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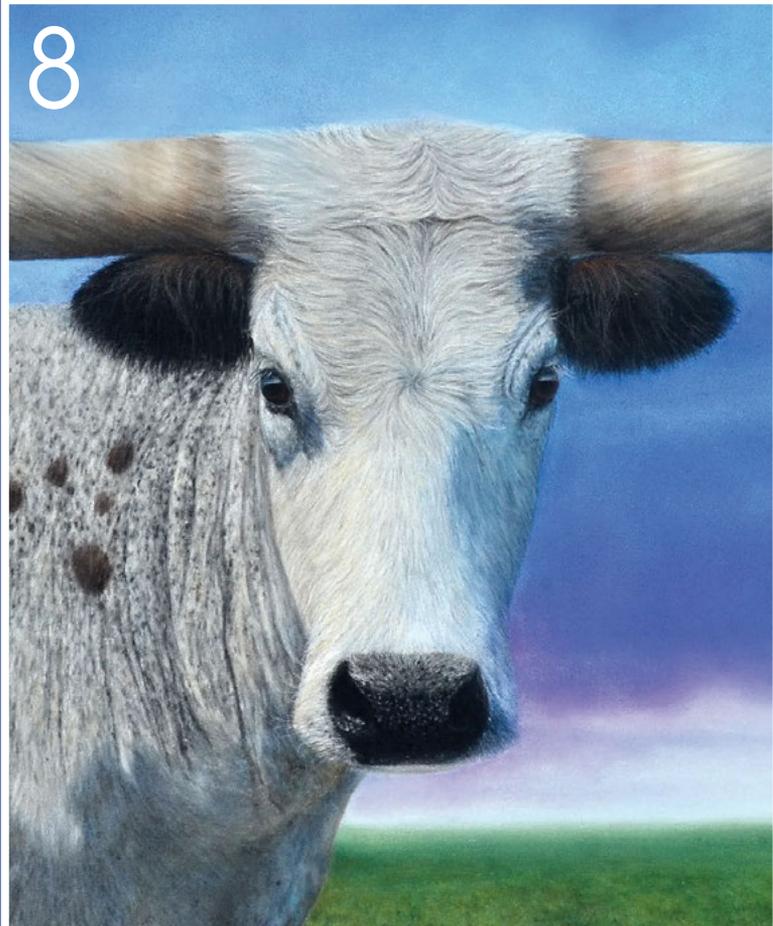
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ON THE COVER

Kara Kraemer's latest honor is a third-place finish in the Fort Worth Star-Telegram Stock Show Art Contest.

Photo by
Hannah Chartrand.

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EDITOR'S NOTE



Angel

Angel Morris
MidlothianNOW Editor
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Hello, Midlothian!

Known for coming “in like a lion” and going “out like a lamb,” I think March is the month most representative of the cycle of life. When we’re young, we expect that we’ll grab the world by its tail and pull it where we want it to go. As we age, our grip may loosen when circumstances, roadblocks and unexpected pitfalls cause us to release some of our expectations.

With time, many of us mellow, and our ferocity is replaced with a certain acceptance that, while we may not have conquered the world, we have carved out our own wonderful little niche. We discover that perhaps the best way to change the world, as Mother Teresa said, is to simply go home and love our family. There are still dreams to be had, but we are less defined by them. It is as heartwarming to see a loved one succeed as it is to accomplish one’s own goals.

The lion returns when our family is in jeopardy because we have learned the importance of protecting our den. But, as time marches on, we realize there’s no shame in being gentle like the lamb. And it is there in the calm we finally find our peace.

Hope March brings your flock a lion’s share of joy!

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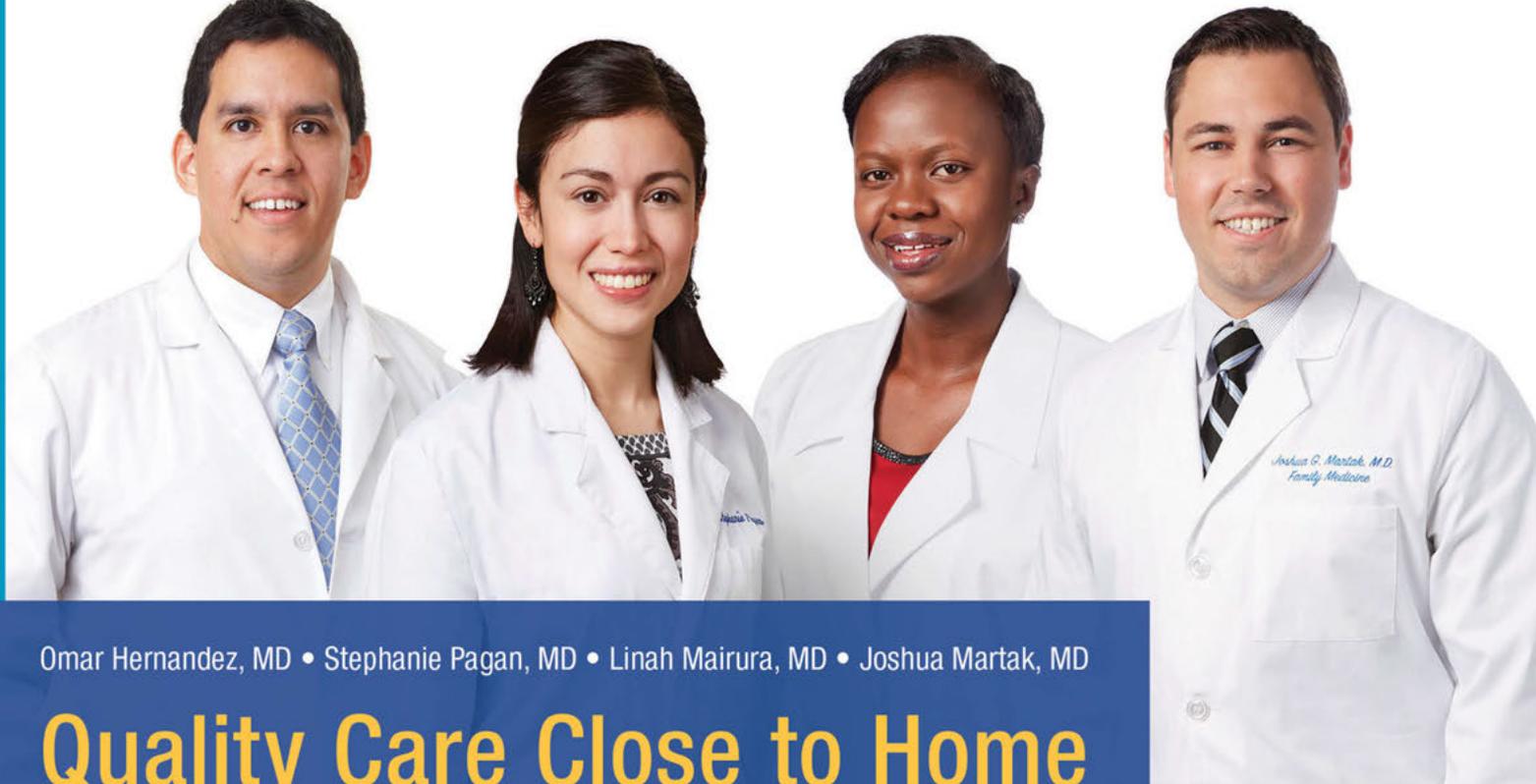
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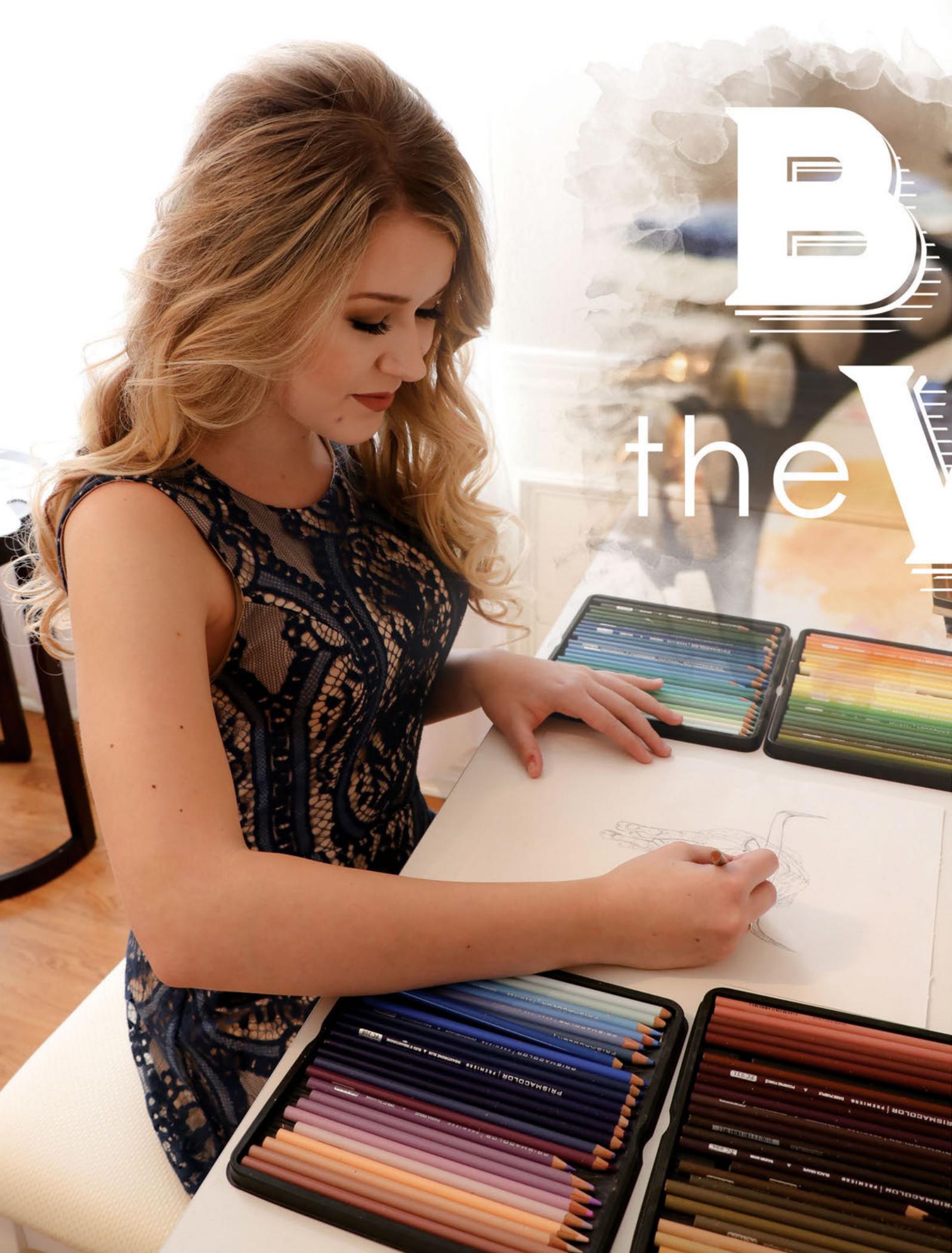
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WEST of WEST

— By *Angel Morris*

When it comes to Western art, it isn't Kara Kraemer's first rodeo. At 17, the young artist is old hat at creating award-winning imagery depicting dusty subjects of the West. "My earliest memories are from San Angelo, Texas, which has a strong Western influence. Many of my friends participated in rodeos or lived on ranches," Kara said. "As a result, I was drawn to horses and landscapes, which have become popular subjects in my artwork."

Kara's artistic passion began in elementary school when she received an old camera that had belonged to her grandparents. "I've always had a passion for art. I love to create lifelike works inspired by my hopes and dreams," Kara said.

Photography spilled into drawing, with an eye for capturing camera-like quality. "In photography, I capture the unique character of animals. In art, I create realistic pieces, with emphasis on the smallest details, to make lifelike images," Kara explained. "Currently, I use bold and beautiful colors for my ultra-detailed artwork. I enjoy painting hyper-realistic art and utilizing experimental mediums."



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Early on, it was clear Kara was a natural. In middle school, she entered the Ellis County Youth Expo and won Overall Grand Champion Artist twice. In high school, she entered the State Fair of Texas, winning Grand Champion in two-dimensional art and first place in sculpture. This year, she won Grand Champion in photography and first place in two-dimensional art at the State Fair. "After the fair, I entered a national youth art contest held by Cowboy Artists of America and *Western Horseman Magazine*. To my surprise, I won Grand Champion and received a trip to the elite art auction and event, Cowboy Crossings, and an art scholarship," Kara said.

The award ceremony was held at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, where Kara met several famous artists, including one of her role models. "Tim Cox



“I’ve always had a passion for art.”

is one of my favorites. I admire his breathtaking paintings and his success in Western art,” Kara recalled. “I consider this contest my biggest accomplishment so far, because it had been a dream of mine to enter for years. All of the artists were very friendly and encouraged me to pursue my art.”

While Kara attended T.E. Baxter Elementary from second through fourth grades, her desire to pursue artistic endeavors led her parents, Chris and Sharon, to begin homeschooling. “In fifth grade, I decided to homeschool to have more time for my artistic passions and to advance my education. Currently, I’m taking dual credit classes and have earned over 30 hours of college credit,” Kara said.

As a homeschooler, Kara takes advantage of a variety of educational opportunities, like a photography class at Travis Academy of Fine Arts where, last year, she was accepted into the selective internship class. As a student of Ellis County Christian Homeschool Organization, Kara is part of an “entreleadership” class taught by Phillip Brown, a Chick-fil-A operator in Waxahachie. She was recently hired as marketing intern for the Waxahachie restaurant, where she appreciated the chance to paint its holiday windows.

One thing Kara appreciates about Midlothian is having a country life



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close to city amenities. "I can live next to ranches and show livestock, while taking art classes downtown. I also appreciate the friendly community and how local churches work together," Kara reflected.

Kara has helped at several service projects, from the Mayor's Back 2 School Bash to the Angel Tree Christmas store. A few years ago, she formed the Ellis County Student Volunteer Club to inform students of opportunities to serve.

Kara has also been an Ellis County 4-H member for seven years and is currently on the County Council. "Last year, I was president of the All 4 Him for 4-H Club. This year, I'm the leader of the rabbit group at Livestock 4-H and teach kids about showing rabbits," she said.

For fun, Kara shows Netherland Dwarf rabbits. "My partner, Junior, and I compete around the state in rabbit shows and showmanship contests. We make a pretty good team. I've won several champion titles and a couple of buckles," Kara said.

Weekly, Kara rides horses at a local ranch, giving them extra training and care. "One day, I would like to own a ranch and raise cutting horses and cattle. Like my artwork and photography, this is part of my passion for Western lifestyle," Kara said.

Another feather in Kara's Western cap is her recent third-place finish in the Fort Worth Star-Telegram Stock Show Art Contest. Her artwork, *Prairie Queen*, was chosen from 1,100 entries.

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Melding her Western interest with the business courses she currently studies, Kara utilized her artistic skills to develop the website, WesternArt.Net. "I wanted to create a way for artists, as well as art patrons, to learn more about Western art. I built the website to provide resources like tutorials and articles," she explained. "I also wanted to create a place where individuals in the Western art community could network and share ideas. My plan is to make WesternArt.Net the go-to place for everything Western art, as well as to add an online store."

Currently, Kara is working on creating a line of products and dreams of growing her online business. She is also working on a series of oil paintings to sell at museums and galleries. "An artist doesn't just paint pictures and sell them. They own a business. They are the brand, and their art's their product," Kara noted.

Besides developing her brand, Kara dreams of someday winning a Prix de West Award, which is one of the most prestigious Western art awards. In the meantime, she will make her mark on the art world, one piece at a time. "Recently, I've sold some art commissions," Kara said. "It's hard letting go of pieces that I spent hours or hundreds of hours on. However, it's awesome to see how much my artwork is appreciated by others and rewarding for my pieces to be displayed in people's homes." **NOW**

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Little by Little

— By Zachary R. Urquhart

At Home With Joe & Molly Carmack

Midlothian is growing. With growth comes new families and a new history to a town that has long had many stories to tell. Joe and Molly Carmack are part of that new history. Coming from two very different backgrounds, they are the perfect microcosm for the growing city with a small-town feel that is Midlothian.

Joe grew up in Waxahachie when it was a small, rural community. “I saw it grow the way Midlothian is now,” he said. After school, he and some friends started working as contracted delivery drivers, and he has turned that into a long-term career. “I am the only one still doing it,” he said. “I own routes in Irving, and we roll 12 trucks a day. I only drive if I have to fill in for someone on my team.”

Molly grew up in Arlington, and even though she was raised in a larger city, she is really a country girl at heart. She has worked in several industries, and





recently started a new job working for SEKO Logistics, a major parts supplier for companies like Lockheed Martin. While Joe might prefer what Waxahachie and Midlothian once were, Molly likes the balance she sees. “It’s great because there’s kind of a small-town feel,” she explained. “But there’s also this growing city at the same time.”

Joe and Molly met 10 years ago. He was a rodeo country boy, and she was a city girl. They made a match reflecting the contrast of the big-small town they now call home, and began to grow their own family. “We have an 8-year-old son, Lynden, who loves sports and being active,” Joe detailed. “Our daughter, Gracie, loves dancing and wearing dresses.” After living in Palmer for several

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years, Joe and Molly found a way to move to Midlothian two years ago.

“My family moved to Midlothian, so we always wanted to live here, too, especially for the schools,” Molly explained. “My mom lives in the neighborhood, and one day we were driving and saw a little *For Sale by Owner* sign.” Soon after, Joe and Molly were leaving 16 acres in Palmer for a house on a few acres in Midlothian. “It’s great because I loved the house as soon as I saw it, but we have enough land for our dogs and even a couple of horses,” she said.

In addition to their chic, country home, Joe and Molly recently got 15 acres farther south in Midlothian, where they are raising cows. “I’d always wanted to raise livestock, so we bought this land,” Joe recounted. “Most Saturdays, Gracie wakes up early with me to go feed and take care of them.” Joe’s love for the outdoors is apparent throughout the house, as there is evidence of his hunting in almost every room. His office has reminders of his days in the rodeo, with photos, trophies and a saddle he won in competition.



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If Joe's hobbies are evident in the display of his animal mounts, Molly's hand is seen in the overall decor of the home. Virtually every room has some piece that she either bought at a market, repurposed from an antique store or found on the side of the road. "I love finding old things and using them," she admitted. That was part of the allure of the house for her. "This home is almost 40 years old, so we've gone through and redone it little by little," she stated. The kitchen shows her redecorating touch in many ways. Joe and Molly have redone the cabinets. She painted the large island a pretty blue hue, and she found an old, dry sink that she uses as a key decor piece in the nook.

Along with her keen decorating eye, Molly has several great displays around the house. "I've been getting crosses for a long time, so I have a good collection," she said. "And we call this the 'kid wall.' We have photos, but we also have some of the things they've done." The kid wall leads to the kids' rooms, which show more of her decorating ability. Lynden's room is Western, but also displays sports trophies and has a patriotic color scheme. Gracie's room is everything girly, filled with pinks, flowers and features an old carousel horse as a main decor piece.



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Molly takes the lead in decorating, but there is a natural blend of her style and Joe's interests throughout the house. This is most obviously seen in the living room. There exists a definite hunting lodge feel in the space, as deer heads are balanced by things like a table leg Molly turned into a candle holder. "I like to think the house has a country feel, but it's not Western," she explained.



Joe and Molly's style is typified in the master bedroom, where rustic furniture mixes with more animal skin rugs. Bay windows look out over their expansive yard. Some of the biggest crosses from Molly's collection hang over their bed. And their house, their style and their lives are summed up with a simple sign that reads, *Two People Become One*. As they update their house little by little, Joe and Molly's story is the perfect addition to a town that is updating, as well. **NOW**

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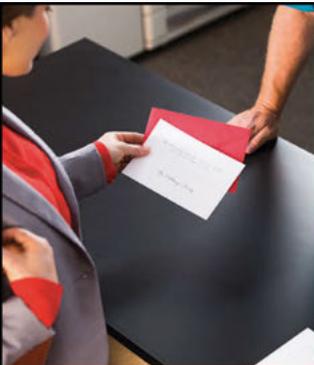
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The Lunch Bunch

— 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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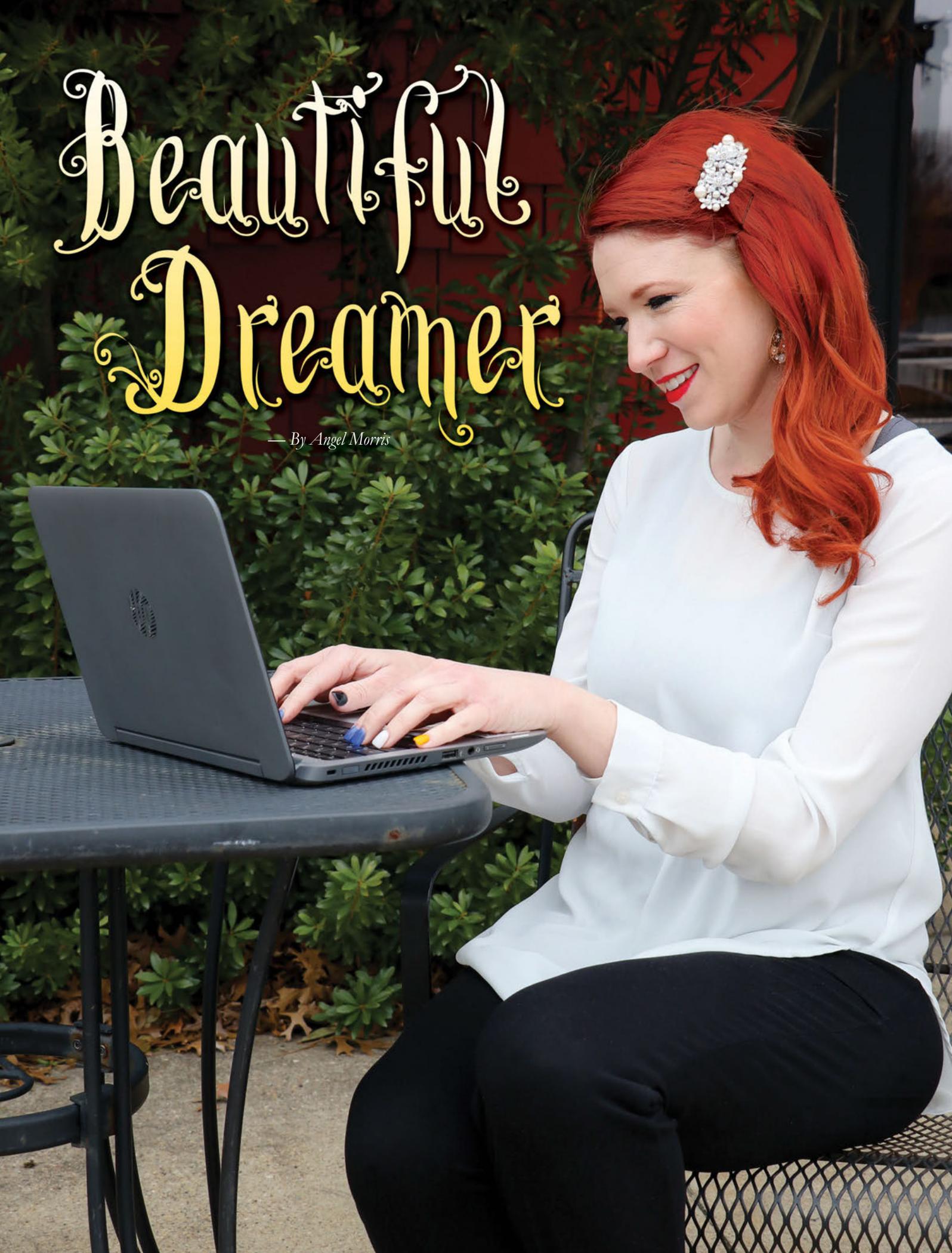


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Beautiful Dreamer

— By *Angel Morris*



Hairstylists may be the next best thing to therapists, and they make you beautiful. Ashley Denison has combined her experience in the salon with a newfound love of writing to enter an all-new career — screenwriting. “Beautiful Problems is my current project and will be the first time I query a screenplay to potential producers,” Ashley explained. “I feel like I’m ready and have established a good foundation in my writing abilities to take that next step, or rather, the next leap.”

Beginning as a hairstylist in high school, Ashley has continued that career for 15 years. Writing, however, was something she also enjoyed. “I’ve been writing my entire life. I entered little competitions when I was in grade school. Like in third grade, I placed third against two high school students,” Ashley recalled. “I never really knew what to do with my talent until social media became popular. I started seeing screenplays for the first time and would download them. I’ve read thousands of them over the years.”

While the idea of writing a novel was daunting, Ashley realized screenwriting would allow her to “show, not tell” a story in a more condensed format. She joined an online screenwriting class and participated in a contest amongst her peers. “There were at least 2,000 in the class, ranging from amateur writers like myself to professional published writers, English professors, etc. I was the dark horse in the writing competition,” Ashley said.

Given the option of three books to adapt, Ashley chose Edgar Lee Master’s *Spoon River Anthology*, a collection of short poems. “I chose a

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very dark adaptation of murder and betrayal, and my short screenplay won first place among some 650 entries,” Ashley recalled. “It was so surreal, I had to reread the post that I won like five times before I really believed what I was reading. That set the tone for everything that would happen next.”

Up next was Ashley’s entrance into the Austin Film Festival, where she submitted a TV pilot, *The New World Order*. “It was about two brothers in the military who gather intelligence about a group of radical elites whose agenda is to depopulate the planet,” Ashley described. This script placed in the top 15 percent at AFF out of 8,000 scripts.

“Winning at that level allowed me to attend private roundtables with managers, producers and directors, as well as exclusive parties and dinners,” Ashley said. “At this point I had the realization that I should get serious. I knew I was going to have to perfect my craft. Especially, if I ever wanted to pitch my script one day.”

To further hone her skills, Ashley submitted her credentials to a scouting agent for a film shot in Dallas’s Deep Ellum, *Kill the Czar*. She was able to shadow the director and work as an extra on set. “I learned so much, and the opportunity further



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validated my dreams of working as a writer and filmmaker,” she said.

With about five years of learning and practice under her belt, Ashley set her sights on making an original screenplay come to life. “*Beautiful Problems* is set in a place similar to the West Texas desert town of Marfa. It follows the lives of four women who work in a salon making other people beautiful, while their looks and lives fall apart behind the scenes,” Ashley described.

A strange woman visits the salon, offering an everlasting beauty pill. “Of course, there’s nothing for free, and the women find they have



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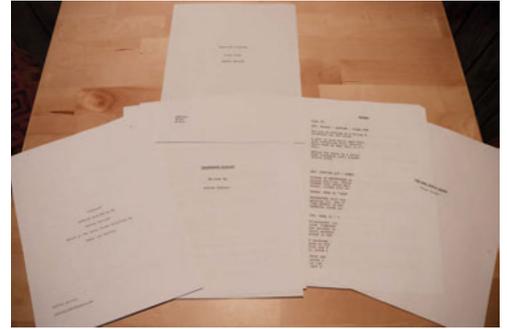
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dabbled in something far worse than aging looks,” Ashley said. “It really is a lesson in the extremes we go to trying to preserve beauty. Everything comes with a price in the end.”

As Ashley polishes the story she describes as *Desperate Housewives* meets *Stranger Things*, she continues to juggle her job as a stylist, while earning her business and marketing degree at LeTourneau University. She is also mom to Gavin (10), Stella (7) and Cullen (5), students of Midlothian ISD. “Finding time to write has been a challenge. There were mornings I was getting up at 4:00 a.m., so I could make sure I wrote a few pages for that day,” Ashley noted. “It’s a balance, but I think with any hobby or passion you’ll find a way to make time for it because it’s something that fuels and adds excitement to your life.”

While she’ll continue her day job where she loves listening to her clients and creating art through hair, Ashley would like to be a full-time writer someday. “I’m constantly observing people and their conversations. I mix that with a little bit of my imagination, and that’s how a story will unfold,” she explained.

Although she initially second guessed her writing abilities, Ashley came to realize risk can be a beautiful thing. “I thought, *What if I fail and waste all of this time?* But you’ll never know unless you put yourself out there, and see what you can accomplish,” she said. “I’m so proud of being a mom, student, stylist and screenwriter. And who knows what I’ll add to my list next?” **NOW**

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In the Kitchen With
WENDY HENLEY
 — By Angel Morris

Wendy Henley has enjoyed experimenting in the kitchen since childhood. “I’d make dinner for the family to toy with everyday meals,” Wendy recalled. “Everyone affirmed my ability to add a little zest to things!”

Wendy still tweaks recipes and favors taco seasoning or Tony Chachere’s Creole Seasoning in just about anything. She also appreciates quick meal prep. “I used to watch a certain TV show so often, my 3-year-old daughter at the time would say, ‘Hi, I’m Rachael Ray, and I make 30-minute meals!’ anytime she saw the TV host’s face in stores.”

As a wellness coach, cooking healthy food that tastes great is important to Wendy. “I am also an avid runner and hiker, so I want to fuel my body to do what I love.” **NOW**

Crock-Pot Chili

- 1 white onion, diced
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- 2 lbs. ground meat (I use 1 lb. venison chili meat, 1 lb. ground beef.)
- 1 pkg. taco seasoning
- 2 15-oz. cans tomato sauce
- 2 15-oz. cans diced tomatoes
- 1 8- to 10-oz. can tomato paste
- 1 tsp. garlic powder
- 2 Tbsp. cumin
- 1 Tbsp. turmeric
- 3 Tbsp. chili powder
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. pepper
- 1 cup water

1. Sauté onion in a pan with olive oil. Add meat; brown. Once browned, add taco seasoning.
2. Put meat and all of the canned ingredients, along with the rest of the

seasonings and water, in the Crock-Pot. (Do not drain tomatoes.)

3. Mix together; cook on high for 2-4 hours or on low for 4-5 hours.

Roasted Veggies

Kerrygold Pure Irish Butter, for coating pan (or any all-natural, full-fat butter)

- 1 large zucchini, cubed
- 1 large yellow squash, cubed
- 2 cups butternut squash or sweet potatoes, cubed
- 1 small bag finger potatoes
- Approximately 10-12 Brussels sprouts, halved
- 1 red pepper, largely diced
- 1 yellow pepper, largely diced

1. Coat a shallow roasting pan with butter.
2. Spread the veggies in the pan evenly; bake at 400 F for approximately 30 minutes,

or until potatoes can be pierced easily with a fork.

Quick Chicken Soup

Makes 4-6 servings.

- 1 pkg. Seeds of Change Quinoa and Brown Rice
- 2 12.5-oz. cans Kirkland Signature Chicken
- 1 carton organic chicken broth
- 1 zucchini, sliced
- 1 cup kale or spinach
- 1 cup Brussels sprouts, quartered
- 1 15-oz. can diced tomatoes
- 2 tsp. Kirkland Signature Organic No-Salt Seasoning
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. pepper
- 1/2 tsp. turmeric

1. Cook Seeds of Change Quinoa and Brown Rice according to package directions. Add all the ingredients to a large saucepan.
2. Boil on medium for around 30 minutes, or until the Brussels sprouts are soft.

Chunky Monkey Grain and Gluten-free Muffins

From Primal Cravings: Your Favorite Foods Made Paleo Cookbook. Makes 12 muffins.

- 1/2 cup coconut flour
- 1/2 cup tapioca flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda

1/2 cup butter
 1/2 cup coconut sugar
 4 eggs
 1 cup mashed bananas
 1 tsp. vanilla extract
 1/2 cup organic chocolate chips
 1/2 cup walnuts

1. Preheat oven to 350 F. Line muffin pan cups with liners.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together coconut flour, tapioca flour and baking soda.
3. In another bowl, whisk together butter, sugar, eggs, banana and vanilla.
4. Whisk the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients.
5. Gently fold the chocolate chips and walnuts into the batter. Fill the lined cups about 1/2 to 2/3 full.
6. Bake until muffins have puffed and the edges are slightly browned, approximately 20 minutes.

Grain-free Gluten-free Dinner Rolls

Adapted from paleospirit.com.

1 cup tapioca flour
 1/4 to 1/3 cup coconut flour
 1 tsp. salt
 1/2 cup warm water
 1/2 cup olive oil
 1 large egg, whisked

1. Preheat oven to 350 F. In a large bowl, whisk together the tapioca flour with the coconut flour and salt. Pour in warm water and oil while whisking.
2. Add the whisked egg to the mixture; continue to mix with a spoon until well combined. If the mixture is too thin to spoon out, add 1 Tbsp. of coconut flour at a time until the mixture is a sticky batter.
3. Use a large spoon to scoop out 1-2 Tbsp. at a time and roll into balls. Should make around 10. (Use tapioca flour in palms of hands to keep dough from sticking.)
4. Place rolls on a greased or parchment paper-lined cookie sheet; bake for approximately 35 minutes. Rolls will be soft and doughy on the inside and crusty on the outside.

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

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BusinessNOW

Midlothian Plumbing

— By Angel Morris

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Tommy and Angela Ewton moved their business to Midlothian three years ago, after serving Mesquite customers since 1999. Formerly Preferred Plumbing & Gas, they became Midlothian Plumbing to help customers find them. “This location is central to all of Midlothian, and from here it’s easy to navigate other areas of Ellis County to reach customers promptly,” Angela said.

Visits to family prompted the move. “We noticed how much we enjoyed the area. After 18 years, we sold our Mesquite home and

built a new one here. It’s been one of the best decisions, and we wish we’d made it sooner,” Tommy said.

The Ewtons believe living in the community they serve holds them accountable for quality business performance. “We work, live and play here. You may find us at the supermarket, car wash or even a youth sporting event,” Angela noted.

As a result, Midlothian Plumbing prides itself on loyalty. “We’re fair and honest while diagnosing and resolving plumbing issues. We want customers for life,” Tommy said. “Some companies care about that one-time job. Not us. We want customers to always have a dependable plumber to call.”

Following the motto, “Local-Licensed-Loyal,” Midlothian Plumbing strives to offer customers prompt, professional, affordable services. “We offer lower rates than most competitors. If you get a quote that seems too high, call us for a second opinion,” Tommy suggested.

Midlothian Plumbing is licensed by the Texas State Board of

Plumbing Examiners. "It's important to us that your issues are resolved by a licensed plumber," Angela said. "And if for any reason we can't get to it, we'll refer customers to another reputable plumber in the area."

Midlothian Plumbing emphasizes respectful relationships. "We're invited into intimate personal spaces with each call, and we respect customers and their property," Tommy noted. "We strive to communicate clearly and do our best to educate customers about the situation at hand."

Treating customers like family has paid off. "We've grown drastically! For many years we worked from home, but due to growth, we found we needed an official shop," Angela said. "Last year, we took the plunge and moved into our current location."

As growth continues, the Ewtons hope to hire additional plumbers to join their team. The team currently includes their daughter, Olivia Ewton, who helps with phone calls and paperwork; apprentice plumber Cole Raine, who's working toward becoming a licensed plumber; and Aaron Castaneda, apprentice plumber, who is close to receiving his Journeyman's license.

Midlothian Plumbing plans to continue supporting the community that has been so welcoming. "Besides being members of the Chamber of Commerce, we support Manna House and various other charities however we can," Angela said. "We also look out for elderly residents, offering discounts toward their plumbing services."

Midlothian Plumbing also encourages customers to conserve water. "Clean water is a privilege we take for granted. There are about 663 million people in the world without access to safe water," Angela said. "Some women and girls cannot work or attend school because their daily chore is to walk for miles to collect water. We remind people to save water whenever possible!"

As they continue providing plumbing services in Ellis County, the Ewtons express gratitude to Midlothian. "Tommy is passionate about plumbing and will always fix it correctly," Angela said. "We have the kindest customers, and it's our pleasure to help out!" **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.

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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.

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- *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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REAL WORLD READINESS

— By Derek Jones

Specifically designed to meet the needs of students with disabilities, Community Based Instruction is a valuable program of Midlothian Independent School District. For 13 years, Melissa Wolfe has served as the executive director of specialized learning for the district, which includes overseeing CBI. “The goal of our CBI program is to teach our students with disabilities to be productive citizens and equip them with necessary life skills to be successful after high school graduation,” Melissa explained. “It is great to watch these kids grow and develop. They truly are an amazing group of students.”





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CBI is available for students beginning in kindergarten through graduation. Because of the extra support many of these students need, they are able to stay in the high school CBI program until they are 22 years old. "Our goal is to see these students graduate and transition into some type of job, so the extra time we get to spend with them is very beneficial," Melissa stated. "We want them to graduate from our two Midlothian high schools with the necessary functional living skills to care and provide for themselves."

Both Midlothian High School and Heritage High School implement the CBI program. Each school has its





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own unique approach to providing learning opportunities within the CBI classroom. “Each school is doing exceptional work for our students,” Melissa said. “The teachers are creative and passionate about providing a truly unique learning experience that is relative to what the students need to be successful.”

Creativity and variety are important within CBI classrooms. “Our CBI students have a wide range of cognitive ability,” Melissa explained. “We want to provide instruction that will meet all of our kids’ needs.”

At MHS, CBI teachers have created a fully functioning store stacked with canned foods and cash registers. Melissa described the importance of this presentation. “It is easy to take for granted things like which food goes in the pantry, which food goes in the freezer and which food goes in the fridge. For students in the CBI classroom, these are necessary skills that need to be taught.”

The store is a re-creation of a real-world location, allowing students to learn how to function in this environment, while still under supervision of their teachers. Students are also involved in making and selling candles. “Making the candles teaches the students about

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production, and selling the candles on campus allows students to learn about business,” Melissa noted.

Heritage High School also has its own unique approach to teaching life skills. Students are learning to cook, but as Melissa explained, it is so much more. “Students must shop for the ingredients; measure, cook and prepare the food; and do the clean-up, such as washing the dishes and putting them away.”

The process of cooking and preparing a meal encompasses many life skills and incorporates academic skills, as well. “Providing an opportunity for these students to cook for themselves and others teaches so many valuable lessons in how to be independent,” Melissa explained.

With the success of these programs at Midlothian and Heritage high schools, Melissa hopes to see them continue to expand. Their success is not only credited to the programs within the schools, however. Many of the older students in the CBI program spend part of their day in the classroom learning life skills and part of the day working in local businesses putting those skills to use.

“Allowing opportunities for these students to experience independence after graduation requires a great commitment from the business community here in Midlothian,” Melissa explained. “The support we get from the community, well, it’s incredible.”

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A relationship with the business community is important, but support for these students does not end there. It is important that CBI students learn to interact with their peers who are part of the larger student body. “Students in our CBI classes have been nominated prom queen, been elected Mr. MHS, served as manager for the baseball team, attend dances and so much more,” Melissa noted. “They are embraced by the students, and that says a lot about our kids in Midlothian ISD.”

Another reason CBI students are so successful is because of the culture developed by school leadership. “Our campus principals and teachers ensure the students are at the center of any decisions made. Teaching is more than just a job. It’s something we pour our hearts into,” Melissa shared.

From making candles, working at jobs within the community, cooking for others or shopping for necessities, the CBI students are gaining real-world experience to help them become self-sufficient. “The true heart of the program is the students in the CBI program,” Melissa shared. “They prove every day that it is not about their disability, but about their ability.” **NOW**

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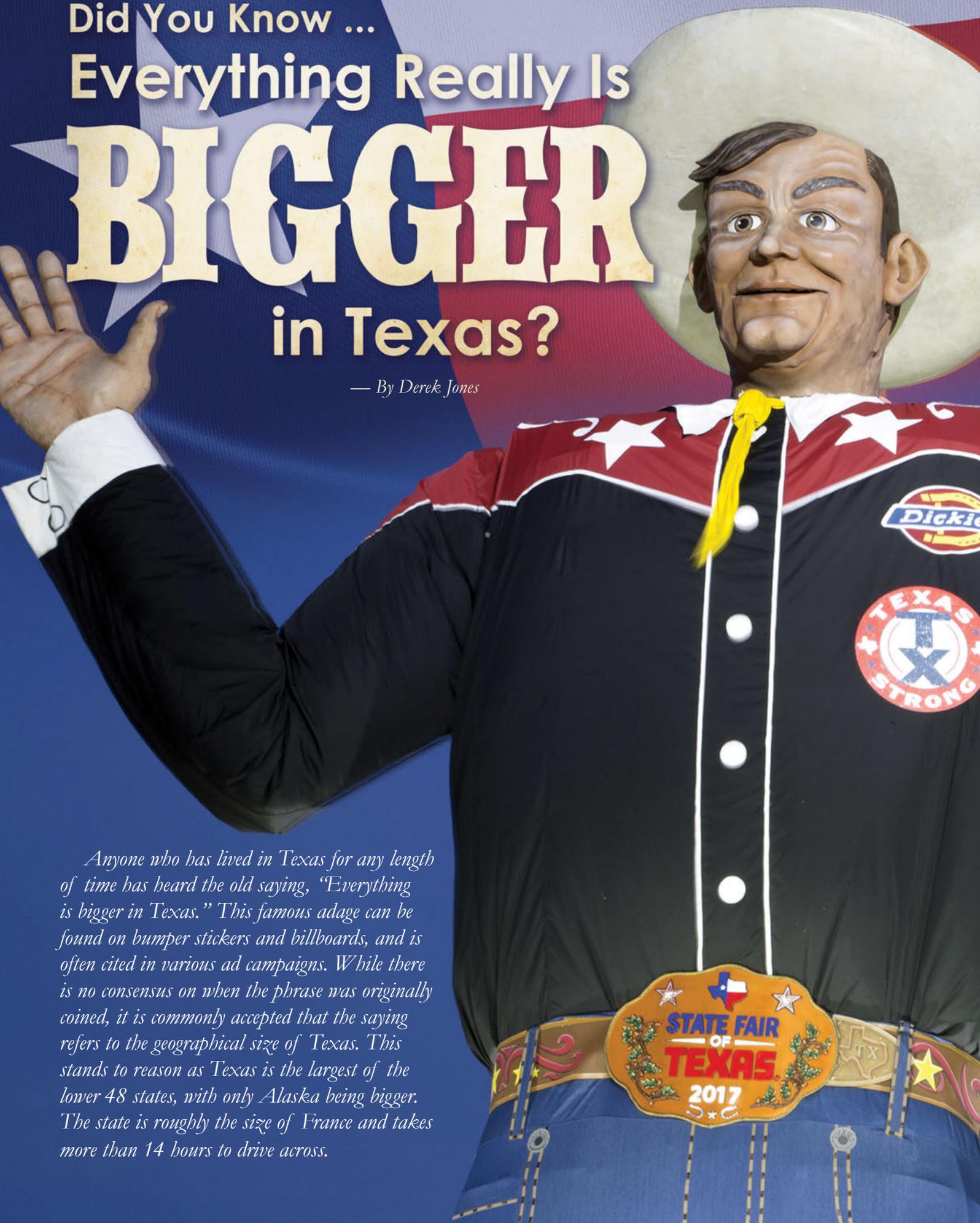


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Did You Know ...
Everything Really Is
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— By Derek Jones

Anyone who has lived in Texas for any length of time has heard the old saying, "Everything is bigger in Texas." This famous adage can be found on bumper stickers and billboards, and is often cited in various ad campaigns. While there is no consensus on when the phrase was originally coined, it is commonly accepted that the saying refers to the geographical size of Texas. This stands to reason as Texas is the largest of the lower 48 states, with only Alaska being bigger. The state is roughly the size of France and takes more than 14 hours to drive across.





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When driving through The Lone Star State, one will encounter many attractions, which serve to illustrate that everything is bigger in Texas. A traveler might encounter the world's largest pecan in Seguin, large whimsical sculptures like that of Cadillac Ranch in Amarillo or the statue of Sam Houston outside of Huntsville, billed as the largest statue of an American hero. There is no limit to the imagination of Texans when it comes to creating images that represent the size of their beloved state.

Texas is home to many larger-than-life icons, which serve as a

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source of pride and identification for Texas residents. For example, who can forget the image of Big Tex himself standing watch over the State Fair of Texas each year giving his customary cowboy greeting to guests? No one but Big Tex could fill his 95-gallon hat. The size of the famous cowboy is appropriate as the event draws some of the largest crowds of any state fair in the U.S., and what better place for the State Fair of Texas than the sprawling metropolis of Dallas, which is also referred to as *Big D*.

If size matters, then one only needs to look to the city of Austin — the home of the Texas State Capitol. From its entertainment industry to politics, Austin exhibits the big Texas spirit. The city bills itself as “The Live Music Capital of the World,” and this is demonstrated



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by Austin's many music festivals and venues. Even the State Capitol reveals the spirit of largeness by standing as one of the tallest state capitol buildings and one of the few which stands higher than the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C.

During the summer months, hundreds of people can be spotted in the evening by Congress Avenue Bridge (also known as Bat Bridge) waiting to see the world's largest urban bat colony emerge from under the bridge in a frenzy of flight in search of food. The robust atmosphere of Austin makes it the perfect location to serve as the capital of such a grand state.

When it comes to everything being bigger in Texas, perhaps the state's most prolific mark is in that of wide-open spaces that lend themselves to romantic thoughts of Texas cowboys roaming the range on horseback. Two national parks are located within the borders of Texas — Big Bend National Park and Guadalupe Peak National Park. Guadalupe Peak is home to the tallest mountain in the state, which rises 8,751 feet, and stands taller than famous El Capitan in Yosemite National Park. From its summit, a hiker can see the floor of Texas spread out beneath them.

Big Bend National Park serves up seemingly infinite miles of wilderness with the Rio Grande flowing along its border. If in the mood for a different landscape other than desert, Padre

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Island will offer a needed change in scenery. Padre Island is the world's longest barrier island and presents white sand dunes, endless ocean vistas and beautiful Texas sunsets. These open and wild spaces conjure up images deserving of a state that prides itself on size.

Sometimes, however, bigger is not always better. In 2017, Hurricane Harvey, one of the largest and most costly hurricanes to hit the United States, made landfall on the gulf shores of Texas. Although government aid was essential during this crisis, it quickly became clear it would not be enough. As the extent of the destruction of the hurricane began to surface, so did incredible stories and images of regular people helping one another. Neighbor helping neighbor became a prominent theme emerging from news sources and demonstrated the true depths of human compassion and the size of Texans' hearts. Hurricane Harvey was no match for the size of the spirit of Texas.

Whether you were born here, moved here as quickly as possible or are just passing through, the uniqueness and grandeur of The Lone Star State is enchanting. The slogan, "Everything is bigger in Texas," is part of the state's tradition, and it holds true that many things really are bigger here. **NOW**

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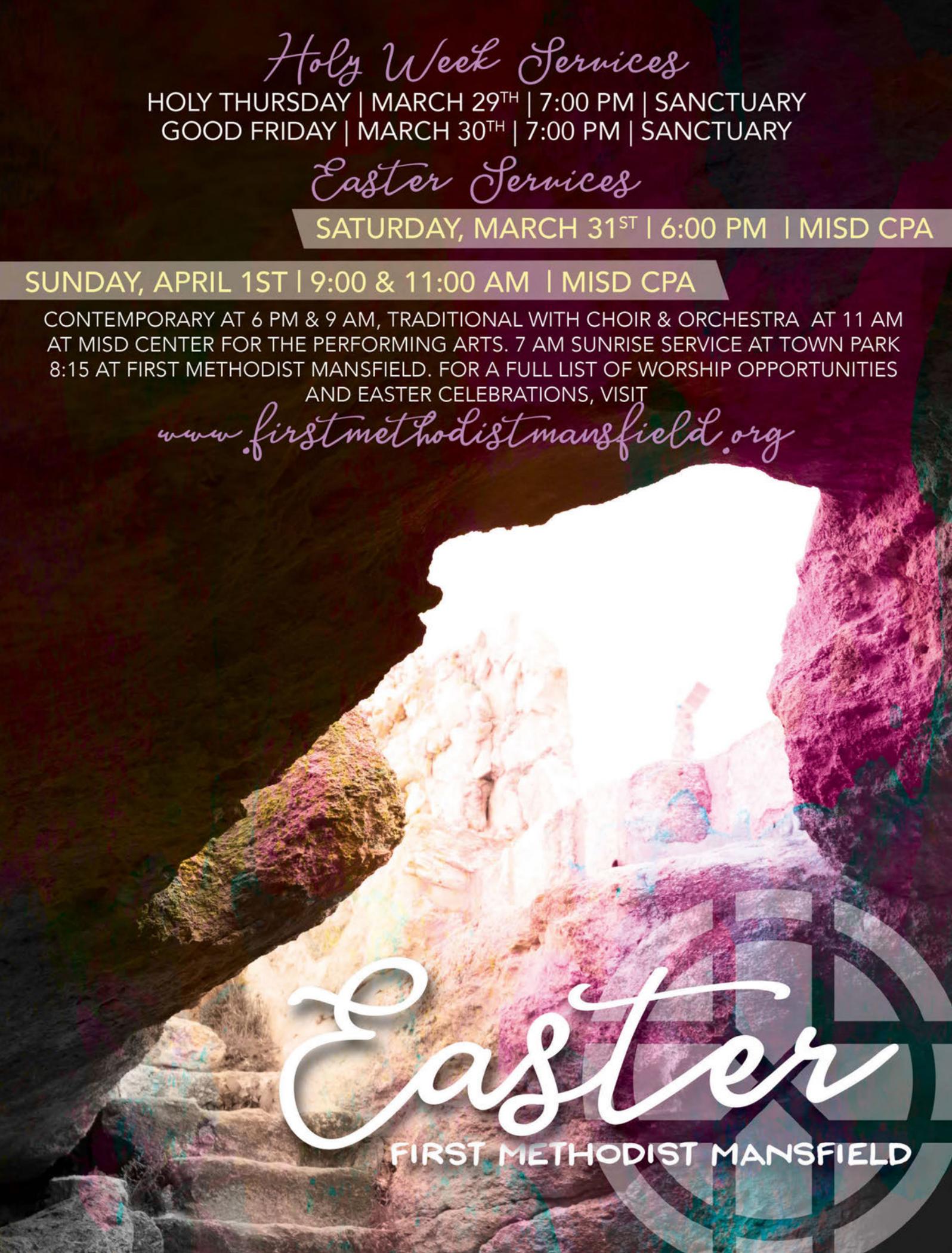
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SUNDAY, APRIL 1ST | 9:00 & 11:00 AM | MISD CPA

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Zoomed In: Natalie Whitaker

By Angel Morris

Natalie Whitaker, like many women, wrestled with unwanted weight, lack of motivation, low energy and self-esteem, despite having a loving husband and family. Having struggled with infertility and a general decline in health, she knew she had to make a change and lead by example for her family.

A unique combination of yoga and faith transformed her not only physically, but emotionally, as well. “I understand firsthand how hard it is to juggle responsibilities — family, work, life,” she said. “My goal became to show people there is always hope!” Her free advice blog is at fitwithnat.com/blogs.



Anticipating the start of baseball season this month, brothers Dalton, 12, and Dylan, 10, show off their autographed memorabilia following the Texas Rangers' stop in Midlothian.



The Pritchard family participates in Ellis County Heart of Texas Animal Rescue at Midlothian Petco. Mom, Britni and son, Ben, volunteer with HTAR.



Town Square Title accepts its Midlothian Chamber membership plaque in its recently renovated offices.



Joe Garcia and Carol Alexander enjoy senior dance night at Western Country Klub.



Taking a break from his Panther suit, Adin Shaver represents Frank Seale's Middle School at the Citrus Bowl. He was also invited to compete in a state mascot competition.



Pastor Demetrius McClendon of One Church co-hosts communitywide events this year with the theme Make New History.



Dotti Holman, owner of Always Good Catering, provides snacks at a Chamber of Commerce After Hours event.

Happy Easter!

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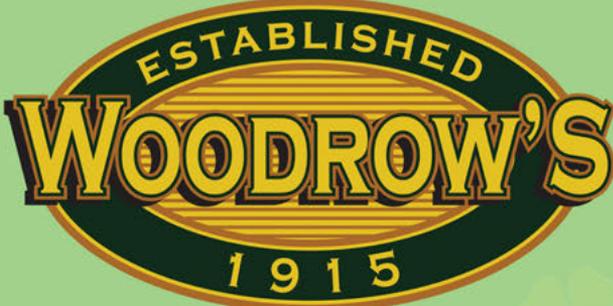
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3

Frank Seale Middle School Golf Tournament: 8:00 a.m. shotgun start, Mansfield National Golf Club, 3750 National Pkwy., Mansfield. Four-person scramble. Benefits 8th grade party. Contact peksmom12@yahoo.com for details.



4

Chip, Dip & Clip: 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., All About Dogs, 840 E. Main St. Bring dogs for a bath, nail clipping and microchip, benefitting Streets to Sheets Animal Rescue. \$20 donation requested.

16

Ellis County Master Gardner Scholarship: 4:00 p.m. deadline, www.ecmga.com under What's Happening tab. Ellis County students pursuing higher education in horticulture and/or life science disciplines may apply.

19

Midlothian Cotillion: times vary by age group, Bella Woods, 1888 N. 9th St. A course in social skills, dance and etiquette for 5th-12th grades. Five classes now-**May 14**. Visit www.cotillion.com to register.

The Writers' Circle: 6:00 p.m., A.H. Meadows Public Library, 923 S. 9th St. Support, motivation and writing tips for participants. For more details, contact Sarah at writerscirclemidlo@gmail.com.

23 — 31

First Ellis County Fair & Rodeo: times vary daily through March 31, Ellis County Expo Center, 2300 U.S. Hwy. 287, Waxahachie. Vendors, livestock, junior/adult rodeos and more. Details at www.waxahachiechamber.com.

24

Midlothian Marketplace: 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center, 1 Community Circle Dr. Businesses showcase, kids' workshops, food trucks and more. Contact Midlothian Chamber of Commerce at (972) 723-8600.

Ellis County Master Gardeners Lawn and Garden Expo: 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center, 2000 Civic Center Ln., Waxahachie. Adult/children's gardening workshops. Visit txmg.org/ellis/lawn-garden-expo for details.



Ongoing:

Mondays

Celebrate Recovery meeting: 7:00-9:00 p.m., The Lighthouse Church, 1400 N. 9th St. For more details, email jason@dfwlighthouse.org.

Second and Fourth Mondays
Rag-Tag Readers Book Club: 10:00 a.m., A.H. Meadows Public Library, 923 S. 9th St. For more information, call Sandy at (972) 775-3417.



Third Mondays

School Board meeting: 6:00 p.m., Midlothian Independent School District Administration Building, 100 Walter Stephenson Rd.

Ellis County Veterans Networking Group: 6:00 p.m., Ryan's Steakhouse, 1400 Dallas Hwy., Waxahachie. Call Mike Lamb at (214) 763-0378 for more details.

Tuesdays

Senior Center Bingo: 10:30 a.m., 4 Community Circle.

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

First Tuesdays

Midlothian Area Historical Society meeting: 7:00 p.m., Community Room of CNB, 310 N. 9th St. For more details, contact Edwin Bateman at (972) 743-2379.

First and Third Tuesdays

Bluegrass Jam Session: 7:00 p.m., Lighthouse Coffee Bar, 1404 N. 9th St.

Wednesdays

DivorceCare: 6:30-8:00 p.m., First United Methodist Church Family Life

Center, 800 S. 9th St. DivorceCare for Kids ages 5-12 meets at the same time. Care for younger children available. For more information, call (972) 775-3993.

Second and Fourth Wednesdays Senior Dance: 7:00-9:30 p.m., Western Kountry Klub, 5728 Lake View Rd. Age 45 and older. \$5 cash admission. Call (817) 800-4585 or visit www.westernkountryklub.com.



Thursdays
AARP Tax Preparation Help: 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., A.H. Meadows Public Library, 923 S. 9th St. Certified volunteers through **April 19**. Priority given to seniors. For information, call (972) 775-3417.

Midway Composite Squadron of Civil Air Patrol/US Air Force auxiliary: 6:45-9:00 p.m., Mid-Way Regional Airport, 131 Airport Dr. Cadets ages 12-18 and Senior Members 18 plus. Visit www.gocivilairpatrol.com.

Open Mic Night: 7:00 p.m., Lighthouse Coffee Bar, 1404 N. 9th St. Sign-up starts at 6:30 p.m., and slots are 15 minutes each.

Fridays
Preschool Storytime: 11:00 a.m., A.H. Meadows Public Library, 923 S. 9th St. Story, craft and snack

provided. For more information, call (972) 775-3417.



Third Saturdays
Midlothian Opry Country Music Show: Midlothian Civic Center, 224 S. 11th St. \$5 admission. Call Davonna at (214) 676-1706 or go to Facebook Midlothian Opry for tickets and show times.

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

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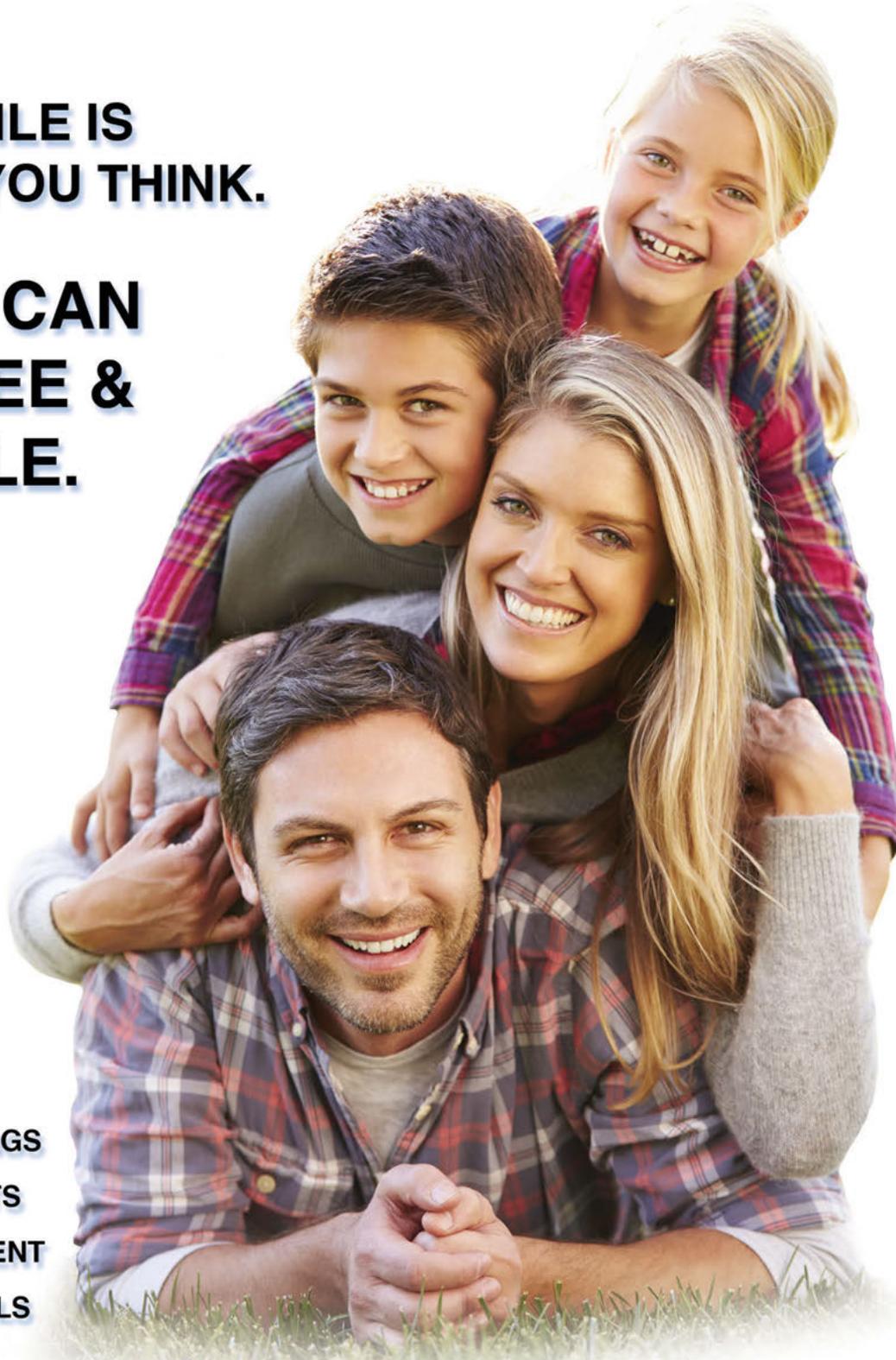
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Breast Cancer Screening Is Essential

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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