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never gave up on the dream

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ON THE COVER

Imaginations come alive in the outdoor learning center at Crockett ECC.

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EDITOR'S NOTE



Sandra

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Happy Spring!

For years, Friday nights after work were spent cleaning house and washing clothes. I had a weekly schedule that included everyone in the household, and I wasn't about to veer from it, nor were they. As I've gotten older, I've learned that the schedule can be changed, and even forgotten. Those choices are entirely up to me. Nowadays, I clean when I feel like it, and I wash clothes only when I have a full load. This lack of a schedule has been liberating, to say the least.

Fridays are now spent doing those things in life that bring me the most joy — working in the yard, curling up with a good book, spending quality time with the grands or just watching some mindless entertainment on TV. Since there is no longer a tried and true, cut and dry schedule, I really can do anything I put my mind to. Currently, we're working in the backyard to complete a project we started at the end of last year. One wheelbarrow at a time, we've been adding decorative rocks to a large area. Wanting something totally different has proven to be a great deal of work but, also, a lot of fun.

What projects are you working on?

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IMAGIN



Every young child needs a place where their imagination can run wild — a place where they can excel in math, art, science, literacy and sensory, dramatic and/or pretend play outside of the regular indoor classroom setting. Crockett Early Childhood Center now has just such a place, and Principal DeeDee Gryder couldn't be happier. "We received a pre-K grant to help make the programs on campus better for our students," DeeDee explained, "and better for us was to add an outdoor learning environment."

DeeDee and her staff of pre-K and kindergarten teachers had a desire for outdoor learning that would support children's development emotionally, socially, physically and intellectually, just like an indoor classroom, but with some added benefits. After a great deal of

brainstorming, the blank slate that was once located at the back of the school has now become a hub of activity, where young minds are challenged by all that the outdoor learning environment has to offer.

Early on, some doors that were opened quickly shut, but that did nothing but spur DeeDee on. She and her staff had a vision, and they were persistent in seeing it come to fruition. The first, and largest expense to date, was preparing the ground. "Although we do want the children to learn how to make mud, we couldn't have a mud pit," DeeDee stated. Jared Brown, the owner of JB Lawn Services in Ennis, helped level and prepare the ground, while the district's maintenance department put a water system above ground to aid in keeping the grass alive, DeeDee noted.

After the ground preparations were complete, DeeDee began the long process of ordering, constructing and repurposing items that would bring the learning center to life. "We knew we wanted it to be a natural-looking environment, not like a traditional playground, and

ACTIONS

Run Wild

— By Sandra Strong

definitely not commercial,” she shared. “We wanted it to have an earthy feel.”

All summer before the school year began, they would arrive early and stay late. As labor began, they realized that many items took several stages of work before completion. Some items had to be sanded several times before receiving a fresh coat of paint, while all items used needed to be sealed on every side to keep them from weathering in the elements. The group of educators cut wood and wrote on wood, rocks and leaves. They did whatever was needed to make the outdoor classroom a success. “I learned how to use tools I never thought I would ever try. My hands have touched every part of this project,” DeeDee admitted. “I was determined, and I was not giving up on our dream. We all just kept pushing forward as a team to make it happen.”

Mike Sellers and other members of Tabernacle Baptist Church supported the vision by completing many of the larger projects. They built the teacher pavilion, the school bus, the weigh station and the oversized abacus, while also refurbishing several writing tables. “Crates outside the fenced

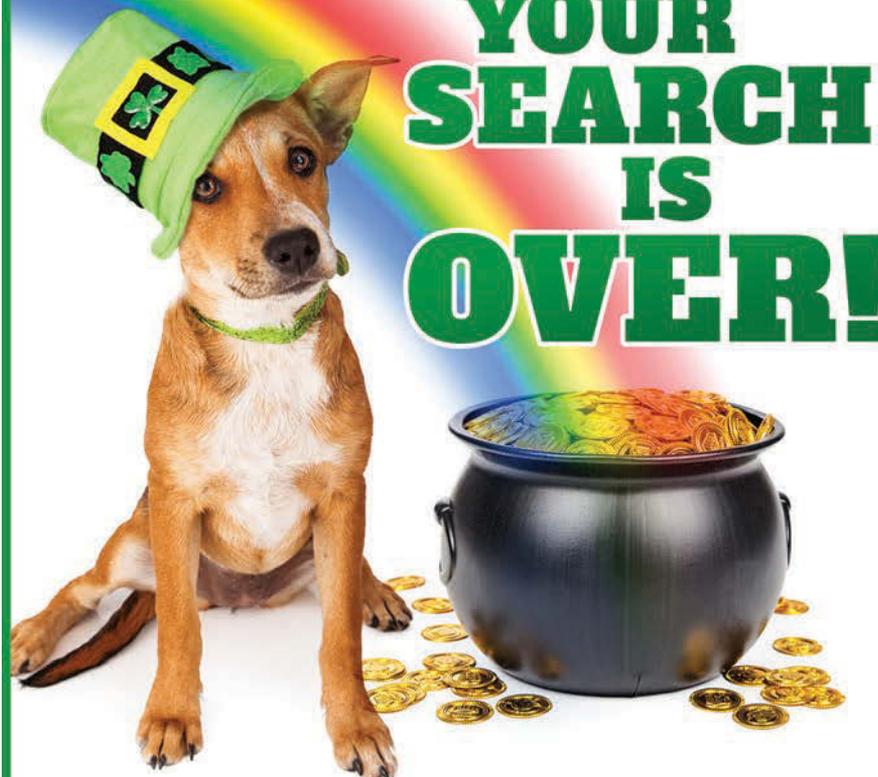




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area have allowed parents to get involved, too,” DeeDee said. “They donate items such as pinecones, rocks and acorns to the crates. We let them know what we need through the children.”

After months of planning and preparation, the outdoor classroom is now open for the business of learning. “A lot of elbow grease and polyurethane went into making this learning center the best it could be,” DeeDee said. “It’s already started supporting and encouraging creativity, and it’s proven to be a great way to incorporate the five senses.”

Every item included was carefully selected and planned with a specific purpose in mind based on the vision DeeDee and the teachers had from the onset. “All the manipulatives and games were in our heads,” DeeDee admitted. “Now, they are compiled in a book that’s kept in a central location, so the teachers can reference it when looking for an outdoor lesson. We will be adding to it all the time.”

Some of the learning manipulatives



include plexiglass paint boards, stepping stones with the alphabet and numbers, painting with water, drawing with shadows, sight word hopscotch, rock and wooden circle tic-tac-toe and fishing for letters using a magnet at the end of a fishing pole to help with hand/eye coordination and fine motor skills. The science area is designed for researching and exploring.

The teacher's pavilion allows one class to learn in a group setting, while another class can take advantage of the other learning centers. "The children spent the first two weeks in explore mode," DeeDee said. "Now, the learning is moving full speed ahead, and it's all worked out so much better than we expected."

The Outdoor Learning Center is in place for the benefit of the children as it gives them another method to learn. Sometimes, they will need to explore alone. Other times, they will explore with friends as they imagine and try new things.

"And they will get to make mud," DeeDee said with a grin. "We want them to experience mud because of the purpose it serves. Mud helps children relax. It has a calming, soothing effect. Believe it or not, mud is peaceful, and it also helps with fine motors skills."

The children are doing things differently than DeeDee and her staff thought they would. Teachers are still in control, but loosened reigns have allowed the children to excel. "This isn't recess," DeeDee stated. "It's sensory learning at its best." **NOW**

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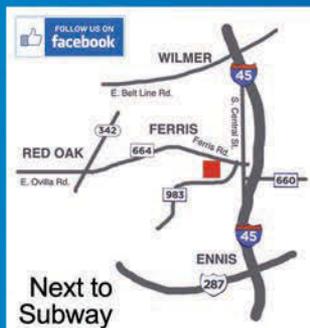
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Treasured Times

— By Debbie Durling

AT HOME WITH SHAWN & ALICIA GLENN



The first impression of Shawn and Alicia Glenn can be found as early as the front door. Words of encouragement written on a large, wooden plaque hang on one side of the front door, while an inviting rocking chair rests on the other side. The rocker whispers a notion of the relaxed and comforting atmosphere that exists inside the 2,500-square-foot, ranch-style home.

Shawn and Alicia have lived in this area all their lives. They met while cruising Ferris Avenue in Waxahachie and were married a year later. With many fond memories and the joy of being surrounded by family, they have chosen to raise their children and make many more memories in their hometown of Ennis.

A couple of years ago, they decided to buy an old family home in the Alma area. It was built by Shawn's great-aunt and great-uncle in the early 1960s. The front portion of the house had been in need of repairs for some time. The family of six moved into the back of the home until the front part was redone. This was an adventure since





this portion of the home was only 1,000 square feet. It gave a whole new meaning to “close family.” After spending nine months living together in one large room, everyone was happy to see the project completed.

After stripping the walls down to the studs, the couple decided to throw an impromptu party that included family and friends. To help dedicate the home, attendees wrote their favorite Scriptures on



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the stripped walls, helping Shawn and Alicia dedicate their home. “This is definitely a time we will always treasure,” Shawn recalled.

Opening up the kitchen, dining and living areas into one great room seemed the best option for their family. Shawn and Alicia did most of the work themselves, but outsourced the cabinets and Sheetrock. Tan walls with white trim and carefully placed canned lights have created the feel of a new home. Hand-scraped,

wooden floors bring ageless warmth to the rooms. Attention to detail is something that Shawn made sure was top priority. He spent many hours transforming spaces.

The kitchen is a crisp canvas of white cabinets and black granite countertops. A large island with a butcher-block counter and an overhang creates an eat-in kitchen area. Glass window-pane cabinet doors accent the farm sink area. This is Alicia’s favorite part of the house. “I

got to design it, and it is the hub of all we do in the home,” she said.

“The attic is my favorite part of the house,” Shawn shared. He takes great comfort in knowing that the attic space is well-insulated. Even though the home is larger than their previous one, it costs less to heat and cool because of the care he took to make it more efficient.

The entire family is partial to the property that spans 7 acres. Hosting events is easy on the patio and in the

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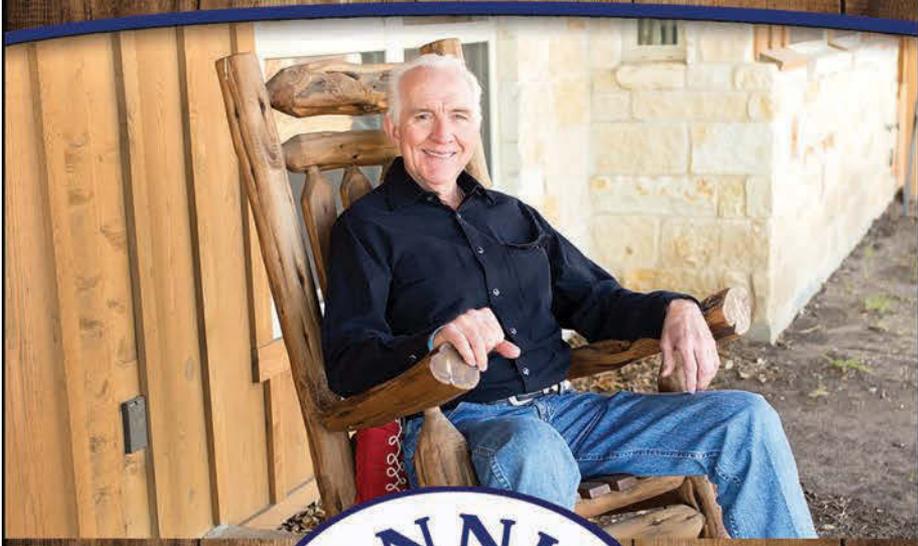
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backyard, which looks out over a pond. They host friends, family and teens around the fire pit quite often. The large yard is like having another “great room” where lots of activities can take place.



Shawn built the family dining table. It is long and narrow and seats 10 people. Rustic pine stained a dark hue is complemented by farm-style chairs in a lighter shade. It’s a perfect addition to the farmhouse theme of the home.

Alicia loves to use nostalgic pieces for decor. The black entry table was once a desk in her father’s room when he was a boy. Her grandfather’s tool box is the centerpiece for the dining table, and it still has his name on it. Much of the decor was either built by Shawn or was handed down through the family.

Relationships are highly valued by Shawn and Alicia. While they both work outside the home, they go to great lengths to keep their children, Austin, Ashley, Colby and Erin, busy in sports and other community/ church events. Alicia worked in human resources at Channel 8 News at one time, but when Tabernacle Baptist Church needed a preschool minister, she was prepared to return home and work in the community. Shawn also works locally in an investment advisory firm. Working close to home gives them both more time to be with family and friends.

“We like to think our family is characterized by the “Triple F’s” — faith, family and friends,” Shawn shared. Their new home would not

be what it is had it not been for friends and family. Refurbishing the home was a family affair. Both Shawn and Alicia's parents were huge contributors in the entire process. They all worked together in the demolition phase, painting, laying floors and clean up. They were slinging sledge hammers, up on ladders and making memories. They teased that it would not have been possible without their "Senior Citizen Work Crew" — Mike Glenn and James and Anne Crutcher.

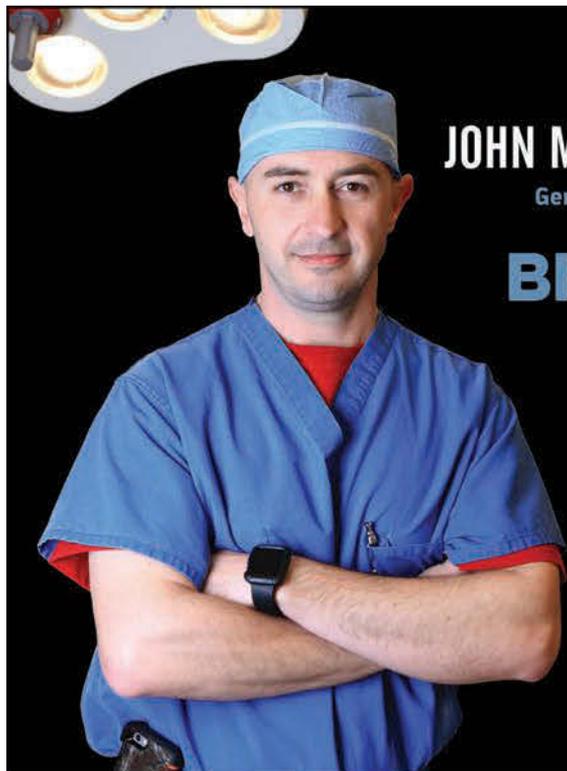
When it comes to their marriage, they both agree that they have a genuine friendship and enjoy being together. "We really love each other," Shawn said.

"We've had our ups and downs, gotten along, not gotten along, kids have made us crazy at times," Alicia laughed. "But our home is a blessing, and our friendship has always pulled us through.



"We actually look forward to retiring together and being able to travel and enjoy time with one another," Alicia said. Both Shawn and Alicia's parents taught them the value of friendship and forgiveness. These have been lessons that have molded their relationship and will continue to shape their future.

Whether spending time with friends and family, cheering on the Lions, coaching teams in the community or hosting events on their property, Shawn and Alicia stay busy creating a wonderful life. They love being close to their roots and cultivating relationships in the community they call home. **NOW**



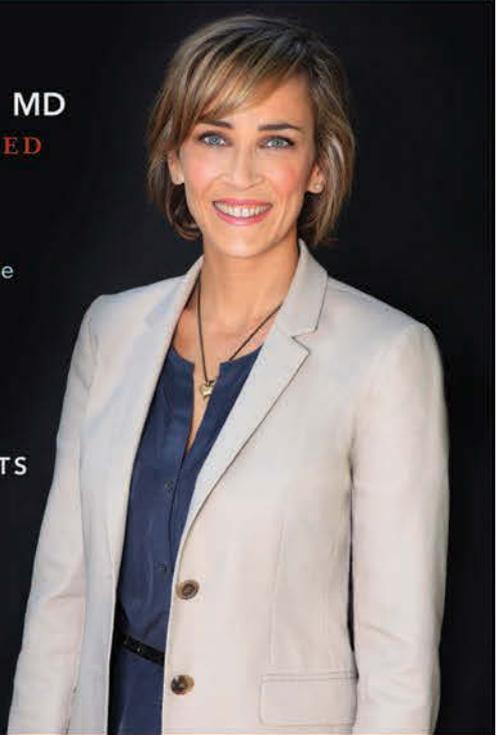
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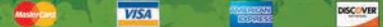


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The Lunch Bunch

— By Jill Martinez

There are kind souls all around us who volunteer to deliver hot meals to homebound people with Meals on Wheels of Johnson & Ellis Counties. “In 2017, we had 600 volunteers who served over 225,000 meals to almost 1,300 people,” said Lisa Deese, community development coordinator for MOWJEC.

They, in fact, deliver more than a meal. “We’ve been involved with Meals on Wheels of Johnson & Ellis Counties since 2003. It is so rewarding to be able to visit with so many sweet people. Providing a hot meal is important, but it’s the personal interaction that really means the most. Sometimes, we’re the only people they’ll see each day, so it’s nice to be able to give a hug and put a smile on their faces,” said Brian and Kim Holley of Ennis.

Nearly 80 percent of the individuals served by MOWJEC last year were senior citizens, and all were homebound for a short or long period of time. By providing meals and other support services, people can remain in their homes, saving

thousands of dollars in nursing home or hospital expenses. “MOWJEC can serve one individual a year of meals for roughly the same cost as a one-day stay in the hospital or a 10-day stay in a nursing home,” Lisa explained.

There are more than 80 routes where volunteer drivers deliver each weekday, serving 15 Ellis County and 12 Johnson County communities, including Lillian. All of this can be a challenge, but it is one that Lisa has taken on happily for nearly 10 years. “I love seniors and love to serve! I know there is a need in our community, and I have the privilege of sharing that need in all of our communities throughout Johnson and Ellis counties,” she said.

One of the beautiful things about this organization is that people of all ages come together to serve. Some mommy/toddler groups deliver, as do working adults and healthy, mobile seniors. Several organizations also volunteer, such as universities, car dealerships and athletics groups. “Being part of Meals on Wheels has been a blessing to me and my team. Each one of us who delivers views it as a privilege to serve,” said Steve Stafford, general manager of North Texas Jellystone Park.

Community leaders join this lunch bunch, too, from time to

time. Every year during the month of March, Meals on Wheels carries out a campaign called March for Meals. "This is our month-long celebration where we raise funds and awareness. We have businesses, churches and individuals who sponsor meals in their community or county," Lisa said.

One week during this month, called Community Champions Week, draws elected officials from both counties and local celebrities to help. "Dale Hansen joined us last year in Waxahachie!" Lisa said enthusiastically.

Delivering meals is not the only way folks can get involved with this endeavor. Many school-aged children contribute by making placemats or cards. Others donate holiday gifts or their time to wrap them. Recipients' faces light up with joy when they see that others have taken time to remember them. It's beautiful.

Many of those served by MOWJEC have pets that act as their steady companions. Through the AniMeals program, deliveries are made once a month, providing precious food for these furry friends, as well. "We have some middle and high school student groups that help to deliver these on a special Saturday route. It's a great way for them to earn their community service hours," Lisa added.

All of the services that MOWJEC provides are covered through donations and government funds. "Last year, 50 percent of our revenue came from local support. We are extremely blessed to serve in very supportive communities," Lisa said. A major fundraiser for the organization is the annual golf benefit held each September. People play individually or in teams, having fun while they support this vital pillar in our community.

Because the aging population continues to grow at a rapid pace, more volunteers and donations will be needed to keep the individuals MOWJEC serves in their home sweet homes. **NOW**

Editor's Note: For more information on the Meals on Wheels program, visit www.monjec.org.

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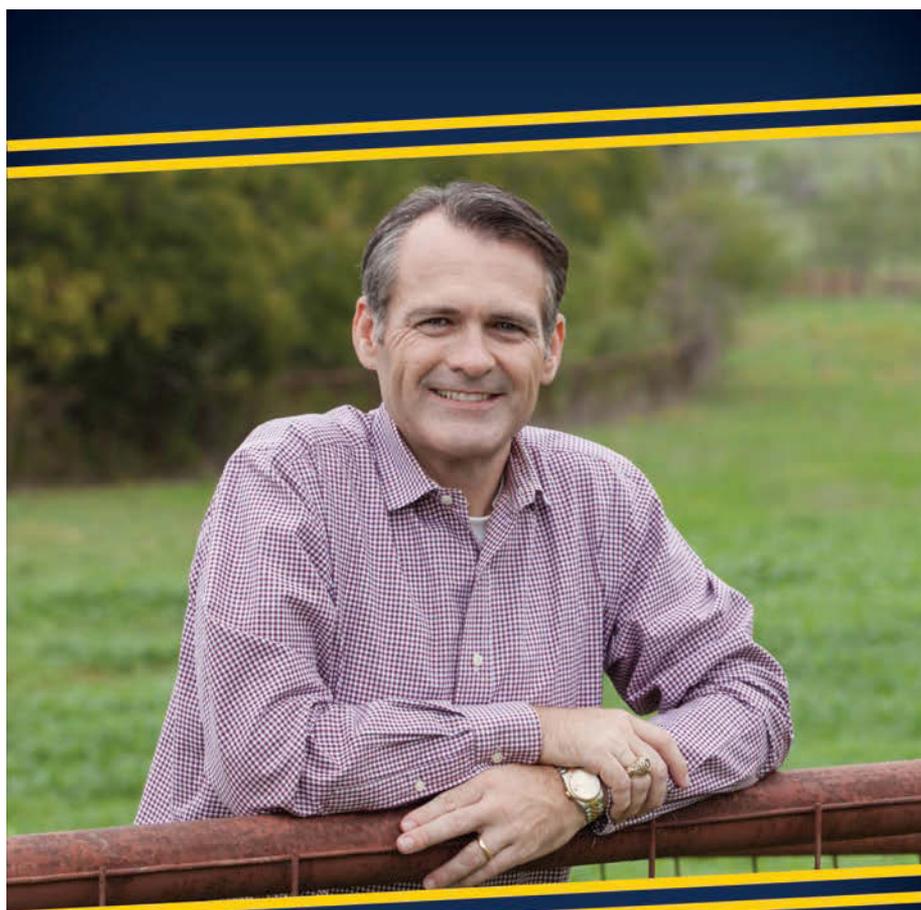
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CookingNOW

In the Kitchen With

JANIE HENDRIX

— By Amber D. Browne



Growing up in the small, North Central Texas town of Munday, Janie Hendrix learned to cook at a young age. “We didn’t have fast food. We cooked almost every meal from scratch,” Janie shared.

Over the years, Janie has learned tips and recipes from her mother, grandmother and mother-in-law. “It has been food that my family has used to bring everyone together. Food equals love,” Janie shared. “It is fulfilling to take random ingredients and make food that is delicious.”

Although Janie admits to having disasters in the kitchen, she has learned to try recipes her way. “If it fails, just dump it out or give it to the chickens,” she stated. “Life goes on, and you just don’t try that approach again!” **NOW**

Janie’s Salsa

- 1 gal. canned tomatoes
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 4-5 jalapeños, roasted
- 3-4 tsp. garlic powder
- 3 tsp. crushed red pepper
- 3 tsp. salt
- 1-2 tsp. kosher salt
- 3 tsp. coarse ground black pepper
- 3-4 tsp. cumin
- 3-4 Tbsp. cilantro, chopped
- 1/3 cup vinegar
- 1/4 cup olive oil

1. Blend tomatoes, onions and jalapeños. Add remaining ingredients and blend.
2. Serve immediately or bring to a boil and simmer for 15 minutes before serving.

Potato-Cheese-Bacon Soup

- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 3 Tbsp. bacon grease

- 3 cups chicken broth
- 5-6 medium potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 3 cups water
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 cup half-and-half
- 1/2 stick butter
- 1 cup smoked gouda or American cheese, shredded
- 6-7 strips thick bacon, fried and crumbled

1. In a soup pot, add onion to bacon grease; cook onions until almost clear.
2. Add chicken broth, potatoes, water, salt and pepper. Boil until potatoes are tender.
3. Add half-and-half and the next two ingredients. Top with bacon and serve.

Iron Skillet Roast

- Roast:
- 5-6 slices bacon, cut into 1-inch pieces
 - Arm or chuck roast
 - 4-5 Tbsp. flour

- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 3-4 cups brewed coffee

Gravy:

- 1 cup water
- 2 Tbsp. corn starch

1. For roast: In a large iron skillet, fry bacon until nearly cooked. Remove bacon from grease and set aside.
2. Coat roast with flour, salt and pepper. Brown sides of roast in bacon grease; add bacon, onion and coffee. Cover and simmer for 1 1/2 to 2 hours, until tender. Add water, if necessary.
3. For gravy: Remove roast from skillet. Mix water and corn starch with roast liquid.
4. If you want potatoes and carrots, add vegetables when roast is nearly done; cover and cook until vegetables are tender.

Mashed Potato Patties

- 3 cups leftover mashed potatoes
- 3 eggs
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. baking powder
- Pepper, to taste
- 1 cup flour
- 3 Tbsp. milk
- 2-3 Tbsp. vegetable oil

1. Mix leftover mashed potatoes and next six ingredients.

2. Heat oil in a frying pan. Drop large spoonfuls into oil; fry until brown on both sides.

Fresh Peach Iron Skillet Cobbler

Filling:

- 8-10 peaches, peeled and chopped
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 1/2 sticks butter
- 1 1/2 Tbsp. flour

Crust:

- 1 cup Crisco shortening
- 2 cups flour
- 1 tsp. salt
- Ice water

1. *For filling:* In a bowl, combine peaches and sugar; set aside.
2. *For crust:* Preheat oven to 380 F. Mix together Crisco, flour and salt in a pastry mixer or with a fork. Add ice water, 1 Tbsp. at a time, until you can easily form a ball. The ball of dough should not be wet. Do not overmix. The less you work the dough, the flakier it will be.
3. Roll 2/3 of dough onto a floured board; lay flattened dough in a skillet. Pour in the peaches. Chop the butter into pieces, and lay it on top of the peaches. Sprinkle flour onto peaches.
4. Roll out remaining dough and lay on top of peaches. Trim edges of crust; seal edges. You can pour melted butter on top layer of crust and sprinkle with sugar for a sweeter crust. Bake at 380 F for about 40 minutes, or until golden brown.

Southern Fried Okra, Squash and Potato Mix

- 2 fresh okra, cut in 1-inch pieces
- 2 yellow squash, cut in 1-inch pieces
- 2 medium potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 1 small yellow onion, chopped
- 2 cups yellow cornmeal
- 1/2 cup flour
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 cup vegetable oil

1. In a large bowl, combine first seven ingredients.
2. Heat oil in a large skillet. Cover the bottom of the skillet with vegetable mixture; cook until browned.

To view recipes from current and previous issues, visit www.nowmagazines.com.



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BusinessNOW Pet Lovers

— By Sandra Strong

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Samantha Brock’s love for animals is such that she’s opened her business — Pet Lovers — to help others with in-home pet services that include 30-minute visits, overnight stays and boarding. “We love your pets like we love our own,” Samantha expressed. “We work with all types of pets, from scales and feathers to fur.”

After working for others in this same field, Samantha decided to venture out on her own in January 2014. She immediately recruited her mom, Kim Brock, and her sister, Rachael Brock. This family trio takes their job of pet care very seriously as they travel from Richland Chambers to

Bedford and back again. “We go wherever the client needs us to go,” she said.

Samantha has added two members to the crew who help with one of their largest clients. This client is daily, two times per day, and it had become too much work for three individuals to handle. “We were getting a little winded from all the hours prior to finding Julie and Kaitlyn Skroh,” Samantha stated. “This mom and daughter duo have been the best addition to our pet-loving gang.”

Samantha may only spend five nights a month in the comfort of her own bed, but she wouldn’t have it any other way. The rate at which Pet Lovers has taken off is what Samantha, Kim and Rachael refer to as “crazy amazing.” Kim puts her time in during the day and early evening Monday through Friday. Samantha and Rachael’s schedules are bit more arduous. “Right now, Rachael and I are working 14 days on and two days off,” Samantha

admitted. "The goal is to work six on and one off." On top of the hours Rachael commits to Pet Lovers, she also holds down a full-time position elsewhere.

The 12 kennels Samantha currently has available for boarding include air conditioning, heat, music and a night light. Future plans include a large expansion in this area. "I would like to have a larger building that would comfortably hold 30 kennels," she stated. "I would also like the building to be large enough to accommodate a doggie day care play area."

Pet owners give specialized care to their pets, and the caring individuals at Pet Lovers want to extend that same care.

Samantha, Kim and Rachael all have stories about their in-home care duties that can bring a smile to their faces, or a tear to their eyes. "We've even taken care of cows, horses, birds, chickens and some reptiles," Samantha shared. "We love them all."

Animals show unconditional love and bring something to the table that humans don't. They may bark, moo, meow and whine, but they don't talk back. And most of the time, or at least with the Brock Brigade's experience, they take direction well. "They are sad to see us go when we have to leave," Samantha confessed, "but they are so excited to see us when we return."

Pet owners give specialized care to their pets, and the caring individuals at Pet Lovers want to extend that same care. Kim makes all-natural dog treats to leave as a "thank you" when a job comes to an end. Company T-shirts sport the slogan, *We will always have room for one more!* "Every pet counts," Samantha reiterated. "They all matter!" **NOW**



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TravelNOW

An Ozark Haven for Art and Architecture

— By Linda DeBerry

A forested hollow in the Ozarks may seem like an ordinary place for a nationally recognized art museum, but Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Northwest Arkansas, is no ordinary place. This jewel of a museum brings together art, architecture and the natural landscape for a total package unlike anything you've likely experienced.

The museum itself is an architectural wonder. Designed by international architect Moshe Safdie, the structure is nestled into a ravine in a 120-acre wooded park. Its monolithic concrete walls and curved copper roofs make the building appear to be almost a part of the surrounding landscape. A stream runs through the complex, its waters slowed by a series of weirs to create ponds encircled by the museum's galleries. Two glass-sided bridge structures span the ponds and inspired the museum's name.

Inside, massive oak beams support the soaring ceilings of the galleries, and the walls are graced by hundreds of American masterpieces. You'll encounter familiar favorites like Gilbert Stuart's portrait of George Washington, Norman Rockwell's *Rosie the Riveter*, and Andy Warhol's *Dolly Parton*, as well as breathtaking works that are sure to become new favorites. From colonial portraits to contemporary works, the entire history of America is laid out here in art. Quiet reflection areas offer an opportunity to relax, as well as to take in views of the museum's breathtaking landscape and architecture.

Architecture is central to the Crystal Bridges experience. On the museum's grounds are works by two American icons of architecture and design: Frank Lloyd Wright and Buckminster Fuller. The Bachman-Wilson House, designed by Wright and

built in New Jersey in 1956, was relocated to Crystal Bridges' grounds in 2015. It is located near the museum's south entrance and is open for public viewing. On the museum's north lawn is a 50-foot dome designed by theorist and architect Buckminster Fuller. Constructed as a prototype for a revolutionary affordable and efficient style of housing Fuller envisioned, the "Fly's Eye Dome" is built of fiberglass — a new material in the early 1980s — and covered in round openings like the lenses on a fly's eye. It, too, is open for public viewing.

Crystal Bridges' expansive grounds are another attraction. The native hardwood forest is threaded with walking and biking trails, and the landscape features natural springs, soaring trees and stone outcrops, as well as several outdoor sculptures scattered along the way. Crystal Bridges' trails connect with downtown Bentonville, offering independent restaurants, galleries, shopping and the modern luxury of a 21c Museum Hotel. Just 40 minutes away is the lively nightlife of nearby Fayetteville, and the funky, artistic Victorian Ozark village of Eureka Springs is just an hour away.

Northwest Arkansas, as a whole, offers an additional array of outdoor activities. From kayaking the beautiful Buffalo River — the United States' first National River — to boating on Beaver Lake, trout fishing at the White River and hiking the many trails at Devil's Den State Park, adventures abound that will make it clear why Arkansas is known as "The Natural State." If cycling is your thing, the area's mountain bike trails are rated among the best in the nation. And the Razorback Regional Greenway is a 36-mile, shared-use trail system that links six communities from Bella Vista to Fayetteville.

Year-round, it's fun to explore the area beyond Bentonville and Crystal Bridges. All you need is a map and a car. But beforehand, check out www.crystalbridges.org/visit/#regional for help planning your total experience. **NOW**

Photos Courtesy of Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas.



Herbs and Honey

— By Zachary R. Urquhart

As food from around the world has become more readily available, a trend has developed with people growing their own crops. If you want to plant an organic garden or harvest honey yourself, here is a quick guide to help get you started.

Have a Plan

- *Know Your Goal.* You may be trying to avoid certain chemicals, wanting to control what goes into your body or just trying to save money. There are many good reasons to start a garden or harvest honey, but different goals might require different plans. You may need other materials for a varied garden than you would if you hope to be the neighborhood tomato supplier.

- *Pick Your Spot.* Before you start tilling soil or installing

beehives, make sure you have the right location in your yard. Some cities either prohibit beekeeping or require a permit, but even if that is not a concern in your area, you will want to keep your hive or garden away from your lot lines so that you do not impinge on your neighbor's yard.

- *Set a Budget.* As with any big project, you will have some cost as you get started. Something to keep in mind is this: If your garden does not produce in its first year, how much money are you willing to invest in the project? If you use your whole budget and get little to no return, you could face the choice of spending more money or calling it quits.

Get the Right Supplies

- *Organic Can Mean Simple.* Depending on your location and soil quality, you may only need to put seeds in the

ground and keep them appropriately watered. If you do need to buy soil or fertilizer, you can get materials at any lawn and garden supply store. Just make sure you see *Organic* on the bag. For ground covering, you can use your own grass clippings or mulched leaves for a cheap and easy solution.

- *Bees Take a Little More.* You will need a beehive, a suit and a few tools to begin harvesting honey. Unless you happen to live near a specialty bee supply store, you will have to order your supplies online. There are brushes and tools for separating the honeycombs, as well as a smoker, which is crucial for keeping the bees calm as you collect your honey. And, of course, you will have to buy bees from either an existing, local beekeeper or an online retail site.

Time for Work

- *Get Your Garden Ready.* Once you have the perfect spot, decent soil and seeds picked out, you need to start planting. You can, but do not have to, make rows in your garden. Get the soil wet before getting the seeds down. If you water after laying your seeds, you risk pushing them right out of the ground. After you have the seeds down, put a small amount of soil on top and keep the ground moist until you start seeing sprouts.

- *Let Your Bees be Bees.* While there is more involved in the original setup for your beehive, once you get the bees in their hive boxes, they will do most of the work. Early spring is a great time to start a hive, but you should anticipate it taking several weeks before you can start collecting honey.

Growing organic crops and collecting your own honey can be a money-saving and fun new endeavor to start this spring. **NOW**

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Zoomed In: Lynn Hancock

By Sandra Strong

As the season changes from winter to spring, the need for yardwork is a must. Just ask Lynn Hancock. "Getting the leaves up isn't so difficult," she said, "but getting all the acorns up is a real chore."

She and her husband have lived in the home for four years. Each year, she's found the size of the acorn crop to be different. The first year, she remembers the acorns to be few. The next two years saw a marked increase. "But this year, the acorns are so thick," she stated, "and if you don't get them up, the grass will not grow." So, raking the yard not once, but many times, is what she does to insure she will have a lush, green lawn come summer.



The 2017 Varsity football team and EHS Jazz band join in at a recent school board meeting.



Mrs. Butler, kindergarten teacher at David Crockett EEC, celebrates 100 days of learning with Easton McIntosh.



Following several weeks of inclement weather, Clay Curry was able to climb a ladder and remove Christmas lights.



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EnnisNOW's Linda Roberson and Sherri Payne attend the Ennis Lions football banquet.



Dee Hart and her four-legged companion, Jenny, return from a long morning walk.



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Vickie Foster takes advantage of a mild winter day to clean windows.

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HealthNOW

Breast Cancer Screening Is Essential

In the U.S., one in eight women will be diagnosed with invasive breast cancer during her lifetime. While awareness of breast cancer has improved, the disease, unfortunately, remains the second-deadliest cancer among American women.

Early detection with regular mammograms remains the single most effective way for combating the disease. As physicians, we know that the earlier we can detect the disease, the more effective treatment can be. When detected early before it spreads, women have a 99 percent survival rate after five years. Mammograms can detect the majority of breast cancer in women, but they are not the only way to identify breast cancer.

Women should begin monthly breast self-exams in their 20s. Women in their 20s and 30s should have a clinical breast exam every three years. Women in their 30s and 40s should discuss their breast cancer risk level with a physician to determine the most appropriate cancer screening options. Women age 50 and older should have a mammogram and a clinical breast exam at least every two years and, if recommended by a physician, an annual MRI screening. If any changes in the breast are detected, contact a physician immediately to be evaluated.

A common myth is that only women who have a family history of the disease develop breast cancer. While the majority of cancer happens by chance,

about 5-10 percent of people with cancer have an inherited cancer. Women with a family history of breast cancer should discuss genetic testing with their physician. If genetic tests indicate a woman is BRCA-positive, there are a number of risk reduction strategies to discuss with her physician.

Age, diet and exercise can also impact risk. Approximately two-thirds of invasive breast cancer cases occur in women over age 55, though the disease can occur at any age. Being overweight and/or physically inactive increases your risk.

It's also important to watch for warning signs and symptoms. The signs for breast cancer are not the same for all women, and some women show no signs in early stages.

- A lump in the breast
- Change in breast size or shape
- Thickening of breast or underarm
- Nipple retraction
- Dimpled skin near the breast
- Tenderness
- Pain in breast or nipple
- Nipple discharge
- A lump under arm or around collarbone
- Irritation, redness, scaliness or swelling on the breast, nipple or skin near the nipple

Until a cure for breast cancer is found, regular screenings, awareness and healthy lifestyle choices, such as eating well and exercising regularly, are among the best tools a woman has to reduce her risk of developing the disease. **NOW**

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Calendar

March:

3

Sweethearts & Orphans Car Show: 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., downtown Waxahachie.



An Evening with Mark Lowry: 6:00 p.m., Hagee Communications Center at SAGU. For more information, visit www.sagu.edu/events/2018-03-03-mark-lowry.

16 — 18

Vintage Market Days presents Vintage Love: 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., **Friday and Saturday**; 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., **Sunday**, Ellis County Expo Center, 2300 US 287 Bypass. For more details, visit www.socentraltexas.vintagemarketdays.com.

17, 18

Waxahachie Gun & Knife Show: Waxahachie Civic Center.

23 — 31

Ellis County Fair & Rodeo: Ellis County Expo Center. The event is sponsored by the Ellis County Youth Expo. For more information, call (972) 937-2390 or visit www.waxahachiechamber.com.



24

Easter Egg Hunt: 10:00 a.m., Rockett Christian Church, 135 Maple Leaf Dr., Palmer. Everyone is welcome.

Spring Lawn & Garden Expo: Waxahachie Civic Center, 2000 Civic Center Ln. There will be over 100 exhibits, speakers and demonstrations. For more information, call (972) 825-5175 or visit www.ecmga.com.

April:

30

Festival of the Arts: 5:00-8:00 p.m., Worship Center at ORBC, 3251 Ovilla Rd., Ovilla. The event, hosted by Ovilla Christian School, includes an art showcase with live performances throughout the event. Event will also include a silent auction, raffle prizes and concessions. Free admission. For more information or for details on submitting artwork, email Jami Navarro at jnavarro@ovillachristianschool.org.

Ongoing:

Mondays

Sign Language Class: 4:00-5:30 p.m., Ennis Public Library, 501 W. Ennis Ave. Classes are free and available for all ages. No sign up required.

Second Mondays

Parkinson's Support Group: Ennis Regional Medical Center.

Third Mondays

Ellis County Veterans Networking Group: 6:00 p.m., Ryan's Steakhouse, Waxahachie. Come join the group for dinner and listen to what the guest speaker for the evening has to share. For more information, call Mike Lamb at (214) 763-0378.

Ellis County Aggie Moms meeting: 7:00 p.m., Waxahachie First United Methodist Church, 505 W. Marvin, Waxahachie. For more information, visit www.elliscountyyaggiemoms.org.

Fourth Mondays

Texas Master Naturalists Indian Trails Chapter: 6:00 p.m., First United Methodist Church, Waxahachie. The program begins at 7:00 p.m. For more information about the group, visit www.txmn.org/indiantrail.

Tuesdays

Lariat Bridge Club: 6:30 p.m., Boy Scout Cabin, 1139 Brown St., Waxahachie. For more information or to confirm the meeting, email Shari at weatherscf@yahoo.com or call (505) 270-4017.



First Wednesdays

Bluebonnet Patches Quilt Guild meeting: 9:30 a.m., First Presbyterian Church, 210 N. McKinney. Contact Judy Wensowitch at (972) 921-8800 or Diana Buckley at SeldomSeenQuilting@gmail.com for more information.

Third Wednesdays

The Ellis County Christian Women's Connection meeting: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Waxahachie Country Club. Cost is \$13. For more information, contact Barb at (214) 463-5064 or email barb.jacobs19@yahoo.com. Reservations are due Sunday before the meeting.

Thursdays

Chess: 5:30-7:30 p.m., Ennis

Public Library, 501 W. Ennis Ave.
Elementary age and above. No sign
up required.



Ellis County Bible Study
Fellowship Satellite Class: 6:30 p.m.,
Waxahachie Bible Church, 621 N.
Grand Ave., Waxahachie. This is
a nondenominational Bible study
class. For more information, call Lou
Archibald at (214) 850-5303.

Fourth Thursdays
MACS: 6:00 p.m., Tabernacle Baptist
Church Life Center. Evening includes

a covered dish meal and a program of
singing or informational message.

Second Thursdays
Mom's Connected meeting: 9:30-
11:30 a.m., Tabernacle Baptist
Church, 1200 Country Club Rd. Call
the church office at (972) 875-3861
for more information.



First and Third Fridays
MOPS meeting: 9:30-11:30 a.m.
during regular school semester,
Tabernacle Baptist Church, 1200

County Club Rd. A ministry
for mothers of preschoolers
in the Ennis community. Visit
www.tabernaclefamily.org/mops/.

Second and Fourth Fridays
Ennis Bridge Club: 1:00 p.m.,
Ennis Public Library, 501 W. Ennis
Ave. For more information, email
Judy at judytx@sbcglobal.net or
call (972) 878-1035.

Fourth Saturdays
Bristol Opry: 7:00 p.m., featuring
local singers and musicians.
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Bristol. For more information,
contact Jim Gatlin at (972) 846-2211.

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tabernaclefamily.org/easter

Time for Your Pre-retiree Checklist?

Like everyone, you want to enjoy a comfortable lifestyle when you retire. But a successful retirement doesn't just happen — it requires a lot of planning. And that's why it's a good idea to draw up a "pre-retiree checklist."

Such a checklist might look like this:

- **Twenty years before retirement:** Try to estimate a "price tag" for your retirement, incorporating a variety of factors — where you might live, how much you might travel, what activities you'll pursue and so on. Then, assess if your retirement savings are on track to help you meet your expected costs. From this point, monitor your progress every year.
- **Fifteen years before retirement:** Although you're still fairly far away from retirement, you'll want to bring your goals and challenges into a clearer focus. For starters, try to establish a firmer target goal for the assets you'll need during retirement. Also, consider your legacy goals and start developing your estate plans, if you haven't already done so. You might also explore methods of dealing with potentially enormous long-term care costs, such as an extended stay in a nursing home. Solutions to long-term care may become much more expensive later in life.
- **Ten years before retirement:** At this stage, in addition to reviewing your target asset and spending levels, you'll want to get more precise about how much income you can expect as a retiree, whether through your investments or retirement accounts — such as your 401(k) and IRA — or through some type of part-time work or consulting. Maintaining an adequate income flow is extremely

important, because you could spend two or three decades as a retiree, and some of your expenses — health care in particular — will likely rise during the later years. It's important to plan for health care and long-term care, given the costs and ability to qualify for coverage later in life.

- **Five years before retirement:** Re-evaluate your investment mix to help reduce the risk of having your portfolio vulnerable to a market downturn when you plan to retire. Generally speaking, stocks and other growth-oriented investments are more volatile than bonds and other income-producing vehicles. So, you may want to consider shifting some — but certainly not all — of your investment dollars from the "growth" portion of your portfolio to the "income" side.
- **Two years before retirement:** This close to retirement, you'll want to pay particularly close attention to health care expenses, so you may want to investigate Medicare supplemental policies. You'll also want to ensure that you have an adequate emergency fund to cope with unexpected costs, such as major home repairs. In addition, you'll want to think about whether you should take Social Security right away or if you can afford to wait until your monthly checks will be bigger.
- **One year before retirement:** Now it's time for some key decisions: How much can you withdraw each year from your 401(k), IRA and other retirement accounts without running the risk of outliving your money? Have you lined up your health care coverage? And, finally, are you really set on retiring in a year or could you delay retirement to improve your financial picture?

This checklist isn't exhaustive, but it can give you a good idea of the various issues you'll need to consider on the long road to retirement. And the sooner you start planning for that journey, the better. **NOW**

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Jeff Irish is an Edward Jones representative based in Ennis.

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