MidlothianNOW

FEBRUARY 2025

Spartan Perspective

Caleb Schaefer tackles worldwide races

FO ONE MOR

In the Kitchen With Brad and Heather McEntee

Be My DIY
A child's handmade card

A child's handmade card is the best valentine

Also inside:

Scavenger Hunt

Sudoku

Featured Business: Judy McGraw, Broker Associate, RE/MAX Frontier

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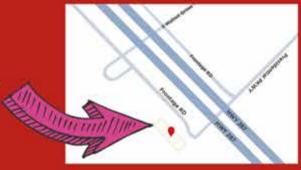






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ON THE COVER



Spartan events push Caleb Schaefer to new heights.

Photo by Kobbi R. Blair.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Warm wishes ...

It's been four years since Texas experienced a winter power crisis back in February 2021. Freezing rain and sleet fell across the state February 11, causing a Winter Weather advisory to be issued for northwest Texas. The longest freezing streak in the state's history was set over the next several days, and the Arctic cold front headed to Southeast Texas just in time for Valentine's Day. Hard Freeze, Winter Storm and Wind Chill warnings were issued for the entire state as precipitation throughout February 15 led to the coldest night of what would eventually be dubbed, the Great Freeze.

According to the National Centers for Environmental Information, the Great Freeze lasted February 11-20, "eight days, 23 hours and 23 minutes, with the last Hard Freeze Warning expiring on Saturday, February 20 at 9 a.m." The South saw many power outages, but Texas was hit hardest with some 10 million people suffering a loss of electricity during the outage's peak — including many Midlothian residents. "... the Great Texas Freeze caused a billion dollars' worth of damages, state-wide blackouts, hundreds of fatalities and enacted a massive emotional and financial toll on Texas residents," NCEI noted.

Electric Reliability Council of Texas reports the Texas power grid has since become better prepared for extreme cold. Fortunately, the Farmer's Almanac doesn't predict the state will put that to the test this month, suggesting "a warmish winter, with above average temperatures." Back in 2021, Midlothian residents responded as best they could to their neighbors' needs as they tend to do in times of crisis. It's good to think things might not get that cold, but it's a warm thought that locals will be there to help, if they do.

Heartwarming!





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Sat., Feb. 15 - Mayor's Winter Walk Mockingbird Nature Park, 10 a.m. (Feb. 22*)

Sat., March 29 - Play Day! Community Park, 6-10 p.m.

Sat., April 12 - Community Egg Hunt Community Park Baseball Complex, 10 a.m. (Apr. 18*)

Tues., April 22 - Earth Day Celebration Community Park, 4-7 p.m.

Sat., May 10 - Summer Beats Concert Location to be determined, 7:30-9:30 p.m.

Sat., May 31 - Kids Fishing Derby Community Park, 8 a.m.-2 p.m. (Jun. 7*)

Sat., June 7 - Movies in the Park Community Park, 8 p.m. (Jun. 21*)

Sat., June 14 - Summer Beats Concert Community Park, 7:30-9:30 p.m.

Sat., June 28 - Independence Day Parade Downtown Midlothian, 10 a.m.

Thurs., July 3 - Independence Day Fireworks, MISD Stadium, 9:15 p.m. (Jul. 5*)

Sat., July 12 - Movies in the Park Community Park, 8 p.m. (Jul. 19*)

*Rainout dates

Fri., July 18 - Parktopia Community Park, 6-9 p.m. (Jul. 25*)

Sat., July 26 - Summer Beats Concert Community Park, 7:30-9:30 p.m.

Sat., Sept. 6 - Autumn Beats Concert Community Park, 7:30-9:30 p.m.

Sat., Oct. 4 - Autumn Beats Concert Community Park, 7:30-9:30 p.m.

Fri., Oct. 31 - Downtown Trick or Treat Downtown Midlothian, 4-6 p.m.

Sat., Nov. 1 - Texas Arbor Day Celebration Community Park, 5-7 p.m.

Sat., Nov. 1 - Autumn Beats Concert Community Park, 7:30-9:30 p.m.

Tues., Nov. 11 - Veterans Tribute Dinner Conference Center, 6:30-9 p.m.

Mon., Dec. 1 - Tree Lighting Ceremony Heritage Park, 6 p.m. (Dec. 2*)

Sat., Dec. 6 - Christmas Celebration & Parade, Downtown, 1-5 p.m./6 p.m.

Fri., Dec. 12 - Merry Movie Night Community Park, 6:30 p.m.

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SPARTAN PERSPECTIVE

— By Angel Morris

Henry David Thoreau said, "It's not what you look at that matters. It's what you see." For Midlothian's Caleb Schaefer, perspective has made all the difference.

Caleb is a participant in Spartan Race, a series of obstacle courses varying in degree and difficulty that take place all over the world. "There are different levels of skill and intensity, involving trail running combined with obstacles," Caleb described. "Two of my older brothers had started running Spartan races, and I wanted to train for one myself with the hopes of competing and beating their finish times. After finishing my first race, I knew it was something I would continue to be involved in."

In March 2021, Caleb participated in his first race at age 17. "It was a Spring 5K in San Antonio. Since that time, I've completed 18 races including six trifectas, and in three of these races, I was recognized as a top finisher for my age group," Caleb recalled.

Two years later, Caleb was one of only two 19-year-olds competing in his age group in the Ultra World Championship: 38 miles and 60 obstacles in Morzine, France. "Around 1,100 runners signed up, and around 400 did not complete the extremely challenging race," Caleb noted. "It's a brutal course with difficult and steep mountainous terrain with an elevation gain of 10,170 feet."

CHOOSING WHERE YOU
STAND GIVES YOU
PERSPECTIVE, AND
PERSPECTIVE DETERMINES
YOUR ACTIONS.







When preparing for these events, Caleb considers altitude, terrain type and duration. "For the World Championship, I prepared by performing high altitude training via oxygen restraint devices to build a tolerance to the difficulties that came along with decreased oxygen intake," Caleb described. "I also increased my running distance and difficulty training, weight-resistant cardio and long oxygen restraining workouts."

Spartan Race Founder Joe De Sena said the purpose of these events is to "help people live without limits." According to his website, these events can allow participants to "develop the physical and mental strength to take on all of life's challenges with an unbreakable spirit," as they "run, crawl, jump and swim" through the grueling physical and mental tests of each race.

For Caleb, the races have lived up to that mission. "Something I've learned is that every moment along the race path is temporary and will pass," he reflected. "This reminds me of the Bible verses, Romans 5:3-5, which say, '... Rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."

Caleb's family — including mom, Jenny, and dad, Brad — raised him on a foundation of faith. He was homeschooled from kindergarten through 12th grade, taking dual credit classes at Navarro College where he





is currently enrolled in the Emergency Medical Services program with the goal of becoming a paramedic.

His Spartan Race involvement piqued Caleb's interest in fitness, leading him to pursue certification as a health coach and personal trainer as well as a certification in nutrition. "I have a desire to help others achieve success in their fitness journey and to motivate them to overcome obstacles not only in fitness but in their daily lives," he shared.

Caleb has been supported on his fitness journey by Main Street Gym, where he works out, and sponsored for the Spartan Ultra World Championship by Jerrod Escalante and his company Pinnacle Roofing DFW, LLC. "I'm really thankful for the community support," Caleb noted. "And athletes such as Robert Killian, Nick Bare and Nathan French continue to inspire me to seek out what I can personally accomplish through fitness. Of course, God inspires me to use my talents for His glory."

Upon Brad's completion of his commitment to the Air Force, he moved his family to Midlothian where Caleb was born. Attending the local Fourth of July parade each year with the family is a favorite memory for Caleb.

Caleb anticipates making more memories through Spartan Races. "I'll definitely continue racing, and I'd love to compete in another World Championship this year," he admitted.

While the fitness is important, the life lessons are perhaps Caleb's favorite part of Spartan participation. "I've come to understand that perspective molds everything — how you personally view things," Caleb said. "You can't always choose the situations or conditions you are in, but you always have a choice on where you stand.

"Choosing where you stand gives you perspective, and perspective determines your actions," Caleb continued. "Ultimately, I've learned that standing alongside Jesus Christ is the only way to see from a perspective of love, gratefulness and peace. And that's what determines my actions." NOW

















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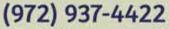
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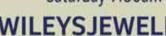
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Your first step, however, is to round up construction paper, markers, crayons and any other craft supplies that may come in handy.

— By Angel Morris



Handmade Valentine cards for a classroom giveaway not only save money, but they are a great way to tap into your child's creativity and occupy them for an afternoon. If getting started is a challenge, however, it can help to offer a few prompts for kids to copy or build upon.

Your first step, however, is to round up construction paper, markers, crayons and any other craft supplies that may come in handy. If your child wants to put their cards in an envelope, keep the size of the envelopes you have on hand in mind when cutting construction paper for cards. The less your child has to step away to find necessary supplies, the smoother the card crafting will go!

If kids have a hard time getting started on their own, it can help to create a few sample cards for them to follow. You might ask them to think of their favorite movie character, a game they enjoy playing or even popular slang among their classmates. These are great jumping off points for messages to include on valentines. If all else fails, here are a few simple themes to consider:

Tic-Tac-To My Heart. After cutting paper to the size that will fit your envelopes when folded in half, have children write the words "You Won ..." atop the front of the card. In the remaining space of the card, draw a tic-tac-toe board (also known by kids today as a hashtag symbol). Cut out three red hearts and glue those in boxes diagonally down the board. Fill in some of the remaining squares with X marks. On the bottom of the card front, the words "My Heart" complete the message. Children can write "Happy Valentine's Day!" inside, or just sign their name.

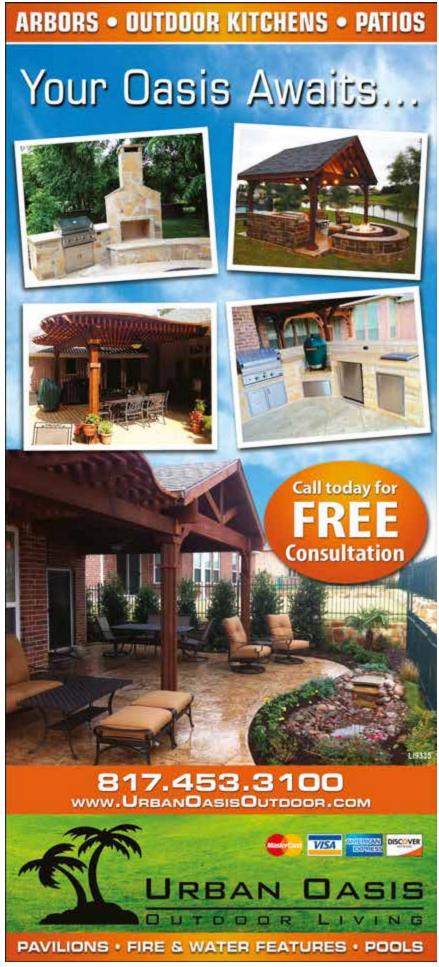
Puzzle Perfect. Have children draw two connected puzzle pieces. Draw one half



of a heart within one puzzle piece, completing the rest of the heart on the other piece, so that one full heart is seen across the two pieces. Draw the pieces large enough so that they will cover a good portion of the front of the card when cut in two. Color the heart, then thickly outline the puzzle pieces in black. Cut apart the two puzzle pieces, gluing one piece in the center of the card front, and the other on the inside of the card. Children can write a variety of messages related to puzzles on the card, such as (outside) "Our Friendship," (inside) "Is a Perfect Fit!" Or (outside) "Like a Puzzle Piece." (inside) "You Complete Our Class!"

Lucky in Love. Help children cut out four small hearts from green construction paper, then glue them atop the card front in the shape of a four-leaf clover, drawing a stem to the ground. Write something like, "I'm SO Lucky ..." atop the card. Inside, cut out a single red heart, also drawing a stem from it to the ground. The inside message can be any variation of why your child feels lucky: "You're My Friend," "You're My Classmate" or, even, "You're My Valentine."

Remember, you can always go with a smiley face heart on the front and "Happy Valentine's Day!" inside. Simple is heartfelt, too! NOW

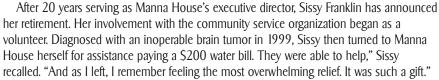


Around Town



Zoomed In: Sissy Franklin

By Angel Morris



Sissy was hired as executive director in 2004, when she began building the struggling organization from one that fed and clothed a few each month to now serving more than 5,000 individuals monthly. A farewell reception is from 4:30-6:30 p.m. February 20 at City Hall. "The Midlothian community is one of the most generous, compassionate and supportive places I've ever known," Sissy credited. "Serving Manna has been my greatest joy and honor."



Kylar and Knoxx enjoy a sunset hike at Mockingbird Nature Park.



Bode Davis, DaShawn Cleaver and Maddox Garcia participate in flag football at Midlothian Community Park.



Midlothian Elite Girls U9 recreational soccer team earns first place in the GLASA Primer Cup in Lewisville.



Dwaine and Mary Maxwell pose at the winter display of Founders Row.



Baylee Black enjoys a visit to the new Midlothian library.



Aubrey and Catherine Wolf experience nature at Lake Grove for the first time.





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BusinessNOW

Judy McGraw, Broker Associate, RE/MAX Frontier

- By Angel Morris

Judy McGraw, Broker Associate, RE/MAX Frontier 803 W. Main St. Midlothian, TX 76065 (214) 536-2790 Judy.McGraw@RemaxFrontierTX.com

Whether buying your first home or your last home, longtime local Realtor Judy McGraw knows how to make the experience a pleasant one. Currently a Realtor with RE/MAX Frontier, Judy's experience spans more than two decades. "I've lived in Ellis County for the past 40-plus years and have been selling real estate for two decades of that time," she stated.

Judy joined RE/MAX Frontier just under a year ago. After 21 years with another company, she chose to move to a locally owned franchise. Having roots in Midlothian is very important to her, after all, and RE/MAX Frontier is connected to the community.

"Most of my business is built through referrals from past clients," Judy said, noting how important it is to her to make clients feel special. "I always felt like I enjoyed this business because I go out and make a friend first, and then work to help them with their real estate needs. Some of my best friends I met through working with them while buying or selling property."

When meeting a client for the first time, Judy advises them of all the opportunities available, including financing options. "With a buyer, the most important step is to get preapproved first. If you aren't, I will try to help you move successfully in that direction," she shared.

Knowing what one's interest rate and payment amount will be is important as buyers begin to search for a home,

Judy stressed. Being aware of other expenditures associated with buying a home is important, too. "I have connections with mortgage lenders, as well as other vendors such as home inspectors, roofers and more, who are at the ready to help my clients," she stated.

Promoting this kind of personal service has brought Judy much recognition. With her previous company, she achieved the President's Award for production and quality service. She has also been awarded Masters Team or Centurion production awards each prior year and has earned Quality Service Awards for the past 20 years. "Knowing that my clients appreciate my service means everything to me," Judy said.

"I ALWAYS FELT LIKE I ENJOYED THIS BUSINESS BECAUSE I GO OUT AND MAKE A FRIEND FIRST. AND THEN WORK TO HELP THEM WITH THEIR REAL ESTATE NEEDS. SOME OF MY BEST FRIENDS I MET THROUGH WORKING WITH THEM WHILE **BUYING OR SELLING PROPERTY."**

Judy is a board member and past chair of the Midlothian Chamber of Commerce, where she helps with various events, including the annual Wine & Arts Festival. She is also on the board of the Midlothian Downtown Business Association, which organizes the Heritage Day Festival and the Scarecrow Festival each year.

As another way to show her appreciation, Judy hosts an annual Pie Day for her clients, distributing pies on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving. "It is such a fun day. My clients ask all the time, 'When is pie day?'" she said.

Judy is also proud to offer scholarships to Midlothian ISD seniors each May before graduation, marking her fifth year of doing so this year. This further underscores how building relationships and supporting Midlothian is what Judy is all about.

"You want each individual person you work with to feel as important as the next. People want someone who is readily available to them," Judy emphasized. "That is the No. 1 way to make them feel important, and that is exactly how I'm ready to serve." NOW







CookingNOW

IN THE KITCHEN WITH BRAD AND HEATHER MCENTEE

By Angel Morris



Brad and Heather McEntee spend quality time together cooking. "We love to put on some Edith Piaf or Ella Fitzgerald, which helps to melt away any stress. Cooking is like therapy for us," Heather shared.

After meeting in college, the couple married in 2003. "We laugh about our first 'homemade' meal when we were dating, which was a frozen chicken meal," Heather recalled. "We've come a long way since then by cooking meals that remind us of romantic trips together."

Originally from Buffalo, New York, the McEntees have lived in Midlothian three years. They have three children, three dogs and love to travel. "We like to cook food from different countries and cultures," Brad noted. "Our favorites are French, Italian, Greek, Indian and Middle Eastern." Now

Ricotta Pie

Pie:

1/2 cup sugar

2 Tbsp. cornstarch

1 15-oz. container ricotta

1/2 cup heavy cream

I tsp. grated orange zest

1 tsp. vanilla extract

1 9-inch premade graham cracker piecrust

Topping:

1 20-oz. can crushed pineapple (drained)

1/4 cup sugar

1 Tbsp. cornstarch

2 tsp. orange juice (I use clementines.)

1. For pie: Preheat the oven to 350 F. In a large bowl, combine all pie ingredients, except the crust; beat until smooth. Pour the mixture into the crust; bake for 50 minutes. The pie should be set around the edges, with a slightly soft center. Cool on a wire rack until room temperature.

2. For topping: While the pie is cooling, combine all the topping ingredients in a medium saucepan. Cook over medium heat, stirring until thickened, about 1 minute. Remove from heat; let cool.

3. Spread the topping over the pie. Cover; chill at least 1 hour before serving.

Shakshuka

A Middle Eastern/North African eggs and tomato dish.

2 Tbsp. olive oil

I red bell pepper, seeded and diced

I medium onion, diced

4 garlic cloves, finely chopped

2 tsp. paprika

1 tsp. cumin

1/4 tsp. chili powder

1 28-oz. can whole peeled tomatoes

Salt, to taste

Pepper, to taste

4-6 eggs

I small bunch fresh cilantro, chopped I small bunch fresh parsley, chopped

Feta cheese, optional, to taste

1. Heat the olive oil in a large sauté pan over medium heat. Add the chopped bell peppers and onions; cook about 5 minutes, until the onions become translucent.

2. Add the garlic and spices; cook for an additional minute.

3. Pour the tomatoes and juice into the pan; break down the tomatoes using a large spoon. Season with salt and pepper; bring the sauce to a simmer.

4. Use a large spoon to make small wells in the sauce; crack eggs into each well. Cook the eggs 5-8 minutes, or until done to your liking. Garnish with cilantro and parsley before serving. Sprinkle with feta cheese, if desired for added flavor. Serve with homemade flat bread.

Easy Flat Bread

1 1/4 cups all-purpose or bread flour I tsp. yeast (dry active or instant)

- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 cup warm water (110 F for active; 120 F for instant)
- 2 tsp. olive oil
- 1. Place the flour, yeast and salt into a large bowl. Add the water and oil; mix for 1 minute.
- **2.** Place the dough (it will be sticky) on a floured surface; cover with a towel. Let rest for 10 minutes.
- 3. Preheat a cast-iron skillet to medium-high heat. Divide the dough into four pieces; shape each piece into
- **4.** Roll each ball into a 6-inch circle. Cook in the ungreased hot skillet about 1 minute per side.

Chile Rubbed Rib Eyes With Cilantro Lime Butter

4 rib eye steaks, 1-inch thick

Steak Rub:

2 Tbsp. brown sugar

2 tsp. ancho chili powder

1 1/2 tsp. garlic powder

1 tsp. cumin

I tsp. chili powder

1 tsp. onion powder

1/2 tsp. ground coriander

1/2 tsp. ground cumin

 $1 \frac{1}{2}$ tsp. coarse salt

1 tsp. ground pepper

Compound Butter:

5 Tbsp. unsalted butter, softened

I shallot, minced

2 Tbsp. cilantro, chopped

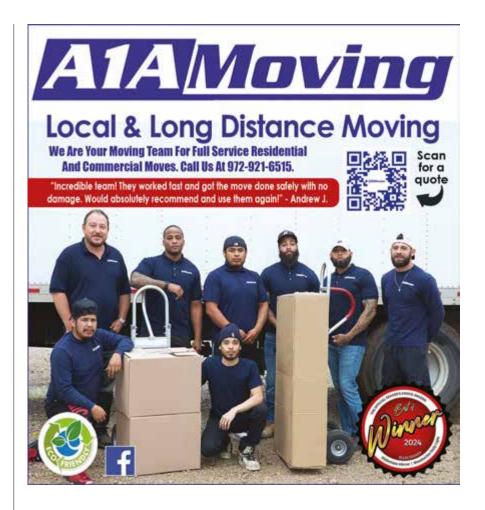
1 Tbsp. lime zest

1/2 tsp. coarse salt

1/4 tsp. ground chipotle pepper

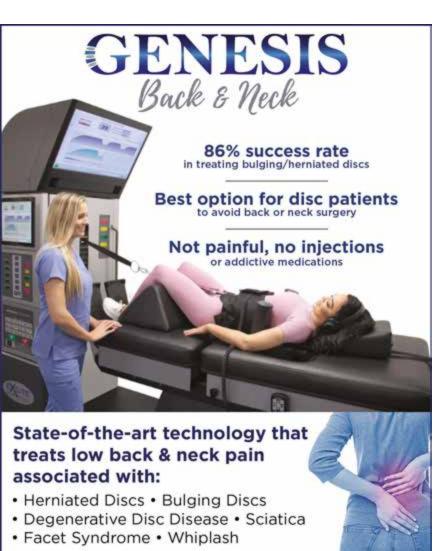
- **1.** Leave the steaks out, bringing them to room temperature (about 30 minutes).
- 2. For steak rub: In a small bowl, combine all of the ingredients. Rub the steaks evenly with the rub.
- 3. For compound butter: In a separate bowl, add all of the ingredients; mix to combine.
- **4.** Set the grill to high heat (450-500 F). Grill the steaks about 8-10 minutes for medium-rare, or cook to your desired level of doneness. Turn the steaks every 2-3 minutes to get grill marks; flip them halfway through the cooking time.
- 5. Remove the steaks from the grill; allow to rest for 10 minutes. Add the compound butter to the steaks to finish.

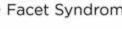














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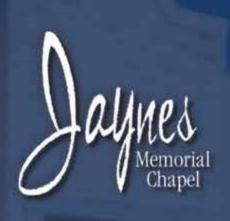


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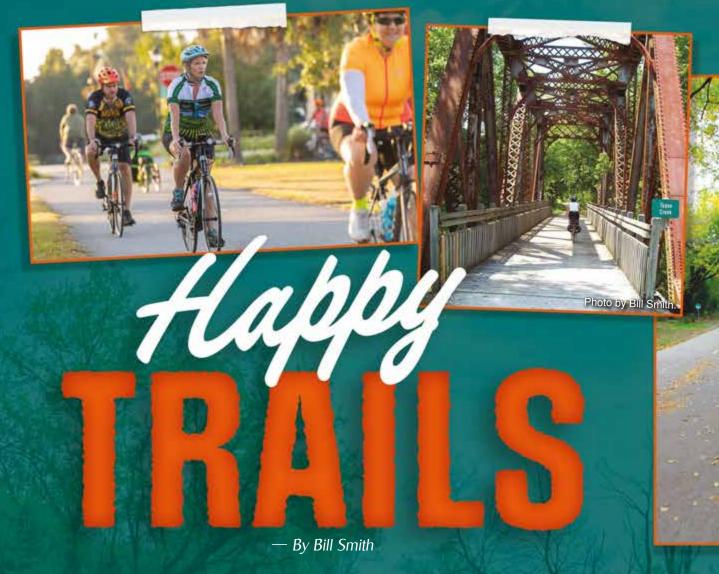
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Whether you hike, bike, jog, skate — or none of these and you just live in North Texas — there is a good chance you have heard of the Katy Trail, which runs through the Uptown and Oak Lawn areas of Dallas. What you may not know is that there is another Katy Trail that traverses much of the state of Missouri and a number of similar trails for public use all across the United States.

One of the things many of these trails have in common is they were all formerly railroad tracks. The Katy Trails are named for the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad, previously known as the MKT or "Katy." The trail in Dallas is 3 1/2 miles long and is nicely paved and maintained by Friends of the Katy Trail. It is also part of the city of Dallas Park System.

The trail in Missouri is much longer, and at 240 miles, it is the longest rails-to-trails project in the United States. While the Dallas trail supports skating, the Missouri trail, constructed of crushed gravel rather than concrete, serves as a great place to travel by horseback. The park runs from Clinton, Missouri, to Machens, Missouri. While the Dallas trail is often highly populated by area residents out for an hour or so of fun and exercise, the Missouri trail is often used by adventurers taking multiday trips. Much of the trail parallels the Missouri River, and there is ample space for travelers to tent camp, but some choose to spend their nights at the bed-and-breakfasts located in the towns that dot the trail. The Katy Trail in Missouri is also a state park. From the website referenced after this article, you can find connections to two other rails to trails in Missouri — the MKT Trail and the Rock Island Trail.

Rails to trails began as a movement by a group of walking and biking fans, railroad historians, conservationists and several other enthusiasts almost 40 years ago. A dedicated organization was formed after the groups began meeting in Washington, D.C., with a vision for preserving unused railroad beds for public use. On February 1, 1986, Rails to Trails Conservancy was formed.

There is probably some kind of trail that has been formed or supported by the group in every state today. In California, the Bizz Johnson National Recreation Trail goes from Westwood to Susanville. It follows the old Fernley and Lassen Railroad line, which closed in 1956. This trail crosses water 12 times on bridges and trestles and passes through two tunnels.

In Pennsylvania, the Allegheny National Forest trail is an



undeveloped trail that offers a variety of hiking and skiing options with various levels of difficulty. The trail begins on a railroad grade along a creek, connects with the Mill Creek Trail and leads to the Twin Lakes Trail.

The website for Rails to Trails Conservancy states, "Since our founding, RTC has worked from coast to coast, supporting the development of thousands of miles of rail-trails and multiuse trails for millions of people to explore and enjoy."

If you have an interest in these trails anywhere across the country, you might just find your next adventure at traillink. com. The site is very user-friendly, and an app that can be downloaded to your cell phone is also available. Now

Sources:

- I. katytraildallas.org/history/.
- 2. katytrailmo.com/katy-trail-state-park/.
- 3. traillink.com/.



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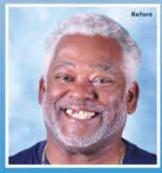


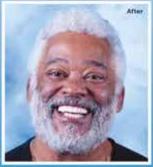




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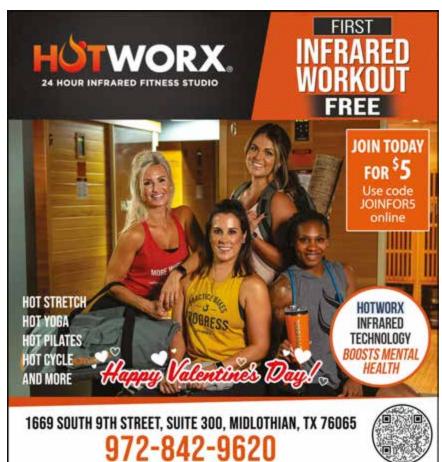
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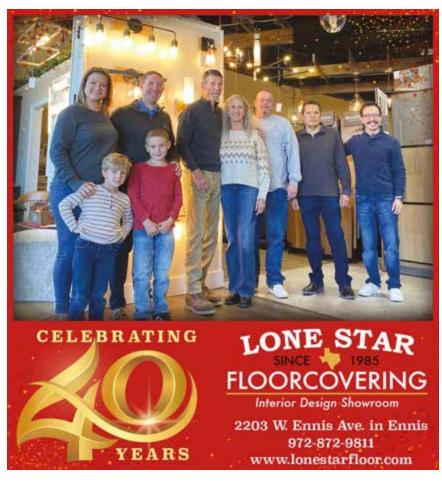
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2/8

Dancing With the Ellis County Stars:

Local "celebrities" dance for your entertainment and the benefit of Texas Baptist Home for Children. 6:00-9:00 p.m., Grand Ballroom, Waxahachie Civic Center, 2000 Civic Center Lane, Waxahachie. Purchase tickets and vote at https://tbhc.org.

Knight of Love:

Honoring Danny and Lyne Knight, the event includes dinner, music and auction. Benefits Ellis County Children's Advocacy Center. 6:30 p.m., Firefly Gardens, 5410 E. Hwy. 287. Learn more at https://tinyurl.com/22jzra2h.

2/15

Mayor's Winter Walk:

A 1-mile, guided nature trail excursion, led by the members of the Texas Master Naturalists, Indian Trail Chapter of Ellis and Navarro counties. Kids crafts and free prize drawings. Free and open to the public. Walk starts: 10:00 a.m., Mockingbird Park, 1361 Onward Rd. Rainout date is Feb. 22.

2/19

Heart Smart Conference: Speakers from Texas A&M

AgriLife Extension Service address keeping Ellis County residents' hearts healthy. 8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m., with discussions beginning at 9:00, 10:00 and 11:00 a.m., followed by a health fair at 1:00 p.m., Waxahachie Senior Center, 122 Park Hills Dr., Waxahachie.

2/21

2nd Annual Purse Fundraiser:

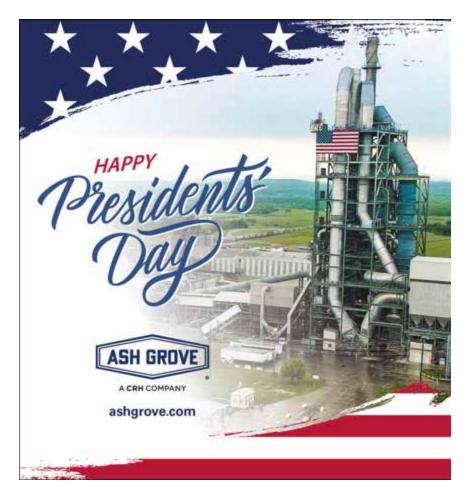
Help Mentors Care provide life-changing mentorship to struggling high schoolers. Gucci raffle, bingo and silent auction. 6:00-9:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center, 2000 Civic Center Ln., Waxahachie. Learn more at https://www.mentors. care/2025-purse-bingofundraiser.

2/21 and 2/28

Open Mic Night:

Open to singers and musicians of all ages. Each performer is allowed two-three songs, depending on attendance. 7:30-10:00 p.m., Union 28, 651 Highlander Ave. Email heatherunion28@yahoo.com to sign up.

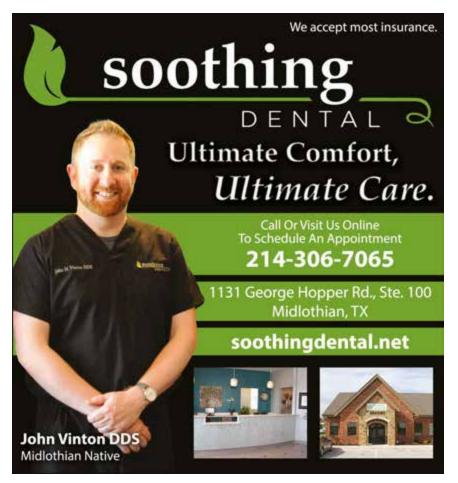
Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your current event details to angel.morris@nowmagazines.com.











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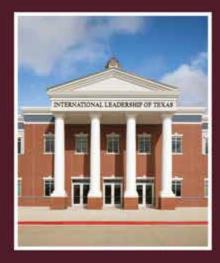


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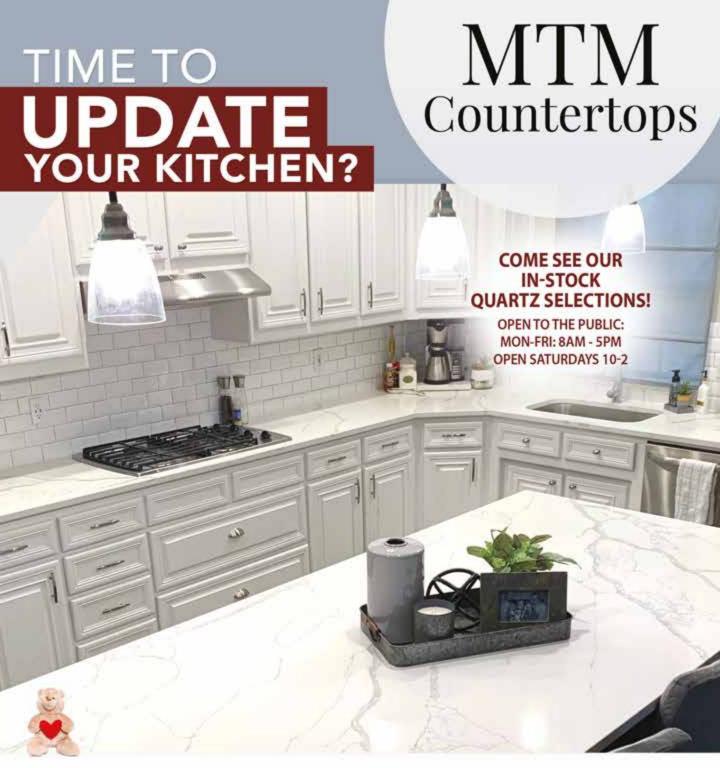
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