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JANUARY 2026

An Adventurous Life

The Botelers share an exciting
past and present

In the Kitchen With
Caroline McAda

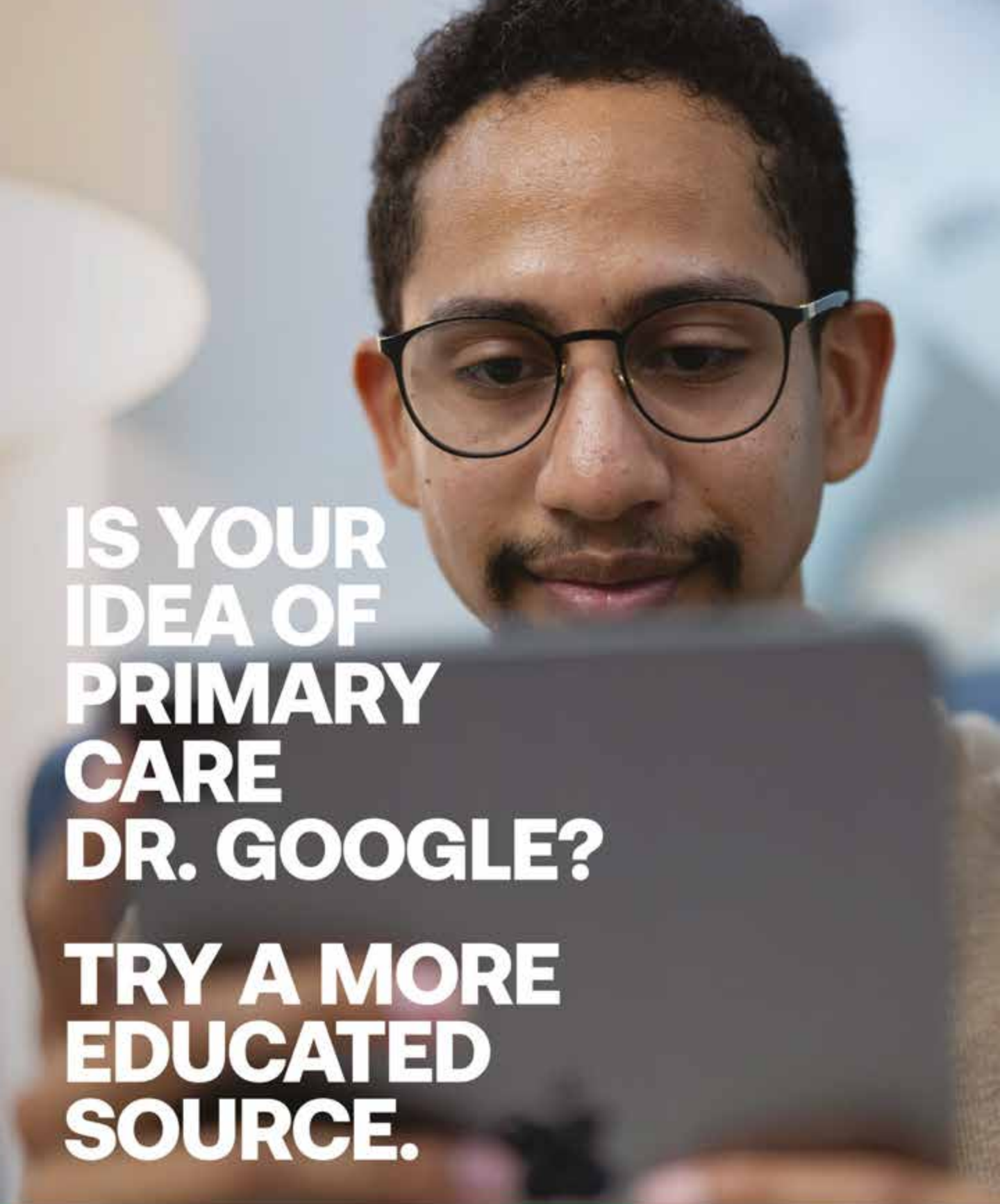
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Scavenger Hunt

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Lift Medical Aesthetics

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Angel Morris
MidlothianNOW Editor
angel.morris@nowmagazines.com
(972) 533-7216

EDITOR'S NOTE

Happy new traditions!

If you don't keep a family memory jar, I encourage you to try it this year. It's low-key and is a great family activity to appreciate big and small moments.

1. Keep a large container filled with note cards and a pen somewhere you pass often (for us, it's the kitchen table). I covered a large coffee can with craft paper to serve as our "jar."

2. Anytime we enjoy an activity, share a laugh or just have an experience worth remembering, we make note of it and toss it in the jar (birthday cards, thank-you notes, movie ticket stubs, event flyers, etc. are welcome, too!)

3. On New Year's Eve or New Year's Day, we take turns reading an item from the jar until it's empty.

4. Reminisce. Laugh. And appreciate things we

might otherwise have forgotten!

You can include whatever you want (sad memories can make us grateful, as well), and I've no doubt family members of any age will enjoy reflecting on their favorite moments together. You'll be surprised at what your housemates most treasured. (I love reading quotes of the silly, offhanded remarks we make to one another as much as remembering special times we shared).

Memories contained!

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ON THE COVER



It's not your ordinary retirement for Tamra and Blake Boteler.

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Kobbi R. Blair.

*Publisher, Connie Poirier
General Manager, Rick Hensley*

EDITORIAL
Managing Editor, Becky Walker
Midlothian Editor, Angel Morris
Office Assistant, Kristin Bato
Editors/Proofreaders, Rachel Rich
Virginia Riddle

GRAPHICS AND DESIGN
Creative Director, Chris McCalla
Artists, Beth Davis . Kristin Bato
Martha Macias . Anthony Sarmienta

PHOTOGRAPHY
Photography Director, Chris McCalla
Photographer, Kobbi R. Blair

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AN ADVENTUROUS LIFE

— By Angel Morris

From life in hiding to hiking across Spain, Tamra and Blake Boteler's story is far from ordinary. Their narrative began at Texas Tech University from where they graduated, through many adventurous chapters, ultimately leading to their not-so-quiet retirement.

"I'm grateful every day to be experiencing life in all of its highs and lows," Tamra, whose career was spent as a dietitian/nutritionist, said.

Blake's career made for particular trials. He served as a Special Agent for 29 years with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) in several states and overseas. "As a member of the ATF Special Response Team, I participated in hundreds of high-risk search and arrest warrants throughout the country, targeting armed violent criminals. We also responded to several humanitarian missions including the Hurricane Katrina Response in New Orleans. I worked extensively in an undercover capacity for over 10 years of my career," Blake said.

Working undercover with ATF, Blake became a member of a violent outlaw motorcycle gang called the Sons of Silence in Colorado Springs in 1997. "I ultimately became an enforcer for the gang. When the investigation ended in 1999, some 58 suspects were arrested



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and more than 200 firearms were seized or purchased to include machine guns, hand grenades, pipe bombs and over \$100,000 in narcotics,” Blake described.

After the gang realized Blake was with ATF, it put out a \$50,000 contract on his life. “This forced my family — by now Tamra and I had three children — into hiding. We lived under assumed names in three different states over the next year as a result of the threats.”

The family also lived overseas for a time, where Tamra taught nutrition courses to undergraduate nursing students at the University of Guam, then took a hiatus from her career to homeschool their children. The family moved to Midlothian in 2000.

“My grandmother had been born in Midlothian in the late 1800s, and my father was born down the road in Venus in 1925. It was Midlothian’s reputation as a great place to raise a family that brought us here,” Blake credited.

Prior to moving to Midlothian, Blake had never lived anywhere for more than five years. “We’ve lived in the same house for over 25 years. All three of our kids graduated from Midlothian High School,” he shared.

Once the kids were in school, Tamra opened her own nutrition business. “Later, I shifted back into medical clinics and obtained a secondary credential to become a certified diabetes educator. I performed this role in various medical clinics until retiring in 2021,” she noted.

Blake retired from ATF in 2016, recognized as one of the most

decorated Special Agents in the history of ATF. Today, his motorcycle and Sons of Silence gang vest are on exhibit in the National Law Enforcement Museum in Washington, D.C.

"I was honored with a number of awards, but I cherish most the small card I received from Locks of Love in 2000 when I donated my long hair I had while undercover to be used to make wigs for children fighting cancer," he recalled.

Ironically, in 2007, Blake was diagnosed with Stage 4 throat and tongue cancer. "It was a long, hard struggle. The doctors and staff at MD Anderson in Houston no doubt saved my life with God's help. After my treatment ended in 2009, I grew my hair long once more and again donated it to Locks of Love," he said.

In 2014, Blake began volunteering with Project Recover (then known as BentProp), a nonprofit organization that travels the world to locate, recover and repatriate the remains of killed and missing-in-action service men and women. In 2020, Blake left his final job as an executive protection specialist for AT&T and began to focus

more on volunteering.

Tamra experienced a major life trauma in 2017. "It was this personal trauma that ignited the spark for my quest to do something that could re-establish my faith in humanity," she admitted.

Tamra's quest turned into hiking the Appalachian Trail from Georgia to Maine, alone, in 2023. "It took six months, and I covered 2,198 miles carrying everything I needed on my back while tenting on the trail or staying in town hostels to re-supply," she shared. "Although I experienced some fears and challenges along the trail, this was by far one of the most growth-stimulating experiences over the course of my 60-plus years."

This past June, the Botelers completed a bucket list 500-plus mile hike across Spain on the Camino de Santiago. "The entire journey took a little over six weeks. It was an amazing experience, and I feel blessed to have been able to complete it with Tamra," Blake said. "We are retired from work, but we are not retired from life and the adventures it holds."

Tamra remains busy volunteering

with New Friends/New Life, a nonprofit assisting teen girls and women who have been sexually exploited or trafficked. Together, the couple volunteers as hosts at Cedar Hill State Park. "We help clean and maintain the park and help visitors have a great experience in nature," Blake said.

While their history lends itself to an active lifestyle, the Botelers encourage everyone in retirement to stay busy. "Go out and experience life. You don't have to walk the Camino de Santiago. You can go to a local park and have a similar experience. The key is to keep your mind and body moving in a positive direction," Blake encouraged.

Tamra agreed. "Sometimes life is beautiful, and sometimes it is not, but every moment can have meaning. And you definitely grow more from the hard moments. It really just depends on which lens you choose to see life through.

"We all have something that we can do to give back to our community, this beautiful earth and ultimately the world," she continued. "So, get out there and live life. Just show up. Everything else will fall into place." **NOW**



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Zoomed In:
Alvin Williams

By Angel Morris

Alvin Williams recently presented a portrait to Linda Averitt in remembrance of her husband, Lee, who founded Lee’s Jewelry & Repair. “Lee was a great friend, and we miss him,” Alvin said.

As a visual artist, Alvin has been honing his craft since age 5. “I have a passion for bringing old photos to life, then engaging my audience in a discussion of shapes, depth and elements in the artwork to explain how each piece came together,” he shared.

Although retired, Alvin continues to showcase his art through area exhibits. “I want my work to touch someone with the same love that touches me when I create each piece,” he noted. “I think Linda was happily surprised by Lee’s portrait, and that brought tears to my eyes.”



Cash Sanders, a fourth grade student from J.R. Irvin Elementary, prepares to flip the switch on the city’s official Christmas tree.



EMS Captain Ted McPherson helps launch the Midlothian Fire Department Prehospital Whole Blood Program with Methodist Mansfield Medical Center to benefit patients experiencing severe blood loss.



Methodist Health System and community leaders celebrate the local hospital’s fifth anniversary and ER expansion groundbreaking.



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— By Angel Morris

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Jennifer Reeher, RN, BSN, is the owner and aesthetic nurse behind Lift Medical Aesthetics, where science meets artistry and every patient experience is built on trust and care. Providing a premier local destination for all things skin, face and beauty, Jen and her team of aesthetic nurses offer personalized care through knowledge and state-of-the-art technology.

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“We’re all about making you look and feel your absolute best. We have everything you need to enhance your beauty, from enriching skin rejuvenation to age-defying injectables,” Jen noted. “Our clinicians are licensed and some of the most experienced in the area.”

With more than a decade of nursing experience and a heart for helping others feel confident in their own skin, Jen brings both expertise and empathy to every treatment she performs. “After years in the neonatal intensive care unit, I transitioned into aesthetics to combine my medical background with my passion for helping people look and feel their best,” she said.

Jen’s approach is rooted in compassion — she listens carefully, treats thoughtfully and believes aesthetics should feel natural, not forced. She has called the Midlothian area

home for nearly 30 years, where she and her husband of 27 years have raised their three children. She's proud to serve the community that has supported her family and her dream, creating a welcoming space where confidence and care go hand in hand.

Assisting Jen in creating this environment are Melissa Duke BSN, RNC-OB and Rachel Mentzel, BSN, RN-BC. With more than 21 years of experience as a labor and delivery nurse, Melissa brings compassion, precision and genuine care for others. A Texas Christian University graduate, she spent her entire career serving families in her community before discovering her passion for aesthetic nursing in the summer of 2022, when she joined Lift Medical Aesthetics.

“We’re all about making you look and feel your absolute best.”

Rachel grew up in Midlothian and takes pride in caring for the community that raised her. A graduate of The University of Texas at Tyler, she spent 13 years at Methodist Mansfield Medical Center and the past four years with Lift Medical Aesthetics, where she combines her nursing expertise with her passion for helping clients feel confident in their own skin.

Lift’s clinicians participate in continuous elite-level, hands-on training. They educate clients on the fact that an effective skincare regimen must contain three fundamental elements: prevention, protection and correction. To that end, Lift Medical Aesthetics offers SkinCeuticals, a product line designed to prevent signs of future damage, protect your healthy skin and correct the appearance of any prior damage.

Providing aesthetics services to Midlothian and surrounding communities since 2019, Jen said that aesthetic nursing aligns with her beliefs in lifelong learning and investing in oneself. She is excited for the LMA staff’s opportunity to listen to clients with empathy, then bring their aesthetic goals to reality. “I believe you’ll feel at home with us,” Jen shared, “and we look forward to helping you look and feel beautiful.” **NOW**

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CookingNOW

IN THE KITCHEN WITH CAROLINE MCADA

— By Angel Morris



Caroline McAda began baking in an Easy Bake Oven, preparing cakes to welcome new neighbors. “I have memories of making cream puffs and cookies with my mom. I’m one of eight kids, and this was something special we did together,” Caroline recalled.

Brownies, Oreo Truffles/Cake Pops and Banana Bundt Cake are favorites of Caroline’s customers, friends and family — especially for Nana, Natalie McAda and Granny Ola Hopkins. “We moved to Midlothian in 2010 to raise our girls and be closer to Granny. Granny has lived in Midlothian over 70 years,” Caroline noted.

Caroline gives back through baking for the Jaxon Anthony Memorial Foundation. “Jeff and Ashley Arnold have made it their life’s work to help other families experiencing the loss of an infant,” she noted. “I feel so grateful to be a part of the fundraising by providing baked goods and volunteering.” **NOW**

Leah’s Favorite Goopy Butter Cookies

- 8 oz. cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 yellow cake mix
- 2 cups powdered sugar

1. Preheat the oven to 350 F Add the cream cheese, butter, egg and vanilla to a bowl; mix until smooth. Add the cake mix; mix until combined. Do not overmix.
2. Chill the dough a minimum of 30

minutes. Using a cookie scoop, roll small amounts of the dough into balls, then roll them in powdered sugar until the dough is fully coated. Place on a parchment-lined cookie sheet.

3. Bake 10-12 minutes until the edges are firm, but the center is still soft. Do not overbake. Place on a cooling rack; sprinkle with more powdered sugar.

Granny’s and Nana’s Favorite Banana Bundt Cake

- 4 ripe bananas
- 1 cup vegetable oil

- 2 cups sugar
- 3 eggs, beaten
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
- Pinch of salt

1. Preheat the oven to 350 F Spray the Bundt pan with cooking spray that includes flour.
2. In a large bowl, mash the bananas until very few lumps remain. Stir in the oil, sugar, eggs and vanilla.
3. In a small bowl, add the flour, baking soda, cinnamon and salt; whisk together. Add the flour mixture to the banana mixture; stir until just combined. Do not overmix. The mixture will be lumpy.
4. Pour the batter into a pan. Bake 40-45 minutes. When the toothpick comes out clean, the cake is ready.
5. Cool on a cooling rack for 15 minutes, then flip over on the rack. Once completely cool, add powdered sugar or a powdered sugar icing.

Oreo Truffles/Cake Pops

- 36 Oreos, original
- 8 oz. cream cheese, softened
- 8 oz. vanilla or chocolate almond bark or melting chocolate

1. Pulse the Oreos in a food processor to a fine crumb consistency.
2. Place the cream cheese in a mixing bowl. Add the Oreo crumbs; mix well with a mixer.
3. Make truffles by rolling the mixture into 1-inch balls; place on a lined cookie sheet. Place in the freezer for 15 minutes.
4. Melt the vanilla or chocolate almond bark or the melting chocolate in a melting pot or microwave, based on the package directions. Dip the truffles in the melted bark or chocolate. Let the excess run off. (You can use lollipop sticks to make these into cake pops.)
5. Place on a foil-lined sheet; drizzle with chocolate, top with sprinkles or more crushed Oreos and let the chocolate set. Store in the refrigerator in an airtight container.



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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.

1/10

Advance Care Planning Workshop:

An interactive workshop to help individuals and families begin meaningful Advance Care Planning conversations before a medical crisis happens. Practical tools and guidance to approach sensitive health care topics. 1:00-2:30 p.m., Midlothian Public Library, 215 N. 8th St.

1/14

State of the Chamber Luncheon:

An update on the Chamber's future and a review of its accomplishments in 2025. Guest speakers are Past-Chair

Erika Roland and the 2026 Chairperson of the Board Jordy Jordan. 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center, 1 Community Dr.

For details or to register, visit members.midlothianchamber.org.

1/29

Legacy & Lights Annual Awards Gala:

A glamorous evening of connection, celebration and unforgettable moments. 6:00-9:00 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center, 1 Community Circle Dr.

For pricing and to make reservations, visit <https://members.midlothianchamber.org/atlas/events/1232/details>.

1/29-1/31

Mamma Mia!:

Midlothian High School Fine Arts presents its spring musical. This production is best suited for middle school-aged students and older.

Thursday-Saturday: 7:00 p.m. and **Saturday:** 2:00 p.m., Midlothian High School Auditorium, 923 S. 9th St. Tickets available for \$12 at MidloTheatre.com.

1/31

11th Annual Hall of Honor Banquet:

Midlothian Hall of Honor recognizes its Class of 2025 athlete inductees. Doors open:

5:00 p.m.; program: 6:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m., Midlothian Heritage High School, 4000 FM 1387. Tickets can be purchased at www.midlothianhoh.com/tickets.

Weekdays

Library Events:

Daily events for a range of ages, from Book Babies and Disney Trivia, to Dungeons and Dragons, Adult Yoga and more.

Midlothian Public Library, 215 N. 8th St. Visit midlothian.libcal.com for schedules.

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



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