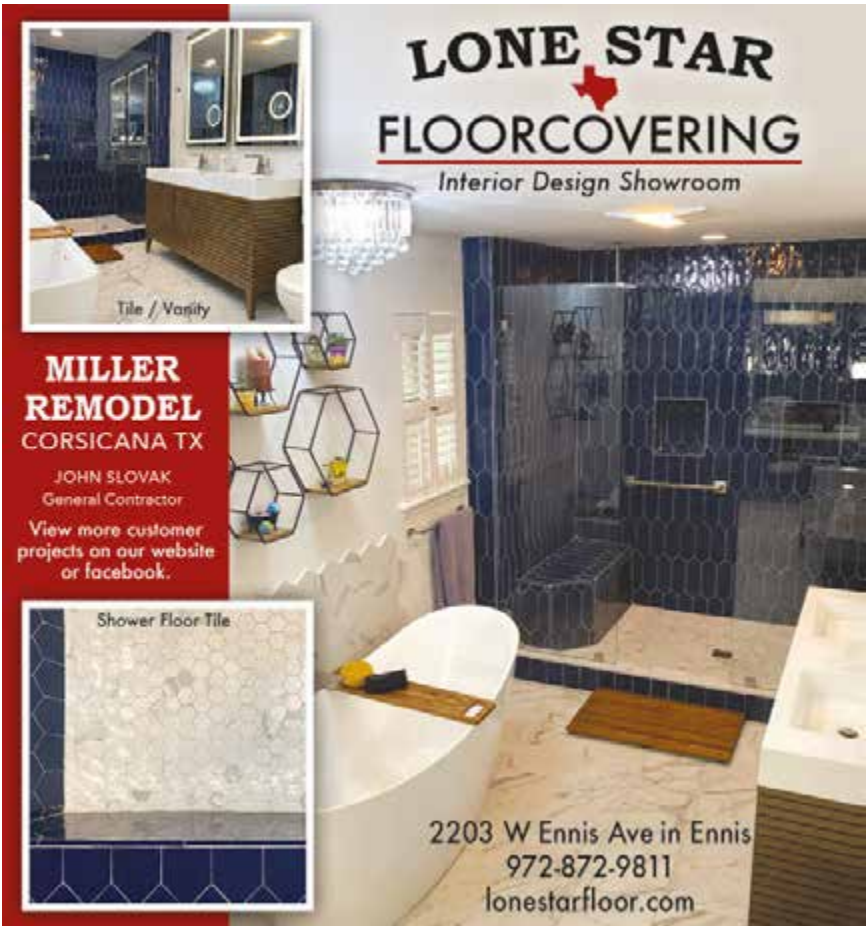
you've been wanting but not perfect, what can you do to make it closer to what you desired? Paint works wonders on wooden furniture. New fabric can update the look of upholstered pieces. Clothing can be tailored more to your style. These changes may not be worth it if they require too great of an investment in money or time. But if you can inexpensively update something that was already a good deal, thrifting can mean getting items you could not get at the same discounted price elsewhere.

**Know your limits.** Just because something is cheap doesn't mean you need it. Ask yourself: Do I have a place for it in mind, or will it end up in my storage shed? Does it fit my decorating style, or will it stick out like a sore thumb? Will it really partner well with my current clothing or end up in the back of my closet?

A bargain is only a bargain if it works with your lifestyle. Thrift stores are a great place to find things to add to your collections. Just don't make the mistake of thinking you need every kind of collectible. Stick to a few that have special meaning to you. If you tire of those or your tastes change, you can always donate them and start over.

**Beware of certain items.** As a general rule of thumb, you do not want to thrift anything that cannot be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. Avoid items that are stained or damaged, of course, unless it is something you know can easily be repaired. While many thrift stores verify appliances are in working order, you run the risk of them lasting only a short time after purchase. It is not considered wise to purchase safety items like children's car seats or bike helmets because regulation standards change frequently. Makeup, hats, shoes, swimsuits and undergarments are typically no-no's, as you could expose yourself to the germs, fungus or skin issues of the previous owner. In the case of items that are new with tags, you would still want to follow deep-cleaning procedures before wearing them.

Keep these suggestions in mind as you begin your thrifting adventures. Whether bargain hunting is a hobby or a lifestyle, the key is to save some money and have some fun! **NOW**



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"Coincidentally, a lot of people who are anxious about going to the dentist are also people who don't have good insurance. That's a bad combination. I have membership plans for patients without insurance, and really good discounts on implants and dentures. A membership might not be necessary if you only need one simple procedure, but if you need sedation and a lot of work, it really pays for itself."

Dr. Allala is a graduate of the Texas A&M School of Dentistry. "When I started there, it was still Baylor. My diploma has both names on it," she recalled. "I specialize in oral surgery, and we're really good at it. I'm nothing without my team. We do everything in dentistry. I like being well rounded. I enjoy being an overachiever, so I'm constantly taking continuing education, keeping up with all the

newest techniques and technology. I'm also a native Spanish speaker. I grew up speaking both languages. Our YouTube videos explaining procedures are available in both English and Spanish."

Dr. Allala is proud of the service they provide at Serenity Advanced Dentistry. "I think we give five-star service. And I know my staff is five-star. We know what works and what doesn't. I know it sounds corny, but this is my life's work. Most of my staff have been with me for years, at different locations around DFW, before I came to Cedar Hill. I met Mariela seven years ago, in Pleasant Grove. It was my first job out of school. Racine has been with me four years, and Jazmine three years, both in Red Oak. Our newest team member is Jessica. She found us three months ago when she emailed me looking for an opportunity to shadow a dentist."

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# HAPPY NEW YEAR

## JANUARY

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.

1/2

### ECWJC Spring Class Registration Begins:

Courses range from computer training and money management to setting boundaries, résumé writing and interviewing. Classes begin **January 30** and run 12 weeks with morning and evening times available, **Tuesday-Thursday**. Learn more at <http://elliscwjclife/> or by calling (972) 937-6620.

1/6

### Children's Story Time:

Join us for story time and crafts. For ages 0-10 years. Free. 10:30 a.m., Paper Leaves Shop, 510 Water St.

1/20

### The Black & White Gala:

Join the Waxahachie Community Theater for the 2024 season kickoff and membership meeting. Adults: \$20; ages 8-13: \$10. 6:00 p.m., University Church, 221 Solon Rd.

1/23

### Chamber's Coffee Connections:

Sponsored by The Hamilton at Garden Valley. 8:00-9:00 a.m., 880 Garden Valley Pkwy.

1/27

### Brave Like Ellie:

Chat with the Brave Like Ellie

team. 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Ann's Health Food Center & Market, 2305 N. Hwy. 77.

### Mondays

#### Oddfellows Meeting:

Dinner: 6:30 p.m.; lodge: 7:30 p.m., 1/2, 215 S. Rogers St.

### Second Mondays

#### Waxahachie School Board Meeting:

The public is encouraged and welcome to attend meetings. 7:00 p.m., WISD Administration Building (2nd Floor), 411 N. Gibson St.

### Fourth Mondays

#### Creative Quilters of Ellis County:

Social time, business meeting, show and tell program. Sign-in/social time: 6:00 p.m.; meeting: 6:30 p.m., Waxahachie Bible Church, 621 N. Grand Ave. Learn more at [elliscountyquilters.com](http://elliscountyquilters.com). Email [klbright53@gmail.com](mailto:klbright53@gmail.com) for more details.

### Tuesdays

#### Waxahachie Lions Club Meeting:

Noon, Meeting Room, Daymark Living, 818 Cantrell St.

### Second and Fourth Tuesdays

### Teen Tuesdays:

Something different will be planned each time - sharing Manga or watching anime, video gaming on our Switch or computers, watching movies, "crafternoons," or Ms. Melissa's favorite, creating fun food and snacks! 13-18 or middle school/high school ages only. 4:30-5:30, Teen Lair, Sims Library, 515 W. Main St.

### Wednesdays

#### Bilingual Story Time:

Strengthen both languages with fun stories. Free. 11:00 a.m., Sims Library, 515 W. Main St.

#### Write On!:

Work on your novel, short story or poetry. Free. 3:00-5:00 p.m., Sims Library, 515 W. Main St.

### Second and Fourth Wednesdays

#### LEGO Lab:

Build your dreams with everyone's favorite toy. 4:30-5:30 p.m., Buckner Room, Sims Library, 515 W. Main St.

### Thursdays

#### Sing & Grow:

This program is for babies who are standing and walking on their own, up to 4-year-olds. 11:00-11:45 a.m., Sims Library, 515 W. Main St.

### Rotary Club of Waxahachie Meeting:

11:45 a.m., Crape Myrtle Room, Waxahachie Civic Center, 2000 Civic Center Ln.

### Second Fridays

#### Homeschool Hangout:

Enjoy hanging with friends. Free. 2:00-3:00 p.m., Sims Library, 515 W. Main St.

### Saturdays

#### Genealogy With Pat:

Get help tracing your family roots. Free. 11:00 a.m., Sims Library, 515 W. Main St.

### Last Sundays

#### Literary Ladies:

Discuss books and make friends. Free. 3:00 p.m., Paper Leaves Shop, 510 Water St.

### Weekly

#### Waxahachie Animal Shelter Adoptions:

**Monday-Friday:** 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.; **Saturday:** 8:00-10:00 a.m. by appointment, 191 Lions Park Rd. For more information, call (469) 309-4150.


*Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your current event details to [adam.walker@nowmagazines.com](mailto:adam.walker@nowmagazines.com).*

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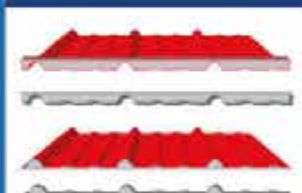


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