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From studio recordings to live performances, this singersongwriter does it all.

#### Photo by

Zhanna Linscombe.

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#### **EDITORIAL**

Managing Editor, Becky Walker Weatherford Editor, Amber D. Browne Office Assistant, Kristin Bato Writers, Becky Walker. Virginia Riddle Editors/Proofreaders, Rachel Rich Virginia Riddle

#### **GRAPHICS AND DESIGN**

Creative Director, Chris McCalla Artists, Kristin Bato . Martha Macias Anthony Sarmienta

#### **PHOTOGRAPHY**

Photography Director, Chris McCalla Photographer, Zhanna Linscombe

#### **ADVERTISING**

Advertising Representatives, Kelsea Locke . Cherise Burnett Dustin Dauenhauer . Bryan Frye Linda Moffett . Linda Roberson Karen Schaefer . Jeremy Young

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Subscriptions are available at the rate of \$35 per year or \$3.50 per issue. Subscriptions should be sent to: NOW Magazines, P.O. Box 1071, Waxahachie, TX 75168. For advertising rates or editorial correspondence, call (817) 613-1533 or visit www.nowmagazines.com.





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## **EDITOR'S NOTE**

Happy New Year, WeatherfordNOW Readers!

I cannot believe yet another year has come and gone. We are now in the year 2025, a quarter of a century into the current millennia. I often wonder what the next 25 years will look like for our world. During my nearly half a century on this earth, many changes have occurred, so I am confident many more are on the horizon for our species.

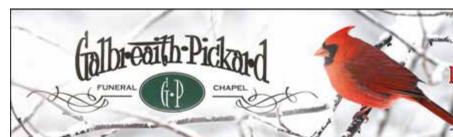
Whatever life has in store for us, I am grateful for the technological advances we have experienced during the past few decades. The World Wide Web and mobile phones are two inventions most people on this earth could not live without. Generation Alpha, those born in the years stretching back to 2010, is known for being introduced to technology at a very young age. However, most generations are at least familiar with technology and its benefits.

My favorite app is undoubtedly Apple Maps. Without it, I would not know how to get to new destinations. A few other apps are on my most-often-used list -Messages, Facebook and Instagram to name a few. Certain apps have changed the methods of how we communicate, pay our bills, capture photographs and even lock our doors at home. The advancements in technology have propelled our communities into the 21st century, and what the future holds is a mystery.

As we begin our new year, I will continue to use technology to aid me in daily life, but I also plan to lessen my screen time. Scrolling on social media steals time, which I could instead utilize to create, prosper and appreciate.

To an amazing 2025!





Sending well wishes and prayers for the coming year. Happy New Year

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# BROCK **EAGLES**

**4A Division II State Semifinalists** 







































By Amber D. Browne

A career other than singing was never an option for Jamie Richards. When he was just 3 years old, his late mother, Julia Richards, began preparing him for the spotlight. "I know that sounds crazy, but she already had me singing at that age. We would go to these allnight singing conventions with these famous, worldtraveling quartets," Jamie shared. Inside a Houston church at the young age of 9, Jamie recorded a gospel album, which featured his mother on piano. "That was my first recording." And, that album was just the beginning of a top-of-the-chart country music singing and songwriting career for Jamie, who now calls Weatherford home.

At the age of 16, while living on a family dairy farm in Oklahoma, Jamie started his own band. They played country music cover songs at venues in Shawnee, Oklahoma. "It's the best feeling," he said about performing on stage. "I would always think to myself that I would love to have my own songs out." A decade later, Jamie made the move to Nashville to pursue his dreams.

While trying to break into the music industry in Nashville, Jamie worked in construction. "I wasn't born with any silver spoon, so I had to make a living at whatever I was doing. I got to be a really good carpenter," he said. It took several years and a couple of failed developmental deals before he signed a publishing contract as a songwriter with Curb Records in Nashville. In the early 2000s, the Houston country music scene provided Jamie with his first record deal with D Records, which had signed artists

such as George Strait. Jamie had made it to

the big leagues. His third album would cement his first No. 1 hit, "Drive," in 2008. Now, this country music artist has seen 13 No. 1 singles on the Texas Regional Radio Report. "I feel pretty proud. It's regional, but Texas is a big ol' state," he said.

Since 2001, Jamie has released eight albums — four with D Records and four independently. And 2025 will see the release of Jamie's ninth album. "It's going to be the biggest deal I've ever had, the biggest opportunity I've ever had.



Jamie and his band — Paul Carr, bass; Scott Jenkins, steel guitar; Danny Reichle, guitar; and Ben Wade, drums travel across Texas and surrounding states to share their music with fans. Jamie's newlywed wife, Stephanie, and their pup, Kylie, often travel in the motorhome to watch the band perform.

Jamie met Stephanie, who is from Fort Worth, at the National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas several years ago.



"She just walked up to me because she had seen me play before. We got to talking," he explained. "We started seeing each other, and we've hardly been apart." They closed on their new home in Weatherford just two weeks before they married in September 2023. "There are some real cowboys in Weatherford, Texas. They're more oldschool country. The real stuff. I think that's pretty neat," Jamie said.

Stephanie shared that Jamie is often recognized when they are out in public. "We love Weatherford. We love the community," she said. "Everybody's just so caring and welcoming. We're happy to be here."

In addition to their Weatherford home, lamie continues to care for his family's homestead in Oklahoma. After his father, Edward Richards, passed, Jamie inherited some of the property. Most of the acreage was sold off, and Jamie purchased the remaining land from his brothers and sisters. He put his carpentry experience to good use and remodeled the house. "It's really nice now. I never minded hard work," he admitted. "I'm hanging onto it for a bit.

I don't feel it yet in my heart to sell."

Jamie's Southern roots shine in his music. He has written about 80-percent of his recorded songs and has developed a style. "It's more traditional. It's more country." Music lovers can find his songs on Spotify or Apple Music. "That's a good way to get familiar with me," he said.

The Richards' new home in Weatherford has become a haven for Jamie's creativity. "He sits back there at the desk and writes," Stephanie said. When imagination sparks during his writing process, Stephanie is often the first to hear the new tune.

Whether it is writing new music, recording in a studio or performing on stage, Jamie enjoys them equally. A live show, however, gives him an opportunity to share favorites with fans. "Last Call" and "The Man in the Neon Moon" are both popular. Jamie recalls songs with emotional connections that he wrote for his parents — "Julia's Table" for his mother and for his father, "Tears Too Deep to Cry." "She Was a Place to Fall" is his wife's favorite. "We played it at the wedding. It's just a

beautiful song," Stephanie said.

Jamie's first holiday song, "My First Christmas Alone," released in late 2024. He performed the song in a movie filmed in Granbury titled, A Christmas Heart. Jamie played a pawn shop owner in the movie. "It was a little bit weird for me. I think I only had four lines, but I had trouble learning them," he laughed. His friend and movie actor and director, Bill McAdams Jr., suggested he ad lib them. "He shouldn't have said that because he had to tell me I was talking too much."

Jamie confessed that he occasionally forgets the words of his songs while performing on stage. "You can sing it a million times, and you can still just have a brain fog and not recall it for a second." Luckily, his fans will assist him from the crowd. "It's just a great feeling. If I forget the words, they help me out."

With a new album on the way, and new lyrics on his mind, Jamie plans to continue writing and recording for the foreseeable future. "I've made a good living playing music, and I've had a great time," he shared. "Never give up because you just don't know." NOW



# Congratulations

# ALEDO BEARCATS

**5A Division 1 Quarterfinalists** 















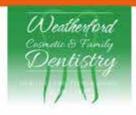
































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# Congratulations PEASTER GREYHOUNDS

**3A Division 1 Area Finalists** 







































# **Around Town**



# Zoomed In: Carol Rhodes

By Amber D. Browne



Baileigh Rhodes performs an original song onstage at Christmas on the Square.



Wendy Ray, 1st place, Randy Loyer, 2nd place, and Anne Feriend, 3rd place, are recognized as the Weatherford Art Association's Artist of the Month winners for December.

At 79, Weatherford resident Carol Rhodes lives life to the fullest. Carol competed in barrel racing up until three years ago and is now retired and no longer riding or training horses. She works out at a local gym and is looking for other activities to stay busy. "It's a new world for me. I'm learning what other people do. I ask people all the time, 'What do you do if you don't have a horse?" she laughed.

Carol received her first horse at the age of 10 and feels fortunate to have been able to compete in rodeo. "There is a winter in life, and there's a summer in life. I'm in the winter," she said. "I just figure God has another plan for me to do something else."



Weatherford College student ambassadors are honored as VIP guests in the Presidential Dining Suite.



The Weatherford ISD Board of Trustees recognizes the Lady Roos Cross Country team, which completed the season as district champs.

## NOW



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Even in the womb, humans are learning about the environment into which they are about to be thrust. Infant through kindergarten years are rapid periods of growth and learning, as older family members encourage and cheer on those first steps, first days of soccer and school. During childhood — until adulthood is achieved — school becomes routine and repetitious, full of assignments and rules, as teachers attempt to instill a love of learning while teaching students how to learn. Many students look forward to their graduation day when they can stop learning facts and new skills and "get started with life in a career and earn money."

However, what that recent high school graduate finds out quickly, whether choosing to attend college or go into the military or a career path, is that learning is just the beginning of building and sustaining a healthy career and personal life. By learning new things, new neural connections in one's brain are created. And what about that 50-year-old nontraditional college student reinventing himself or herself into a new career? Brain studies show the older student has the advantage over an 18-year-old because the older student's brain's frontal lobes are more developed, helping him or her to focus, and he or she can relate new learning to more extensive life experiences.

Midlife doesn't have to be a crisis. For many, it becomes a period of finding commonalities, rather than competing with others, and accepting changes in family life. One can retire and change careers or find a new hobby or regenerate an interest in a former hobby, which leads to making new friends. The following ideas can help one find passion rather than experiencing a "hardening of the attitudes":

- a. Travel to new places and learn a new language and new customs. Enjoy new sights, sounds and smells.
- b. Volunteer in an area which provides learning opportunities.
- c. Tutor/mentor a student.
- d. Attend a college/university or senior center's lifelong learning class.
- e. Exercise daily to regenerate the entire body yoga, tai chi, dancing, gym workouts, hiking, etc.
- f. Enjoy video games, card games, board games or puzzles.
- g. Learn to play a new musical instrument or join a choir.
- h. Become more interested in the world, socialize and find like-minded people with whom to have regular solve-the-world's-problems conversations.

i. Write a personal memoir or personal essays for family and friends.

j. At work, cross-train in positions to learn new skills.

Neuroscientist Marian Diamond. Ph.D.. concluded, "... with proper stimulation and an enriched environment, the human brain can continue to develop at any age." Albert Einstein once predicted that devoting even just 15 minutes daily to learning something new would help a person become an expert in a year, so it's never too late to learn new skills.

The difference in learning during school days and later in life is that lifelong learning is an ongoing, voluntary and self-motivated style of learning, whether the skills or facts learned are for career or personal use, for wonderment of the world or for having to adapt to different physical needs during physical or occupational therapies. One has the choice to stagnate in place or grow and expand their capabilities and circles of acquaintances and friends of all generations. Brain studies have shown that when learning stops or slows, cognitive performance lessens because internal connections break down.

Learn that learning is fun, and through learning new things, one can reduce stress, gain confidence, improve mental health, have fun, socialize, set an example for children and teens, rediscover neglected hobbies or gain new ones, secure a better sense of well-being, beat boredom, fulfill a lifelong dream, overcome fears and gain happiness in sharing.

Socrates, who pursued studies in music and dance late in life, stated, "Wonder is the beginning of wisdom." May we all keep a childlike sense of wonderment, which will spur our brains to learn new skills, enable us to adapt to changing environments, open doors and give us a constantly renewed sense of purpose throughout our years. NOW

#### Sources:

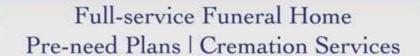
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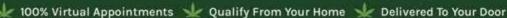
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# THE LOCAL TABLE

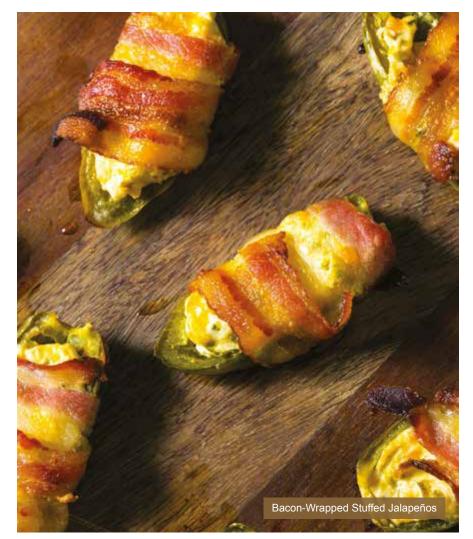
One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well.

- Virginia Woolf









# CookingNOW IN THE KITCHEN WITH AMBER D. BROWNE

- By Becky Walker



WeatherfordNOW Community Editor Amber D. Browne grew up in Southeast Texas. "Seafood was a staple in our diet," she said. "I love to cook Cajun and Creole dishes."

Amber inherited some recipes from her mother and finds new ones on Pinterest. She also enjoys watching competitive cooking and baking shows. "I have learned about different ingredients, as well as cooking and baking tips through the trial and error attempts of the competitors and the judges' critiques," she explained.

A teacher at heart, Amber enjoyed passing on the basics of cooking to her children. "I found that if I gave them responsibilities preparing the food," she said, "they were more inclined to eat it." NOW

#### **Bacon-Wrapped Stuffed** Jalapeños

Nonstick cooking spray 13 jalapeños 1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese 1 16-oz. pkg. bacon

- 1. Preheat the grill or oven to 350 F. Line a cookie sheet with foil; grease with nonstick cooking spray. Wash the jalapeños. Cut off the stem of each jalapeño; cut each one lengthwise. Remove the seeds with a spoon. Place the halves on the cookie sheet.
- 2. Fill each half of the jalapeños with cream cheese.
- **3.** Cut the bacon strips in half. Wrap one half of bacon around each cream-cheese filled jalapeño half; place onto the cookie sheet. If cooking on the grill, slide the foil with jalapeños onto the grill grates; cook for 25-30 minutes at 300 F or until the bacon is to your liking. If cooking in the oven, place the cookie sheet in the oven; bake at 350 F for 25-30 minutes or until the bacon is to your liking.
- **4.** Remove the bacon-wrapped stuffed jalapeños from the foil; place them onto a paper towel-lined plate to drain the grease. Serve immediately.

#### **Red Beans and Rice**

- 1 16-oz. bag kidney beans
- 2 14-oz. pkgs. smoked beef link sausage
- 1 Tbsp. Lawry's Seasoned Salt
- I tsp. garlic powder
- I tsp. salt, plus more to taste (divided use)
- 1/2 tsp. black pepper, plus more to taste 2 cups white rice
- 4 cups water

Green onions, chopped (optional)

- **1.** Pour the kidney beans into a large pot. Add enough water to cover the beans. Cover with a lid; soak at least 4 hours or overnight.
- 2. Drain the beans; return them to the large pot. Cover the beans with water. Add the lid: heat over low-medium heat for 1 hour.
- **3.** Cut the link sausage into rounds; add them to a skillet on medium heat. Brown the sausage for about 2 minutes on each side; drain the grease.
- 4. Add the cooked sausage, Lawry's Seasoned Salt, garlic powder, 1/2 tsp. salt and 1/2 tsp. black pepper to the beans. Add more water, if necessary, to completely cover the mixture. Stir; add additional salt and pepper, to taste. Cover; cook on medium heat, stirring occasionally for 1-2 hours or until the beans are tender.
- **5.** Rinse the rice three times before cooking. Add the water to a pot: boil the water on high heat. Add 1/2 tsp. salt to the boiling water. Pour in the rice. Cover; turn the heat

to low. Cook for 20 minutes.

**6.** To serve, add rice to a bowl and top with the red bean and sausage mixture. Sprinkle with green onions, if desired. Serve with corn bread or toasted bread and butter.

#### **Bev's Beer Biscuits**

4 cups Bisquick 12 oz. light beer 3 Tbsp. sugar Nonstick cooking spray

**1.** Preheat the oven to 400 F. In a large bowl, mix together all the ingredients. Grease a muffin tin with the nonstick cooking spray. Scoop the dough equally into the muffin tin. Bake at 400 F for 15-20 minutes. Serve with butter.

# Peanut Butter and Chocolate Protein Bars

2 cups peanut butter
1 1/4 cups chocolate or cookies and cream whey protein powder
1/2 cup pure maple syrup
1/2 tsp. salt
Nonstick cooking spray
1 1/2 cups chocolate chips

- **1.** In a medium-sized bowl, combine the peanut butter and next 3 ingredients; mix well.
- **2.** Spray an 8x8-inch glass dish with nonstick cooking spray. Spread the peanut butter mixture into the dish.
- **3.** Add the chocolate chips to a microwavesafe bowl. Microwave for 45 seconds; stir. Continue to microwave the chocolate chips in 15 second intervals until fully melted. Pour and spread the melted chocolate onto the top of the peanut butter until covered. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes before cutting into squares to serve. Keep refrigerated.



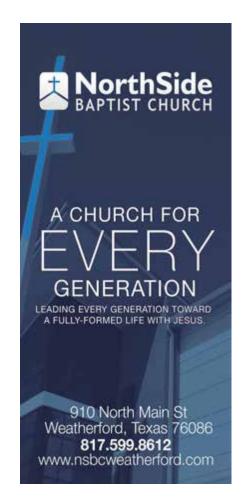




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		1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8
9	10		T	T	T		11		T	T
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32	-	$\vdash$	$\vdash$		33	+	+	+		

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Online versions and solutions available at www.nowmagazines.com. From our Homepage, click on the Crossword-Sudoku tab. Click on a puzzle. Click on the See All button to view solutions.

#### Across

- 1 Took a dip
- 5 "Trust ---" (Janet Jackson song)
- 9 They raise the pitch
- 11 Bok ---, Chinese cabbage
- 12 Hill product
- 14 Condo, for example
- 15 "The Cannonball Run" star Reynolds
- 16 Ft. Collins setting
- 17 Track prelims
- 18 Without being stated

Medium

21 Title for a lady

#### Down

22 Popeye's verb

25 " ... --- Cold ---

them all."

(Kipling)

26 Composer ---

immediately

behind another

Bartók

racecar

30 Oversupply

31 Whoopee!

32 "--- of the

33 10 Down

output

D'Urbervilles"

27 Drives

- is master of

of being

- Mad guitarist played as one of twelve on high
- 2 Formal legal document
- 3 Brown delivery firm
- 4 Ocean-height standard
- 5 Real 6 17th century
- European war
- 7 Cheers 8 Feminine half, in Chinese
- 9 Urban renewal target
- 10 Cackleberry makers
- 13 Assist
- 17 "She Done ---Wrong" (Mae West movie)

- 19 Gets a little one a little later in life
- 20 Metal
- containers 21 Toulouse thousand
- 23 Mrs. Alfred Hitchcock
- 24 Hot Lips worked at one
- 26 North Atlantic hazard
- 27 USMC noncom
- 28 French alternative to "café"
- 29 Bald patch patch?

# Sudoku Puzzle

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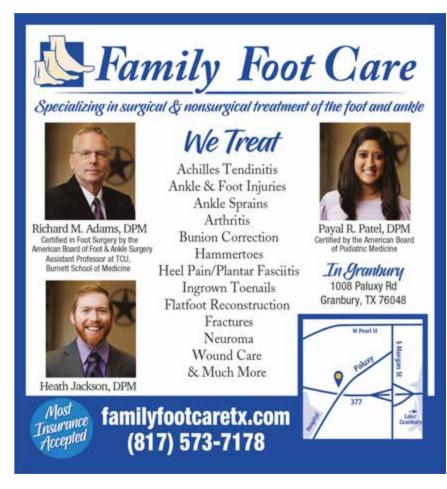
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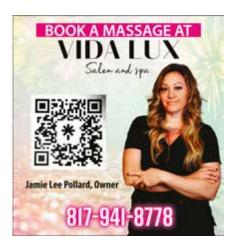
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Online versions and solutions available at www.nowmagazines.com. From our Homepage, click on the Crossword-Sudoku tab. Click on a puzzle. Click on the See All button to view solutions.













#### 1/10-1/11

## New Year Truck Fest 2025:

Free admission to check out trucks at the event sponsored by RP Elite Motors & Marine.

Friday: Noon-5:00 p.m.;

Saturday: 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Heritage Park, 711 Santa Fe Dr. rpelitemotors.com.

#### 1/13-1/19

# Parker County Restaurant Week:

Area restaurants will participate in this inaugural event to benefit Tarrant Area Food Bank West. Times and locations vary. Visit weatherford-chamber.com for additional information.

#### 1/25

#### 23rd Annual Parker County Bridal Fair:

Meet dozens of vendors. Free admission and door prizes. Noon-4:00 p.m., Doss Heritage and Culture Center, 1400 Texas Dr. Visit pcbf.weebly.com or email pcbridalfair@gmail.com for more information.

#### 1/28

## Stock Show Goes Pink Day:

Half of rodeo ticket and general ground admission sales at the Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo will benefit Careity Foundation. 8:00 a.m.-10:30

p.m., 3400 Burnett Tandy Dr., Fort Worth. fwssr.com, careity.org.

#### 1/31-2/16

#### Alice by Heart:

Live stage play presented by TOTS. **Fridays and Saturdays:** 8:00 p.m.; **Sundays:** 2:00 p.m., Theatre Off the Square, 114 N. Denton St. (817) 341-8687. Get tickets and more information at theatreoffthesquare.org.

#### Weekends Prior to First Mondays

## Weatherford First Monday Trade Days:

Event is held Friday-Sunday prior to the first Monday of the month. Browse vendors offering unique gifts, antiques, pet supplies, tools and more, plus enjoy great festival food. 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., First Monday Trade Days Grounds, 317 Santa Fe Dr. experienceweatherford.com.

#### Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays

#### **Tone and Trim:**

Join Weatherford ISD's Community Education's adult fitness class. **Mondays and Thursdays:** 7:00-8:00 p.m.; **Saturdays:** 8:30-9:30 a.m.

Cost: \$30. Curtis Elementary gym, 501 W. Russell. weatherfordisd.com.

#### Fourth Mondays

## Weatherford Art Association Meeting:

Join for an artist demonstration and more. 6:00 p.m., Senior Center, 1225 Holland Lake Dr. For more information, visit weatherfordart.com.

#### Tuesdays

#### **Preschool Story Time:**

Join us for story time. 10:30 a.m., The Doss Heritage and Culture Center, 1400 Texas Dr. dosscenter.org.

#### Tuesdays and Thursdays

#### **Storytime at the Library:**

Toddlers enjoy books and activities on **Tuesdays** and preschoolers on **Thursdays** (**closed 1/2**). 10:30 a.m., Weatherford Public Library, 1014 Charles St. weatherfordtx. gov/142/library.

#### Wednesdays

#### VFW Post 4746:

Join to support veterans. Burger night: Cost \$5. (Steak Night on 1st & 3rd Fridays: Cost \$20.) 6:00-8:00 p.m., 224 Zion Hill Rd. (817) 594-7356.

#### Second Thursdays

# Gardeners' Club of Parker County Monthly Meeting:

Each meeting includes a speaker with information relative to gardening in Parker County. 10:00 a.m., St. Francis Church, 117 Ranch House Rd., Willow Park. (817) 919-6280.

#### Third Thursdays

# Quilter's Guild of Parker County:

Come early to socialize: 6:15 p.m.; meeting: 6:45 p.m., Lakeshore Drive Baptist Church, 200 S. Lakeshore Dr., Hudson Oaks. quiltersguildofparkercounty.org.

#### Fridays

## American Legion Post 163 Dinner:

Enjoy dinner for a small fee to support local veterans. Opens: 5:00 p.m.; dinner: 6:00 p.m., 200 Cartwright Park Rd. Email alpost 163@gmail.com for info.

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



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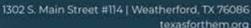




66

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