

WeatherfordNOW

M A G A Z I N E

FEBRUARY

Working With Watercolor

Through the creative process, Mike McCarty discovers enjoyment in art

In the Kitchen With Julie Parker

Also inside:

Scavenger Hunt

Featured Business:
Oaxaca Mexican Cuisine

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ON THE COVER



A fun hobby evolved into a favorite pastime for Mike McCarty.

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EDITOR’S NOTE

Happy Heart Month!

February is known as the month of love as Valentine’s Day falls on February 14, but it is also recognized as American Heart Month. The two go hand in hand as love is often associated with being an emotion of the heart. Everywhere we look, decorations of pink and red hearts might inspire us to plan a romantic evening with a significant other, a Valentine’s Day get-together with girlfriends or a love-themed craft for the children. Allow these adornments of affection to also be a reminder to focus on cardiovascular health.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, heart disease is the No. 1 cause of death for Americans. Throughout the month of February, the CDC encourages people to take control of their heart health. Heart disease risk factors include high blood pressure, diabetes, smoking, an unhealthy diet and physical inactivity. To treat these medical issues and overcome unhealthy lifestyle choices, people can educate themselves and enlist specialists to help with medical advice, nutrition and exercise.

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute is also raising awareness about American Heart Month by urging Americans to incorporate a few self-care activities into their schedules to reduce the risk of heart disease. Here are a few tips. Try a heart-healthy recipe each week. Be active while watching television by stretching or doing a few pushups. Create an online support group, or pledge to walk with a friend or family member several days each week. A few simple changes can make all the difference.

To a month of love and heart health!

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Working With Watercolor

— By Amber D. Browne

What started as a fun activity painting with watercolors while traveling on family road trips has evolved into a favorite pastime for Weatherford resident Mike McCarty. When reflecting back to the mid-1990s, he remembers playing around with some of his children's watercolor supplies. "There was no epiphany or magic moment where I woke and decided, 'Oh, I think I'll do some watercolor today.'" As an architect, Mike found a welcome relief from the precision of the industry while creating watercolor art, and this artistic hobby he discovered has continued for nearly three decades.

Mike's artwork includes imaginative portrayals of animals, portraits, structures and other subjects that bring him happiness. "I joke with everyone in the Weatherford Art Association that I'm a lazy watercolorist. I prefer subjects that have a lot of white or light color in them, so the paper provides most of the painting, most of the subject matter. I think I enjoy painting what's not there, and then forcing the observer to participate in the painting and fill in the blanks."

A photograph might spark his imagination and lead to a new piece. He might use a projector to display the photograph onto paper, so he can draw guidelines for the artwork. "I enjoy drawing, but I enjoy the painting more, so that's an expedient way to get to doing the artwork."

Mike said it is important to learn how to draw and paint what you see, not what you think you see. "Anyone can learn to draw if they get out of the way of what they think they know."

When Mike began his watercolor journey, he would often get frustrated. As a self-employed architect, he was accustomed to precision and attention to detail. "One of the things you learn from it, at least me, is that you don't control everything on it," he shared. "I think, philosophically, everyone has within them that desire to do something beyond their typical scope of activity, to have a little creativity show up."

Mike finds himself using his imagination when creating artwork, often incorporating atypical paint colors for the subject. "You're the artist. You're in control. You have the paints. You have the colors. You're not bound," he explained. A variety of paper weights and textures provide different results. For example, Mike used a rougher texture of paper for his graphite piece





entitled *Three Tenors* to help develop the fur on the wolves. A smoother paper might be selected for color pencil artwork.

To create a semirealistic drawing or painting, the artist must gain an understanding of the lights and the darks, the value from white to black and all the shades in between. It helps design a more three-dimensional piece. "With a little practice, you can do it," he said.

And practice Mike does. Recently retired, he is spending more time working on creative outlets. He primarily works with watercolor but dabbles in graphite art and would like to learn more about clay throwing to create pottery. He also has a no-longer secret desire to purchase a wood lathe for woodturning to shape bowls and other items. He is a self-taught artist and uses resources such as YouTube to learn about new mediums. "Find somebody who does what you're interested in, and see if you can be a fly on the wall. Just sit and watch, and then

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When his grandchildren visit, he often brings out the crayons, colored pencils and finger paints. “I give them a little basic information, but I try not to teach them because they are still at a point where they’re learning and discovering everything themselves. They don’t need somebody else with a set approach to things interfering with their own exploration.”

Another local organization, the Weatherford Art Association, provides a safe space for local art hobbyists or professional artists to share their creations. Mike is a current member and past president of the WAA. “They deserve a lot of credit and acknowledgement.” The WAA previously officed out of a building in Downtown Weatherford, where members’ creative pieces were showcased in a studio. No longer housed in that space, the WAA is searching for a permanent location to be a more consistent figure in the community. They hope to find a new space by 2026, which is when the WAA will celebrate its 60th anniversary.

lucky artists are selected and recognized for their creations. Member artwork is currently displayed at Doss Heritage and Culture Center, First National Bank and Fort Worth Community Credit Union. "Those folks are good enough to provide a spot for us to hang and display our work."

Mike's artwork has received accolades in WAA Artist of the Month competitions, as well as at the Parker County Peach Festival. With a little more time on his hands these days, Mike expects to ramp up his painting, drawing, pottery and woodworking endeavors.

"I enjoy the mental place you go to when you get inside your head doing the artwork," Mike shared. "Whether it's sculpting, pottery, painting, drawing or whatever, you transport your mind into that realm, and it's interesting to observe yourself doing that." **NOW**

Editor's Note: For more information about how to get involved in art within the local community, visit weatherfordart.com.

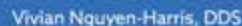
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A romantic couple in winter gear smiling and hugging in the snow. The woman in the foreground has her eyes closed and a joyful expression, while the man behind her looks at the camera with a smile. They are both wearing knit hats and scarves. The background is a soft, out-of-focus snowy landscape with falling snowflakes.

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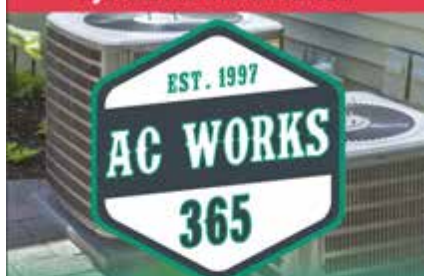
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Kindle Tuin and her sons, Vance and Lincoln, clean up litter along a local roadway for the Aledo chapter of Young Men’s Service League.

Zoomed In:
Steve Martin

By Amber D. Browne

Steve Martin (pictured right) has served as the branch manager at Tarrant Area Food Bank West since it opened in Weatherford about two years ago. The facility provides groceries to qualifying residents in seven area counties.

Qualifying residents can shop the Community Market for fresh produce from the on-site garden, as well as frozen proteins and nonperishable goods once stocked in the facility’s distribution warehouse. TAFB West partners with other local agencies, such as Center of Hope and Manna, to distribute products to residents in need.

Steve lives in Weatherford and is happy to be part of the program. “I like it out here,” he said. “We’re making a difference in the community, and that’s what we want to do. We’re helping people.”



Weatherford High School junior Landrie Polk scores her 1,000th point as part of Lady Roos Hoops.



Brock High School athletic trainers wrap up the football season.



Weatherford College voice students compete at the National Association of Teachers of Singing Texas and Oklahoma regional competition.



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— By Amber D. Browne

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Sunday: 10:30 a.m.-8:30 p.m.



At Oaxaca (WO-HA-KA) Mexican Cuisine in Weatherford, the culture of Mexico comes alive during the dining experience. The menu offers a variety of colorful dishes from southern Mexico and traditional Tex-Mex plates. “We are teaching our customers that it’s not just rice, beans, white queso, yellow queso. This is Oaxaca. We have colorful, different, more authentic Mexican food — what my mom or grandma was cooking for me every day. You can have that experience here,” shared Alex Rodriguez, manager.

The menu from Chef and Kitchen Manager Juan Arriaga features from-scratch dishes, starting with freshly made chips and salsa. Appetizers of nachos, chicharrones or seabass ceviche served with blue corn tortilla chips add to the dining experience as guests contemplate the menu. A fan favorite is the Oaxaca enchiladas with shrimp and tilapia wrapped in blue corn tortillas, smothered in roasted bell pepper sauce, topped with cheese and served with sides of rice and black beans. Other seafood specialties, plus barbacoa or carmitas dishes, are options. Traditional Tex-Mex plates of tacos, burritos, flautas and quesadillas are also on the menu. “We have the best fajitas in town,” Alex said.

The bar offers a variety of Mexican, domestic and local brews on tap, wine and cocktails that incorporate fresh, quality ingredients. Seven options are available for Oaxaca's infused margaritas. The most popular choice is the pineapple jalapeño-infused margarita. Oaxaca grills both the pineapple and jalapeño to create a smoky flavor, and then adds them to tequila to sit for 21 days. The tequila is drained and used to create the infused margarita. "People say we have the best margaritas. We have strong drinks. It's enjoyable quality," said Gerardo Rodriguez, the bar manager.

Oaxaca's happy hour runs from 4:00-7:00 p.m., Monday-Friday. Whether dining at the bar or cozing up near the chimney on the outdoor patio, guests can enjoy complimentary snacks, such as bean and cheese nachos and queso. Oaxaca coupons are offered in *WeatherfordNOW*, and guests can take advantage of daily specials, such as half-price meals for children on Mondays, Taco Tuesday discounts and \$5 off enchilada plates every Wednesday. Live music entertains on Thursdays, and brunch specials can be enjoyed on Saturdays and Sundays.

Oaxaca hosts special events throughout the year, including an upcoming Valentine's Day dinner. Guests can choose packages of three- to five-course meals for a romantic dinner. Oaxaca's largest celebration of the year falls on Cinco de Mayo (May 5). The all-day event features dancing horses, musical entertainment and drink specials. "We prepare the whole year for the big celebration," Alex said. Private table reservations to include food and drink options will be available for an outdoor VIP section. Since opening in September 2015, Oaxaca has also hosted an anniversary celebration each fall.

The restaurant includes a VIP room for guests to host private parties of up to 25 people, and the large dining area can hold up to 60. Full-service catering is also an option. "We try to give the customers an experience with an ambiance that feels like being at home with family," Gerardo said.

Oaxaca is committed to providing excellent service, food and beverages, and it is dedicated to its employees and the community. "For you to have a beautiful plate or a great drink, it's because of the employees," said Luis Lugo, the general manager. "You'll experience an explosion of flavors in an enjoyable ambiance. You don't have to wait for an anniversary or a celebration. Any day can be a great dining experience." **NOW**



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CookingNOW *In the Kitchen With* JULIE PARKER

— By Amber D. Browne



When she is not volunteering for nonprofits and church groups, photographing nature or competitively flying model airplanes across the United States, Julie Parker might be in her garden picking fresh herbs and vegetables to incorporate into some of her favorite dishes. During her childhood in Roswell, New Mexico, Julie learned basic cooking and baking techniques from her grandmother. Instilled with confidence and influenced by the availability of chiles and other spices, Julie began developing her own recipes.

She has continued that hobby since moving to Weatherford in 2015, developing recipes for canned goods and other dishes to share with friends and neighbors. “I love cooking and baking for people because good food makes people happy, and I find that very rewarding and inspiring.” **NOW**

Julie's Crab Dip

1 lb. crab meat, drained and chopped
8 oz. cream cheese
4 oz. sour cream
4 oz. mayonnaise
Fresh garlic, minced, to taste
Fresh dill, finely chopped, to taste
Fresh chives, finely chopped, to taste

Salt, to taste

Fresh parsley, finely chopped, to taste
Black olives, finely chopped, to taste
Pimentos, chopped, to taste

1. In a large bowl, mix together the crab meat and the next 3 ingredients. Add the remaining ingredients, a little at a time, until you are happy with the flavor.

2. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours; serve with water crackers.

Chunky Spaghetti Sauce

1 Tbsp. olive oil
1 medium onion, chopped
1 green bell pepper, chopped
2 16-oz. cans diced tomatoes
1 6-oz. can tomato paste
1 15-oz. can tomato sauce
1 4-oz. can cremini mushrooms, chopped, sliced or whole
1 Tbsp. minced garlic
2 tsp. sugar
2 tsp. dried parsley
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. dried oregano
1/2 tsp. dried basil
1/2 tsp. ground black pepper
Cooked sausage, meatballs or chicken, to taste (optional)

1. Add the olive oil, onions and bell peppers to a skillet; sauté about 5 minutes.
2. Add the mixture and the remaining

ingredients, except the meat, to a large saucepan. Bring to a boil; cover and simmer at least 30 minutes.

3. Add cooked sausage, meatballs or chicken, if using, to the simmering sauce. Serve over whole wheat spaghetti, zucchini noodles or your favorite pasta.

Cranberry White Chocolate Snickerdoodles

- 2 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp. cream of tartar
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 4 oz. cream cheese, softened
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 cup dried cranberries
- 1 cup white chocolate chips

Cinnamon Sugar:
1/3 cup sugar
2 Tbsp. cinnamon

1. Preheat the oven to 350 F In a large bowl, mix together the flour and the next 3 ingredients; set aside.
2. With a mixer, cream together the butter, cream cheese and 1 1/2 cups sugar. Add the eggs and vanilla; blend well. Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients; mix well. Stir in the cranberries and white chocolate chips.
3. For cinnamon sugar: In a small bowl, combine sugar and cinnamon.
4. Use a small cookie scoop or teaspoon to scoop dough. Roll into a ball, and then roll in the cinnamon sugar. Place 2 inches apart on an ungreased cookie sheet. Bake at 350 F for 8-10 minutes. Let sit on the cookie sheet for several minutes before moving them to a wire rack to cool. Store in an airtight container.

To search for more great recipes from any of the 9 NOW Magazines publications, visit www.nowmagazines.com.

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2/7-3/6

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2/16

Parker County Health Foundation Boots & Bling Charity Gala:

Attend to raise funds benefiting Parker County organizations. 6:30-10:30 p.m., River Ranch Stockyards, 500 NE 23rd St., Fort Worth. parkercountyhealthfoundation.org.

2/17

Texas A&M Singing Cadets:

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Cadets. Cost \$15. 7:00 p.m., Aledo United Methodist Church, 100 Pecan Dr., Aledo. parkercomoms.aggienetwork.com/2024-singing-cadets.

2/27

Rotary Pancake Supper:

Funds raised go toward scholarships for Parker County high school seniors. Tickets: \$5/advance; \$8/door. 5:00-7:30 p.m., Weatherford High School Cafeteria, 2121 Bethel Rd. (817) 771-9838 or weatherfordrotary.org.

2/29 and 3/1

Cooking Well With Friends-Cooking With Herbs and Spices:

Learn how to use different herbs and spices in healthy meals. Cost: \$15. 6:00 p.m., Parker County Extension Office, 604 N. Main St., Ste. 200. Register at (817) 598-6168.

3/1

Galbreath Pickard 75th Anniversary Celebration: Come-and-go event. 4:00-6:00 p.m., Galbreath Pickard Funeral Chapel, 913 N. Elm St. galbreathpickard.com.

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Weatherford First Monday Trade Days:

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Mondays

Aledo Farmers Market:

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Fourth Mondays

Weatherford Art Association Meeting:

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Tuesdays and Thursdays

Storytime at the Library:

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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.

LEGO Club:

Ages 8-12 can enjoy related activities. 4:00-5:00 p.m., Weatherford Public Library, 1014 Charles St. weatherfordtx.gov/142/Library.

Parker County Camera Club Meeting:

All photography levels are invited. 6:00 p.m., Barlow Hall, 125 S. Waco St. theparkercountycameraclub@gmail.com.

Third Thursdays

Quilter's Guild of Parker County:

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

Fridays

American Legion Post 163 Dinner:

Proceeds support local veterans. Post opens: 5:00 p.m.; dinner: 6:00 p.m., 200 Cartwright Park Rd. alpost163@gmail.com.

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