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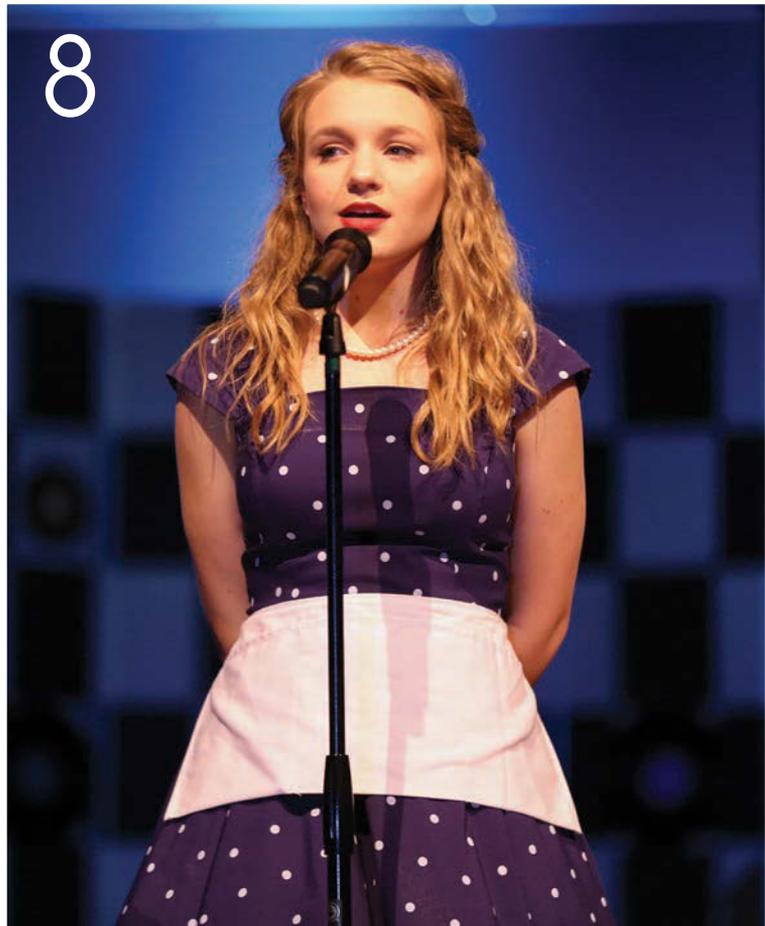


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ON THE COVER

McKenna Cooper performs through choir and musical theater at Midlothian Heritage High School.

Photo by
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EDITOR'S NOTE



Angel

Angel Morris
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Hello, Midlothian!

As the saying goes, it's time to "spring forward" with Daylight Saving Time beginning March 10. Since this particular jumping ahead is the only exercise I look forward to, March is one of my favorite months. Losing an hour is well worth the drawing near of spring, I think. I also turn 49 this month, which, perhaps surprisingly, I'm super excited about! I've lost some special people far too soon, which makes me appreciate every year I'm given (even if I don't much care for the gift of wrinkles and whitening hair that aging can bring).

Besides milestone birthdays, March is beloved by school children (and educators) everywhere for providing spring break. Young or old, you appreciate the idea of a whole week off to recover from winter and celebrate a new season's approach. Even if you won't be traveling during the break, you can refresh your home environment with a little spring cleaning.

Let's not forget, this month also provides one last chance to stock up on the famous cookies offered by Girl Scouts of the USA. Did you know there's even a Digital Cookie app to help you locate your nearest cookie sales site? "Be Prepared" may be the Boy Scouts' motto, but the Girl Scouts also know how to keep up with the times. This month, I hope you find time to sit back with a Thin Mint or Trefoil, enjoy one last cup of hot cocoa and prepare to embrace a new season.

Happy spring!

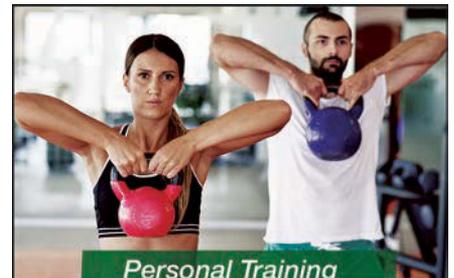
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Standing on a small stage in a Dallas recording studio, McKenna Cooper shuts out the onlookers she is facing by focusing on the video camera in front of her. She sings Adele's "Crazy for You," then begins Sam Smith's "Lay Me Down." About halfway through her second song, one of the onlookers waves her to a stop, and McKenna is about to learn where her musical endeavors go next. "For as long as I've been performing, people told me I should try out for American Idol or The Voice. But I was like, 'No thanks. I'm good,'" McKenna admitted. "Then last year, I got a text from my dad saying The Voice auditions were coming to Dallas. I said, 'OK. Let's do it.'"

In the first round of auditions, McKenna joined thousands of musical hopefuls at Globe Life Park in Arlington. "We waited in big lines to register, and then sat in a holding room. I was looking around seeing a lot of these people in their 20s and 30s who probably had a lot of experience," McKenna recalled. "I was 15 at the time thinking, *Why am I here?*"

McKenna's limited experience, however, didn't overshadow her natural talent. "In the first round, we were separated into groups of 10 with one judge. We each sang one song a cappella, then some were asked to sing a second song," McKenna noted. "Three of the 10, including me, received a call back for the next round of auditions."

Although the judges praised McKenna's next performance, they did not send her through to the third round. "They said I had a beautiful voice and good tone, but they didn't know if my song choice was one the judges would turn their chair for on the show," McKenna explained. "They told me not to be discouraged. I was disappointed, but it was a great experience."

While McKenna might consider auditioning again, she said it would likely not be before finishing high school and college. Today, her focus is performing in choir and musical theater at Midlothian Heritage High School, where she is currently a junior.

Under the mentorship of director Cliff Carbone, McKenna has her sights set on growing her talent. "He was my director in middle school before he moved to Heritage. Then he's been my director my freshman, sophomore and now junior years," she reflected. "Without him, my voice wouldn't be half as strong as it is today."

In middle and high school, McKenna competed and placed in UIL voice competitions, receiving the highest ranking given to participants and earning eighth chair last year in the All-State choir. "That's not bad, considering I was only a sophomore, and the music is very hard," she said. In the most recent All-



THE
VOICE

— By Angel Morris

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State choir process, McKenna earned first chair in Region, second chair in Area and received a spot in the All-State choir.

Prior to these contests, McKenna participated in the local competition, Midlothian's Got Talent, and placed in the top three each year, even though she was only in elementary and middle school at the time. "Third grade was my very first time to compete in any way, and I got second place performing a song from *Annie*," McKenna said. "That was special to me, because that's a song I sang with my Grandee."

Grandee — McKenna's name for her maternal grandmother — can also be credited with sparking McKenna's musical fire. "Grandee would put on *Phantom of the Opera* when I was about 4, and I started singing to that," McKenna remembered. "I loved music all through elementary school and was part of Southwest Children's Chorus."

Based in DeSoto, Southwest Children's Chorus brings together musically gifted children. In her three seasons with the chorus, McKenna performed in California, Canada, New Mexico and New York. "It's where I discovered that music is totally my thing," McKenna admitted.

McKenna filled her elective courses at MHHS with arts-related classes and performed in musical productions including the chorus of *Beauty and the Beast* and *Les Mis in Concert*, then as Cinderella and Rapunzel in *Into the Woods*. "I loved those roles. They pushed me vocally. They are soprano parts, and I'm very much an alto," McKenna noted.





McKenna portrayed Catherine in this year's Newsies and gets additional practice through the school's seasonal shows and "Coffee House" concerts, which are stripped down vocal performances.

While McKenna enjoys every musical opportunity she's given, her most memorable performances have been with Midlothian's First Baptist Church. "When I was 13, I was on our missions team in the community of Januária, Brazil. We set up a stage, and at first, there were only a few people watching us perform," she recalled. "By the time we were finishing, there were hundreds in the town square. Hearing people worship in a different language is something I'll never forget."

For now, McKenna is content to work toward college and a degree in music therapy for special needs children. "She's always been generous and has a servant's heart," McKenna's dad, Matt, said. "It's inspiring to see her find her passion at such a young age and to recognize she's been given a gift."

Music has always been part of the Cooper home, where McKenna would watch her dad play a piano cord, and then mimic it back at age 2. "My dad serves on the praise team at FBC; Mom, Sarah, is in the church choir; and younger sister, Caroline, is in the middle school choir at WGMS," McKenna said.

While confident when it comes to singing and playing musical instruments (including piano, guitar and ukulele), McKenna admits to social anxiety. "I don't get stage fright, but I do have trouble opening up to people. That's just another thing music helps me overcome," she said.

In the future, McKenna hopes to push herself even further. "I'd like to be on Broadway or have an album," she noted. "When you love something, you want to share it. I just want to be me and share the love and joy of music." **NOW**

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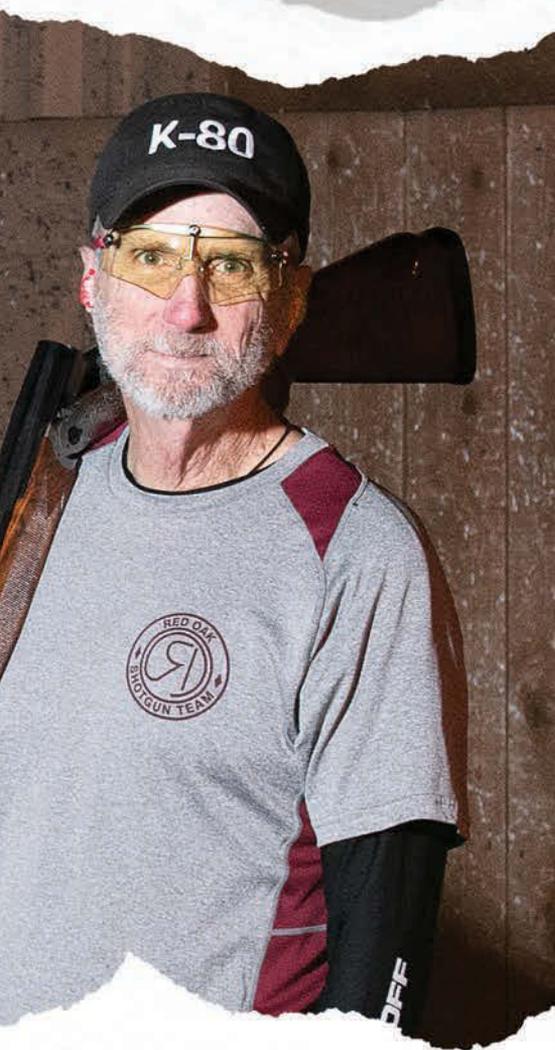
WHEN IT FINALLY CLICKS

— By Sandra Strong

Monday evenings gear up at Ellis County Sportsman's Club where students from across the area learn about the sport of clay target shooting. Under the close tutelage of Midlothian residents Brooks Humphreys, Bob Ramsden and Tom Brown, who hails from Forreston, 24 youth members of the Red Oak High School Shotgun Team, both male and female, show up ready to learn something new or hone skills they already have. "None of us have a dog in the hunt," Bob said, with a smile. "We just enjoy what we're doing."

The three coaches come to the team with experience matching the knowledge they are passing along to their young charges. All three hold their certifications through the Scholastic Clay Target Program — Brooks, four years; Bob, two years; and Tom, also two years. Brooks has coached the local 4-H shooting team for the past nine years, while Tom was an active parent volunteer for five years prior to becoming a coach. All three are certified coaches, Brooks through 4-H, Bob and Tom through the National Rifle Association. "The program and team are in their fifth year," Brooks clarified. "The team we have in place is diversified. This allows us to work with students from other districts."

Seven on the team are from Midlothian — Travis Domke, Logan Chadwell and Barrett Hamilton are from Midlothian High School; Ethan Domke is from Frank Seale Middle School; Kloe Jansonius and Clayton



Golden are from Heritage High School; and Carson Golden is from Walnut Grove Middle School.

A dozen are from Red Oak, while there are two from Maypearl, two from Waxahachie and one young lady who comes from the Dallas area. "Any school in Ellis County is eligible to shoot with the Red Oak team as long as their district does not offer a gun club," Brooks explained.

The club didn't just magically happen one day. It was born out of the persistence of ROHS student, Michael Edwards Jr., and had its beginnings in Red Oak, but quickly grew to include students from the surrounding areas. The team competes with students from high schools in Allen, Highland Park, Southlake Carroll, Keller, Burleson, Jesuit, Ennis and Texas Christian Academy, to name only a few. "There can be 17-20 teams at a competition and upwards of 300 shooters," Tom stated.

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“Our goal is to finish in the top three.”

“Some schools have 80 students to our 24,” Brooks said, “but we still win lots of trophies.”

There are three disciplines to the sport of clay target shooting — skeet, trap and sporting clays, and the three coaches teach all three. Skeet or trap is shooting at a clay target as it’s thrown from a trap to simulate the flight of a bird. Both disciplines throw targets in a somewhat predictable pattern.

Sporting clays is a form of clay pigeon shooting that includes a course of up to 10-15 different stations laid out over natural terrain. This discipline represents the unpredictability of live shooting because of the various trajectories, angles, speeds, target sizes, etc.

“Skeet seems to be our most successful discipline as a team,” Bob shared. “We’ve had students who have shot 100 rounds and not missed a single target.”

Shooting is fun, but safety always comes first within the team and at the club. “They are not allowed on the field without first taking safety classes,” Tom explained. “In fact, safety classes are taken once a year, whether you’ve had the class or not.”

“You can easily become complacent,” Brooks added. “They can’t get too comfortable, so we need to keep reminding them of the importance of gun safety.”

Bob puts a binder together for all new student shooters. They not only have Bob’s words of wisdom, they also have information from famed shooter Todd Bender, and skeet shooting pointers. “It’s all a mindset,” Bob said. “And it’s all about consistency, persistence and the desire to always do better.”

Brooks holds a safety briefing prior to each competition. He has five rules that are repeated every time: “Always assume

the gun is loaded. Keep your finger off the trigger until you are ready to shoot. Keep the gun pointed in a safe direction at all times. Know what your target is and what's behind it," he stated. "And lastly, check any gun given to you to make sure it's not loaded."

They also learn facts, such as why certain shells have different colors. "They have specific colors for a reason," Brooks said. "Twelve-gauge shells can be any color except yellow. Twenty-gauge shells are always yellow. Knowing this one hard and fast rule keeps shooters from loading the wrong shell."

The primary goal of all three coaches is simple: "The more familiar they become with a gun, the more at ease they will become with one," Brooks said.



At least one weekend a month, you will find the team at a competition. Like the postal service, they compete in all kinds of weather. "The only thing that will cancel a competition is lightning," Bob explained.

Brooks remembered one shoot where the competitors were standing in water puddles and another where the rain was coming down so hard the kids had to be temporarily pulled off the field. "One youngster had to keep cleaning the water off his glasses, before he could shoot," Brooks recalled.

The team has learned that hard work, consistency, dedication and honoring the game of clay target shooting has its rewards. "We are building confidence and helping kids come out of their shells," Bob said, "one student at a time."

"When it finally clicks," Tom added, "it's amazing!" **NOW**

Editor's Note: To learn more about the team, call Brooks Humphreys at (469) 964-6224.



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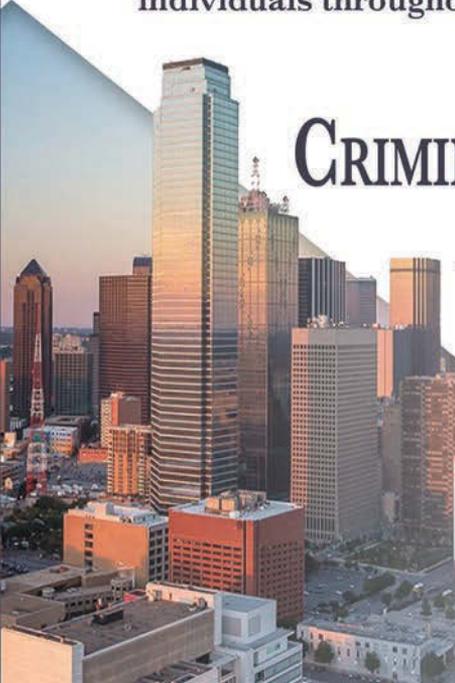
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Owners Michael and Kelley Ivy opened Branded Burger Co. in Midlothian in 2012, featuring their signature branded buns, which are made fresh each morning. Serving lunch and dinner, the restaurant was well received. "We have been open for six years as of December 2018, and Midlothian is our original location. Without the support of our customers, we would not be where we are today," Kelley said.

Just six months after opening, the Ilys entered and won a burger competition in the area. "Our Smokey Bull Burger won the very first Ellis County Burger Battle in 2013. We were thrilled, but not surprised. It's one of our best-selling burgers!" Kelley recalled of the menu item that features grilled onions, crispy bacon and pepper jack cheese.

To keep up with customer demand, Michael completed a two-month expansion of the Midlothian restaurant, increasing seating capacity to 160 patrons in June 2013. Branded Burger Co.'s open kitchen allows patrons to watch

burgers and sides in the making from stools or rustic booths in the restaurant's laid-back environment.

Whether eating inside or on the patio, guests choose from signature menu items, which include gourmet burgers, using 100-percent Angus beef and fresh vegetables. Not a burger fan? Chicken lovers can enjoy grilled or deep-fried chicken sandwiches or chicken tenders. "Our buns are homemade, and yes, we brand each bun every morning. We cut and press our patties, which are fresh Angus beef. We cut everything, from our lettuce, tomato and onion ... the pickle is the only thing that comes in already cut," Michael noted.

Even the menu's mushrooms are fresh, cut and sautéed every morning, so customers know they are getting fresh veggies with every order. Hand-cut french fries and onion rings are among the Branded Burger sides, while homemade fried pies kickoff dessert options. Milkshakes feature Blue Bell ice cream. "We are also known for our homemade onion rings that we batter and make twice a day. Plus, our fried pies are fried to order, and you can top them with Blue Bell ice cream. They are to die for!" Kelley enthused.

This year, the Ivys are excited to expand into Waxahachie, as well. "Our Waxahachie customers have been begging for a Branded Burger, and we felt after six years and the wonderful support Midlothian has given us, it was time to expand," Michael explained. "Of course, Waxahachie was top on our list. This is our first franchise location, and we are very proud that the first franchise is staying in the family."

At either Branded Burger Co. location, guests can expect to pay between \$4 and \$8 for a burger, with sides ranging from \$2-\$4. Kids' meals are available (burgers, mini corn dogs or chicken tenders) with fries and drink for \$4.49. Boylan cane sugar bottles, fountain drinks, beer and margaritas are offered.

"We love being involved in the community," Kelley admitted. And the Ivys look forward to their continued participation in both Branded Burger Co. locations. **NOW**

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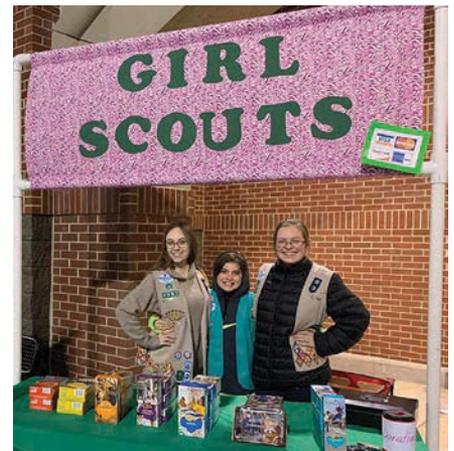
Tamy Riley celebrates her husband, Matthew Snow's, milestone birthday with a fabulous night of wine tasting and food pairing.

Zoomed In: Kaiden and Paxton Day

By Angel Morris

With Midlothian's ongoing growth, twins Kaiden and Paxton Day, and their Destination Imagination Biofighters teammates at LaRue Miller Elementary, are focused on protecting local trees. After attending discussion meetings with city leaders, the group is selling seed packets donated by Lowe's, and monies will go to Earthtones Greenery toward buying trees for Midlothian.

The Biofighters want many to be food trees to help with nutrition and asked that those trees be planted around community parks and schools. They requested any other trees be planted in grassy medians of city roads. Kaiden, Paxton and the Biofighters team hope their efforts will result in a community tree-planting day sometime soon. To learn more, visit www.gofundme.com/trees-for-midlothian-tx.



Members of Midlothian Girl Scout Troop 2567 sell cookies at Brookshire's.



National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association of Ellis County recently installed Midlothian residents James Whitfield (third from left) and Rex Carey (far right) as officers.



Heritage High School FFA volunteers present wooden signage created by Midlothian High FFA for the new dog park.



Local students Kalen Phillips, Cody Zell, Mason Zacharias and Brooks Brown enjoy K1 Speed Racing.



Clever Container celebrates its grand opening with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Chamber of Commerce.



Kelley Swanson with The Creative Brush teaches pottery at Midlothian Marketplace, which happens again March 2.



Midlothian first responders rescue dogs after a resident reported hearing the animals stuck in a culvert.

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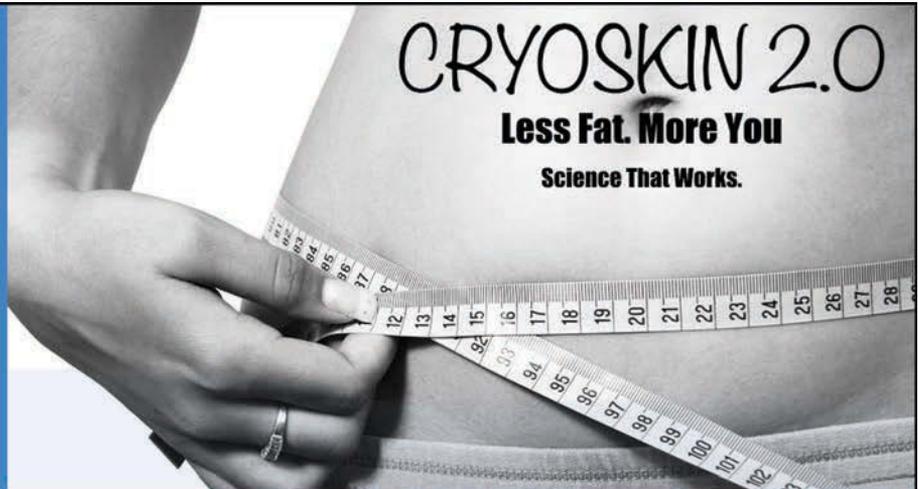
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CookingNOW

In the Kitchen With

SARA ALLEN

— By Angel Morris



Full-time massage therapist, wife and mom, Sara Allen is a foodie. “I watch food shows and text myself names of restaurants, so if I ever go to that state, I can try whatever recipe I fell in love with!” Sara admitted.

Despite having a scar from her first attempt at frying eggs in fourth grade, Sara is not afraid to try new recipes. “I don’t know how many nights I lie in bed, looking up recipes, and dropping my phone on my face because I fall asleep saying, ‘Just one more,’” Sara joked.

Sara’s recipes range from low-carb to comfort food. “I love all types, but it’s important to know what foods are right for you,” Sara, who inherited diabetes and high triglycerides, explained. “I’m grateful I’m able to teach myself and share my cooking with others!” **NOW**

Spring Rolls

Dipping Sauce:

1/2 cup hoisin sauce (I wouldn’t use off-brand.)

1/4 cup peanut butter, smooth

1/4 cup water

1 Tbsp. rice vinegar

Shrimp Rolls:

6 oz. thin rice noodles

10 round rice paper wrappers

10 leaves of red leaf lettuce, thick stem ends removed, cut in half

1 cup carrots, shredded (divided use)

1 cup red cabbage, thinly shredded (divided use)

1 cup fresh bean sprouts (divided use)

1 1-lb. pkg. cooked shrimp, peeled, no tail

1/2 cup cilantro (divided use)

1. For dipping sauce: Combine all sauce ingredients in a medium-size bowl, whisking until smooth.

2. For shrimp rolls: Boil noodles until tender but not mushy, about 6 minutes, or according to package directions. Drain; cool with cold water. Refrigerate until ready to use.

3. Fill a pie dish or bowl large enough to hold rice paper with water. Set damp dish towel on cutting board. Immerse one rice paper sheet into water for 15-20 seconds.

4. Remove, shaking off excess water; lay flat

on dampened towel. Paper may still seem stiff. However, it will become pliable as you build each roll.

5. Lay one piece of lettuce over bottom third of rice paper. On lettuce, place 2 to 3 Tbsp. of noodles, 1 Tbsp. of carrots, 1 Tbsp. of cabbage and a few bean sprouts.

6. Roll paper halfway into a cylinder. Fold sides in envelope pattern. Lay 2-3 shrimp along the crease. Place a few pieces of cilantro beside the shrimp. Keep rolling paper into a tight cylinder to seal.

7. Repeat with remaining wrappers. Store with seam side down. Serve immediately with dipping sauce.

Breakfast Enchiladas

2 cups deli ham, chopped small

1/2 cup green onions, diced

2 1/2 cups shredded cheddar cheese (divided use)

10 8-inch flour tortillas

1 1/4 cups half-and-half

4 large eggs

1/2 tsp. salt

1 tsp. flour

Salsa, sour cream and extra green onions or cilantro, for serving

1. Coat a 9x13-inch baking dish with nonstick cooking spray. Mix ham, onions and 2 cups of cheese in a medium bowl. Scoop 1/3 cup of mixture onto each tortilla; roll and place seam side down in the baking dish.
2. Whisk half-and-half, eggs, salt and flour; pour over tortillas. Cover; refrigerate overnight.
3. In the morning, preheat oven to 350 F. Bake, covered, for 35 minutes. Remove foil; sprinkle remaining cheese over enchiladas. Bake for 10 more minutes, or until tops are golden brown and egg mixture is set.
4. Serve with salsa, sour cream and additional green onions or cilantro, as desired.

Fettuccine

- 1/2 cup butter
- 8 oz. cream cheese
- 1 pt. heavy cream
- 1 tsp. garlic powder
- Salt, to taste
- Black pepper, to taste
- 2/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese, preferably fresh
- 1 lb. fettuccine, prepared according to package directions

1. In a medium saucepan, melt butter; add cream cheese. When cream cheese is softened, add heavy cream. Season with garlic powder, salt and pepper.
2. Simmer for 15-20 minutes over low heat, stirring constantly. Remove from heat; stir in Parmesan. Serve over hot fettuccine noodles.

Strawberry Refrigerator Cake

- 1 strawberry cake mix and all its required ingredients
- 2 10-oz. boxes frozen strawberries in syrup
- 1 cup milk, cold
- 1 3.5-oz. box vanilla instant pudding
- 1 8-oz. container Cool Whip, thawed
- 1 pt. strawberries, tops removed and strawberries halved (thawed)
- 1/3 cup pecans, chopped (optional, but recommended)

1. Prepare cake mix; bake according to package directions. When done, cool completely.
2. Use handle of wooden spoon to poke rows of holes in cooled cake. Add strawberries with syrup into a food processor or blender; pulse to slushy consistency.
3. Pour strawberry puree mixture over cake; spread evenly. Let it soak in. While it's soaking, put milk and pudding mix into a bowl; mix until thickened. (Pudding box recommends 2 cups milk; only use 1.)

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Upside Down
Pineapple Bundt Cake

4. Fold in thawed Cool Whip. Once pudding and Cool Whip are well combined, spread evenly over cake.
5. Place strawberry halves atop Cool Whip; sprinkle with pecans. Refrigerate for 4 hours before serving.

Upside Down Pineapple Bundt Cake

- 1/2 cup butter, melted
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 8-oz. can pineapple rings (reserve juice)

- 1 12-oz. jar maraschino cherries
- 1 box yellow or pineapple cake mix
- 1 box vanilla instant pudding
- 1 cup milk (will not use full cup)
- 1/3 cup vegetable oil
- 3 eggs

1. Preheat oven to 350 F. Thoroughly spray Bundt pan with nonstick baking spray with flour.
2. Melt butter; pour evenly into the bottom

of the pan. Sprinkle with brown sugar. Cut pineapple rings in half; alternate with cherries around the pan. Set aside.

3. In a large mixing bowl, stir cake mix and pudding mix together. Drain pineapple juice into a measuring cup; add enough milk to make 1 cup of liquid. Add to cake/pudding mixture; add oil. Add eggs, one at a time, until thoroughly mixed, using mixer on medium speed about 2 minutes.

4. Carefully pour batter over fruit; bake for 33-36 minutes. To avoid spills, put Bundt pan on a baking sheet. Cool 10 minutes in the pan. Slide knife around edges and center;

invert cake onto serving tray. Slice between pineapples; serve warm or at room temperature.

Easy Burritos and Rice

Burritos:

- 1 pkg. El Monterey Burritos (I use beef and bean.)
- 1 32-oz. jar Old El Paso Enchilada Sauce
- 1 pkg. shredded mozzarella cheese

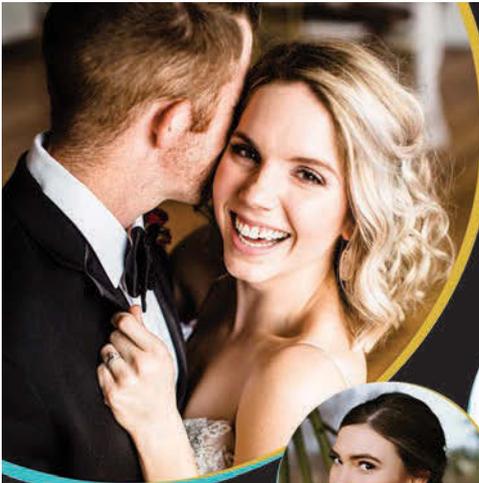
Rice:

- 1 box Success Instant Cook Rice
- Knorr Tomato Bouillon
- Cilantro, to taste
- Onion, to taste

1. For burritos: Heat oven to 350 F. Place burritos in a 9x13-inch pan. Cover with sauce and cheese; cook for about 45 minutes, or until sauce is boiling.

2. For rice: While burritos are cooking, prepare rice according to package directions. Before adding rice, put 1 Tbsp. of bouillon per cup of water.

3. Cut cilantro; set aside. Sauté onions until tender. After rice is done, add cilantro and onion; stir and serve.





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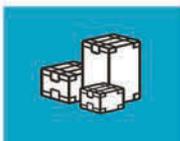
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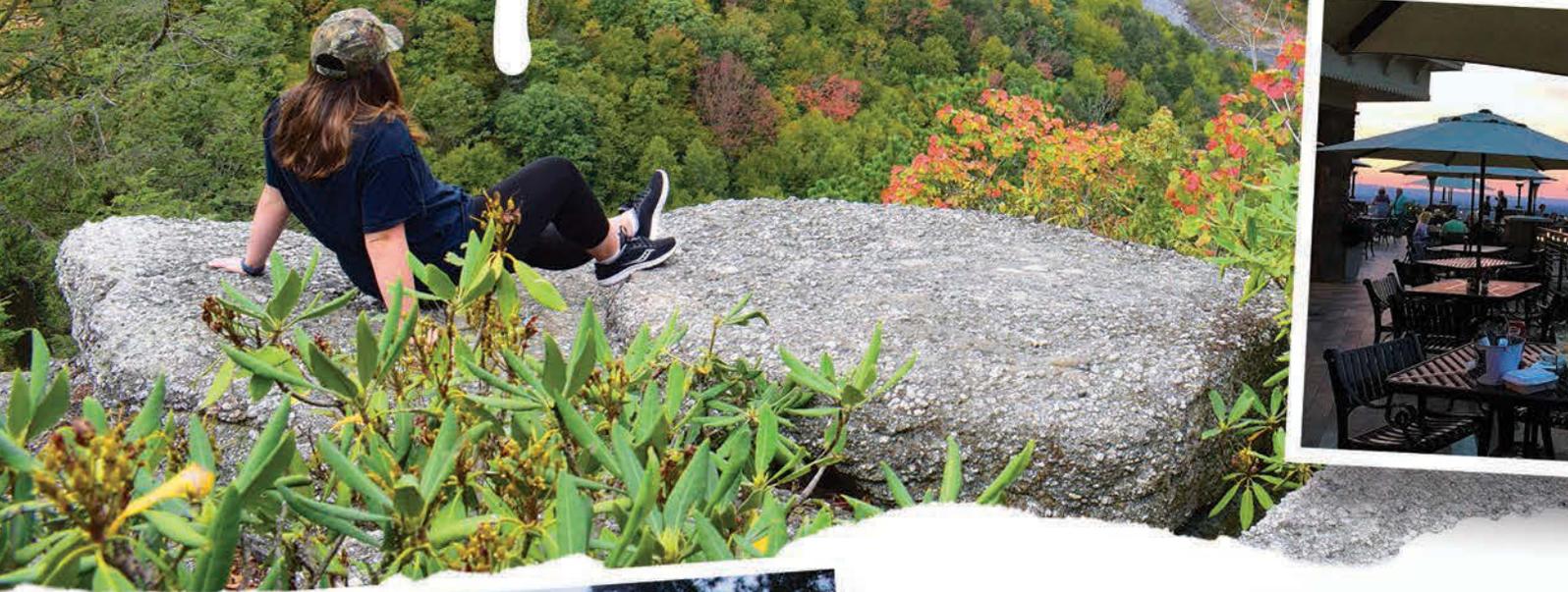
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— By Kelly Shannon



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The Pocono Mountains, also known as “the Poconos,” is teeming with history. A popular destination to many on the East Coast, it’s a short drive from major metropolitan areas, such as New York City, New Jersey, Philadelphia, Baltimore and



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Natural scenic beauty; fun-filled, year-round activities; and luxurious accommodations make the Pocono Mountains the perfect place for a romantic stay. The region has become a haven of world-class, luxury spas incorporating breathtaking, natural surroundings. Romantics indulge in decadent amenities,

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such as saunas, massage tables, log-burning fireplaces and whirlpool baths.

Accommodations are as varied as the Poconos' landscape. Consider a bed-and-breakfast atop a mountain peak overlooking one of the Poconos' many quiet coves, or an inn nestled among rolling hills and scenic mountains. Alternatively, visitors can stay in a historic, downtown boutique hotel that caters to romance with its vintage charm and warm hospitality.

The past decade has transformed the region into a family-friendly destination. Endless entertainment is provided, whether it be in the form of indoor water parks, arcades, adventure parks, NASCAR races, scenic train rides, festivals, ski/snowboard lessons, snow tubing or a resort with daily activities tailored to children. Options are endless, and families return time and time again.

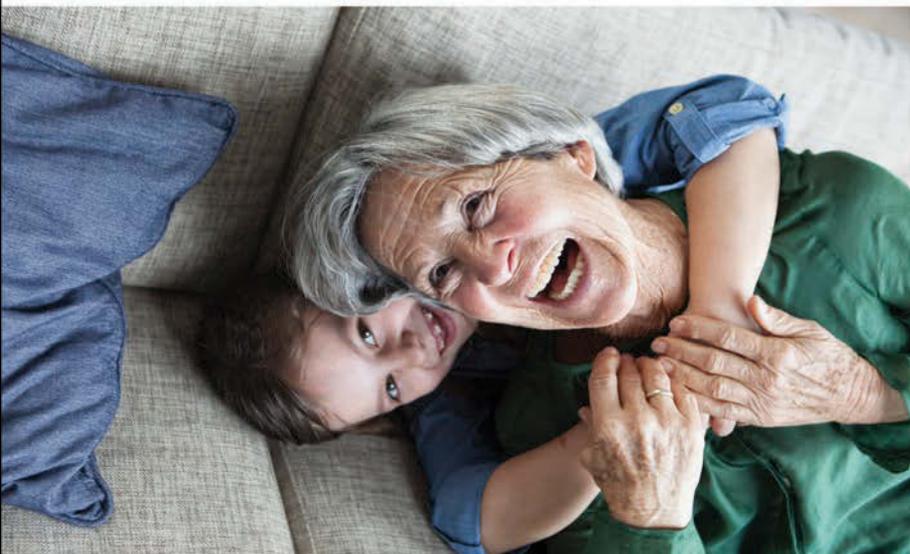
The Poconos' bountiful nature makes the destination shine. There are nine states and two national parks, more than 261 miles for hiking and biking, dozens of majestic waterfalls, rivers for whitewater rafting, more than 35 golf courses and lakes for boating, fishing and jet skiing. Even just driving around, visitors can catch grand scenic overlooks.

Winters offer guests the opportunity to ski or snowboard 163 ski trails, snow tube (including galactic tubing and family-style tubing), snowmobile and even snowshoe their way through snowy wonderlands.

The family will love the Pocono Mountains' miles of snowmobile trails in the winter and its wonderful selection of family-friendly resorts, motels, cottages and condos just steps away from the many lakes in the summer.

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The region's water park resorts welcome families to splash and stay in any season, as they are always 84 degrees. Full-service hotels and resorts serve up extensive amenities and make for a well-appointed home base while exploring. A variety of campgrounds can be found along the rivers, lakes or in the woods.



Foodies will have a field day at a variety of restaurants around the region. Find upscale French flair at the Delmonico Room at the Hotel Fauchere, or at the French Manor Inn & Spa. End the family-fun day at Kalahari's indoor water park with a juicy burger and a milkshake — topped with a donut at B-Lux Grill & Bar. Share a sunset toast with your travel buddy at The Dock on the third largest lake in the state, Lake Wallenpaupack.

While exploring the quaint downtowns, visitors find unique cafés, bakeries, ice cream parlors and coffee shops. The local breweries and wineries offer some of the tastiest beverages on the East Coast.

The Poconos' year-round cultural tours and art exhibitions, abundant antiquing, brand-name shopping and full calendar of festivals showcase the heritage, music and food of the Pocono Mountains. If you are considering a vacation to this region, the friendly professionals who manage the Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau are happy to help. **NOW**

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— By Melissa Rawlins

When friends and family drop in for a visit, a tasty beverage can make them feel right at home. Beer-drinking guests' taste buds veer to variety, yet craft beers are not inexpensive. Home brewers have figured out that sharing a \$3, 22-oz., handmade concoction neither breaks their bank nor bothers their buddies.

Buying beer-making kits, each producing 39 22-oz. bottles of beer or one kegger, is a snap. You can get started within a wide range of investments. For instance, Bed Bath & Beyond offers a \$600 craft beer brewery system. Williams and Sonoma's is only \$49.95. At mrbeer.com, you can spend anywhere from \$169 for advanced beer brewing systems to \$1 for basic ingredients. Locally, beer-making supply houses operate in Haltom City, Arlington, Fort Worth, Dallas, Carrollton, Richardson, Pantego, Colleyville and, of course, Austin.

Retired couples, young marrieds and singles are finding their foray into beer making pretty straightforward. Yet creativity surrounds the basic process. For instance, some people use their garage for fermenting, while others repurpose their hardly-ever-used guest shower. An initial, minimal investment of around \$200 in good equipment is just as important as the ingredients you select.

Must Haves

- A cauldron (or an almost commercial-size pasta pot)
- A large fire source
- Commercial-cooking utensils, including a stirring spoon and thermometer



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- A 5-gallon plastic bucket with a lid
- A 6-gallon, glass fermenting jug called a carboy
- A hydrometer
- A capper, for sealing bottles
- Bottles or a kegger

Once home, you need a temperature-controlled space where you let the beer ferment. Getting to the point of serving takes nearly a month. The American Homebrewers Association provides online instructions for making beer, mead and cider, and a website called homebrewing.org contains simple guidance to equipment, ingredients and procedures that adventurous souls should know.

Brewing Benefits

- People like your beer and enjoy themselves.
- You get to smell the odors of boiling hops.
- You experience the joys of chemistry, while watching cane sugar and molasses boil to make the fermented juices.
- You can make a game out of going to bars or liquor stores, begging used beer bottles to scrape and clean.
- Once you've got the first batch built, you get another started right away and develop a collection of different kinds of beer.
- Homebrewing provides a way to have an extravagant beer on the cheap.

Production Pitfalls

There is an economic incentive to brewing beer properly. It costs money to throw it away. If you do fail miserably, it's not good to throw it away on the grass, unless you rinse the residue with a high-powered hose. The yeast products could kill dogs if they eat it.

You cannot taste your batch while you're preparing and bottling it. So,




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you'll not know whether you failed until the beer is finished. But it won't go to waste. People who enjoy beer will find a way to drink it.

In the process of making the beer, space matters. It will surprise you how much space you need in your pantry for 39 22-oz. bottles of beer.

Tips and Tricks

- Do not ignore instructions.
- Stay within the various time and temperature limits. You can ruin a batch pretty easily by cooking it too hard or too fast.
- As soon as you reach your time limit, you must cool your brew as fast as possible until it reaches the temperature range where it will ferment nicely — as opposed to burning. Most sets of instructions do not tell you that you need a lot of ice to bathe the tub in the sink.
- The fermentation process contains many activities that each take a couple of hours and, over time, require quite a commitment. Think of the process as a fun way to spend time with your beer-brewing partner.
- Bottling takes more time than kegging. Putting the finished batch of beer in a big barrel or keg, or into a made-over refrigerator, makes bottling the beer unnecessary. Your choice depends upon how you and your guests like to drink beer.

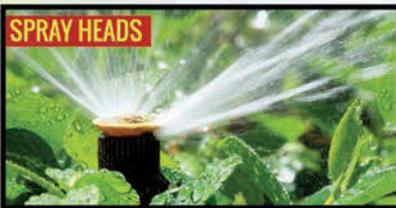
Your labor, time and financial investment will be just significant enough to ensure that you appreciate the process. But don't put your finished products in storage. Keep your kegger full or rotate your 39 bottles from the pantry through the refrigerator. Anytime a friend visits, you'll be ready to welcome them with a cold one. Beer is most fun when you give it away. **NOW**

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TALES OF TEXAS

**ONE RIOT
ONE RAN**



Capt. Bill McDonald.
Courtesy of the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum, Waco.

As part of the Texas Rangers Frontier Battalion, Capt. Bill McDonald, served from 1891-1907, armed with a Colt .45 caliber Classic Peacemaker, a Winchester rifle and a shotgun. His and other Rangers' exploits became legendary through publications and songs, and it was his deeds that led to the Ranger's motto: "One Riot, One Ranger." Walter Prescott Webb, Texas historian and author of The Texas Rangers: A Century of Frontier Defense, attributed the motto to having started with a plea for Rangers to handle a mob. "When a lone Ranger got off the train — Bill McDonald, of course — there was a vigorous protest from the citizen committee at his inadequacy to control the situation. 'Well, you ain't got but one mob, have you?' he inquired sweetly." Albert Bigelow Paine, Capt. McDonald's biographer, attributed the motto to having risen from Capt. McDonald's comment to a Dallas mayor who needed Rangers to stop an illegal prizefight. When getting off the train, Capt. McDonald, the only Ranger to arrive, reportedly said to the concerned mayor, "Hell! Ain't I enough? There's only one prizefight!" Fact or lore? Who knows?

Law enforcement officers who earn the right to wear the elite Texas Ranger silver or gold star follow a tradition that began in 1823. After inheriting his father, Moses', empresario designation from Mexico, Stephen F. Austin authorized the formation of a Tejas militia to range far and wide, while dealing with Native American raids and criminals. Those recruited earned \$15 per month, paid in property in Mexico's Tejas colony.

The militia served, as needed, under many names and provided their own horses, supplies and equipment. Their ethnicities reflected the multicultural roots of Tejas and the growth of immigrants worldwide. From each other, they learned new tactics and multilingual skills. By 1835, with the war for Texas independence from Mexico imminent, a "Corps of Rangers" with elected officers was formed with pay set at \$1.25 per day. Those Ranger companies provided "cover" for Texans retreating from Santa Anna's advances,

— By Virginia Riddle

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Courtesy of the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum, Waco.

harassed his troops and were Texas Army scouts. Some of them answered Lt. Col. William B. Travis' last request for help at the Alamo.

The Colt .36 caliber five-shot pistol became the weapon-of-choice of famed Ranger Capt. John Coffee "Jack" Hays and his company, thus continuing the Ranger tradition of learning and adapting to new tactics and technology. Modifications to the weapon were made by Samuel H. Walker, one of Hays' men, so the newly designed weapon became known as the Walker Colt.

After Texas became a state in 1845, the Mexican-American War found Rangers helping U.S. troops as scouts. They were given the name, *Los diablos Tejanos*, the Texas Devils, due to their fierce fighting skills. Later, following Texas' secession from the union during the Civil War, the "ranging" regiment became frontier protectors, with some eventually joining with Confederate troops in Texas in that task.

During Reconstruction and into the next century, frontier lawlessness reigned, so the Texas legislature coined the name, Texas Ranger, officially creating a force in 1874 to deal with outlaws. Operating under the authority of the governor, the newly created two divisions of Rangers, the Frontier Battalion and the Special Forces, began bringing justice to the land with many of the battles becoming part of legends and lore.

Through the ensuing years, Rangers dealt with famed Pancho Villa, Bat Masterson, John Wesley Hardin, along with wildcatting oil boom days and boundary/fence cutting problems, smugglers and spies, train robberies and bootleggers during Prohibition. It was former Texas Ranger Captain Frank Hamer, then commissioned as a Texas highway patrolman, who tracked down Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow.

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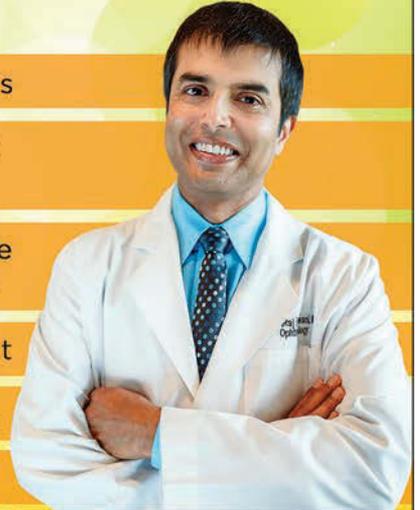
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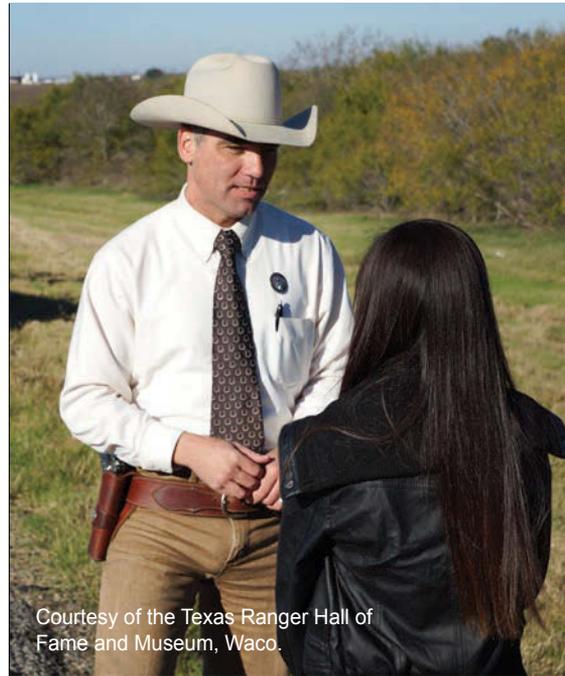
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Today's Rangers' caseload and duties are continually growing in proportion to Texas' population and business growth. In addition to the work of their special operations group and other specialized programs, such as their internationally recognized Interdiction for the Protection of Children Program, Texas Rangers have nine basic missions: Interagency investigative assistance, criminal intelligence/suppression of organized crime, localized suppression of crime of extraordinary circumstances, interagency training, special officers of the court, internal investigations, forensic capabilities, special security for elected officials and gubernatorial security.

An elite force, the legislature-authorized 173 Rangers are selected from DPS officers, with more than 100 applicants per opening. They travel by whatever means is necessary, including horseback. Texas Rangers wear appropriate-to-the-job regulated attire that still, most often, includes western-style boots, western hats, ties and their cherished badges. **NOW**

Editor's Note: In 1976, The Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum was opened in Waco. For more information, visit www.texasranger.org.

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Fido for the Family

— By Amber D. Browne



For most couples with little ones, a pet is a necessity. Dogs provide hours of playtime for children, teach responsibility and offer unconditional love and companionship. But which dog breeds are best for children? The answer varies for each family depending on multiple factors including yard space, allergies and the child's age, among other things.

Soon-to-be dog owners with large, enclosed yards could choose more energetic breeds, since the dog has plenty of outdoor room for exercise. According to the American Kennel Club, the Labrador Retriever is friendly and active, and as America's most popular breed, fits well with families. The Golden Retriever is obedient and devoted to its owner. Because of its patience, the breed does well with young children. The Beagle is also known to be great with children. The breed enjoys companionship, and its playful demeanor will provide hours of entertainment.

Apartment renters or homeowners with limited yard space could decide to add a smaller breed to the family. Small- to medium-sized breeds include the Bulldog, which is a patient pup, and the Bull Terrier. The Bull Terrier can be mischievous, but was bred to be a companion dog and is good with older children. Another popular breed for families is the Poodle. With multiple sizes available, a miniature Poodle might be an option for families living in an apartment.

Because it is hypoallergenic, the Poodle is one breed better fit for families suffering with allergies. Another breed for allergy sufferers is the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier, which has a happy disposition and is a devoted companion. Depending on the age of the child, parents must decide if a puppy or mature dog would be the perfect fit for the family. Puppies need to be trained, but the dog will grow and mature along with the child. An older dog will most likely have some training and can provide several years of companionship for an older child. As the child ages, he or she can take on more responsibilities when caring for the pup. Younger children can help brush, feed and water the dog. Older children can walk the dog or even bake fresh puppy treats in the kitchen.

Whether parents decide to purchase or adopt the pup, they must do their research. Most adoption or rescue agencies know the breed or have an idea of the breeds if the animal is mixed. Whatever the case, families should look for a calm and friendly temperament, how the breed might interact with other pets, research possible health problems and determine if the dog will incur grooming expenses. Although adding a furry family member to the pack is a big responsibility, the memories made with children and adults alike are unforgettable. **NOW**

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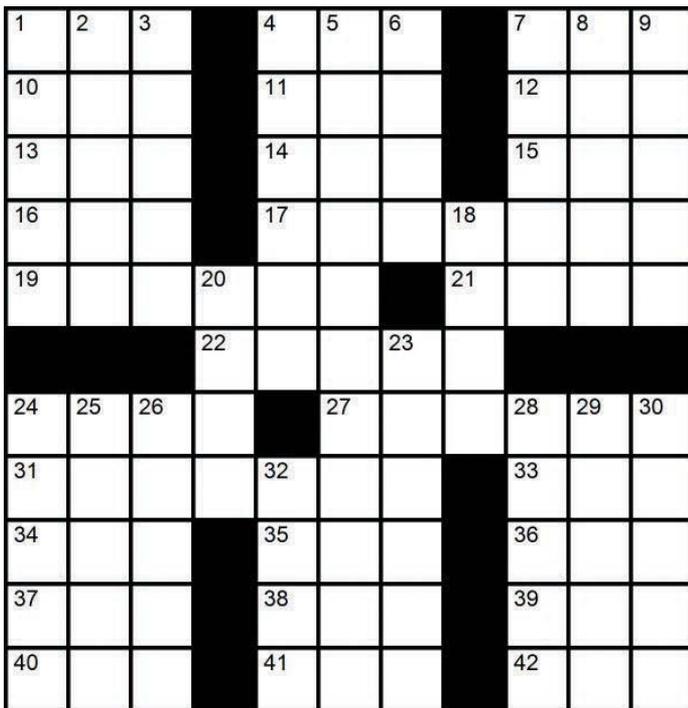
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Crossword Puzzle



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Across

- 1 British Delta Force equivalent
- 4 Short change?
- 7 Iraq war *casus belli*
- 10 Presidential advisory grp.
- 11 "Figured it out!"
- 12 Weeding implement
- 13 Diamonds
- 14 Actor --- Gibson
- 15 Admiration
- 16 Fiver
- 17 Built
- 19 Party, south of the border
- 21 Blades
- 22 Drop by unannounced
- 24 Transfer legally
- 27 Cover completely
- 31 Drafted
- 33 Observe
- 34 Free
- 35 El operator
- 36 Highest mountain in Crete
- 37 Repetitive behavior condition, for short
- 38 Atmosphere
- 39 Crackpot
- 40 Might
- 41 Statute
- 42 Navigational aid

Down

- 1 Smell
- 2 Computer data character set
- 3 Part of an act
- 4 Woke up
- 5 Healing
- 6 An auction
- 7 "Oh, --- Beautiful Mornin'"
- 8 Lawn-care buy
- 9 Real estate documents
- 18 Nam force
- 20 Vomit
- 23 To a certain extent
- 24 Information holder
- 25 "Fear of Fifty" author --- Jong
- 26 Annie's Lieutenant-General
- 28 On drugs
- 29 Introduced, with "to"
- 30 Achievements to be proud of
- 32 College sporting org.

Solutions on page 60

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Sudoku Puzzle

Easy

1				7				
			3	4				
					8		7	3
9								2
5		3					1	7
			5			3	8	
		5	1		6			
	7					5		
	2				4	6		8

Medium

	6							
		5	3					1
		7			4			
			7			6	3	
				2				9
5	9			6				
					7		2	
	2		6	5				
	5			8		4		

Crosswordsite.com Ltd

Solutions on page 60

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3/6

Business Breakfast:

Guest speaker will discuss real estate training. \$10 advanced tickets; \$15 at the door.
8:00-9:00 a.m.,
Midlothian Conference Center,
1 Community Circle.
Tickets available at
members.midlothianchamber.org.

3/16

Wildflower Walk:

Enjoy a half-mile trail identifying wildflowers with Texas Master Naturalists. Wear outdoor-appropriate clothing and shoes.
9:00-10:00 a.m., Mockingbird Nature Park, 1361 Onward Rd.
txmn.org/indiantrail/.

3/19

Breakfast With the Blue:

Learn about CATT (Community Action Through Teamwork) Unit and helping local police deter crime. 8:00-9:30 a.m.,
Midlothian Conference Center,
1 Community Circle.
info@midlothianchamber.org.

3/21-3/30

Ellis County Youth Expo Livestock Show and Rodeo:

Nine days of activities that start with professional rodeos and live concerts and continue with a full schedule of events every day.
Ellis County Fair and Rodeo:
21-23; Stock Show: **24-30**.
Ellis County Expo Center,

2300 W. Hwy. 287, Waxahachie.
www.ecyexpo.com/tickets.

3/22-3/23

Waxahachie's Old Fashioned

Singing Project presents Heaven's Front Porch:

All tickets are \$12. 7:00 p.m.,
Friday; 3:00 p.m., **Saturday**,
Chautauqua Auditorium,
Getzender Park, Waxahachie.
www.WaxaOFS.com.

3/23

Juicing 101:

Free demonstration providing the basics of juicing for health and wellness. 2:00 p.m.,
A.H. Meadows Public Library,
923 S. 9th St. Contact Kathy at
(972) 775-3417.

April-September

Metroplex Senior Citizen Softball Association:

Join area slow-pitch softball enthusiasts in twice-weekly 10 a.m. games. Divisions for Men 55 and older or 65 and older; one for women 40 and older.
Contact Dale Wilson at
(972) 742-6926 or visit
www.seniorsoftballdfw.com.

4/6

Mentors Care Sporting Clays Tournament Registration:

Second Annual Aiming for Graduation Clay Shoot Fundraiser benefiting Mentors Care, a mentoring program for local youth

at risk of not graduating.
To register or make a donation,
visit www.mentors.care.

Monthly

JOY of Midlothian Service Efforts:

More than 100 student volunteers available for serving the community. Email
JOYofMidlothian@gmail.com.

First Mondays

Adult Evening Book Club:

If you love book discussion, come join us. 6:30-7:45 p.m., A.H. Meadows Public Library, 923 S. 9th St. Contact Terry at
(972) 775-3417.

Second Mondays

Ellis County Veterans Networking:

Dinner and guest speaker.
6:00 p.m., IHOP, 1206 Dallas Hwy.
Waxahachie. Jim McKeever
(469) 258-7424.

Second and
Fourth Mondays

Rag-Tag Readers Book Club:

Join lively discussions of books chosen by club members. 10:00 a.m., A.H. Meadows Public Library, 923 S. 9th St. Call (972) 775-3417.

Third Mondays

Writers' Circle:

Group is open to the public

(18 years and older) to provide support, motivation and writing tips. 6:00 p.m., A.H. Meadows Public Library, 923 S. 9th St. Email
writerscirclemidlo@gmail.com.

Tuesdays

Rotary Club Meetings:

Hear guest speakers and learn how Rotarians serve the community.
Noon-1:00 p.m., Midlothian Civic Center, 224 S. 11th St.

First Tuesdays

Midlothian Area Historical Society Meeting:

7:00 p.m., Community Room of CNB, 310 N. 9th St. Contact Edwin Bateman at (972) 743-2379.

Second Tuesdays

Ellis County Republicans Monthly Meeting:

7:00 p.m., Ellis County GOP Headquarters, 610 Water St., Waxahachie. Call (972) 923-9383.

First and Third
Tuesdays

Bluegrass Jam Session:

Everyone's invited to join in. Bring your instrument or simply relax and enjoy. 7:00 p.m., Lighthouse Coffee Bar, 1404 N. 9th St.

Wednesdays

DivorceCare:

Group sharing for those who have gone through or are going



3/2

Midlothian Marketplace:

Free community event featuring businesses, services and organizations. Also, food trucks and DIY experiences. 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center, 1 Community Circle Dr.

through divorce. DivorceCare for Kids ages 5-12 meets at the same time. Care for younger children available. 6:30-8:00 p.m., First United Methodist Church Family Life Center, 800 S. 9th St. Call (972) 775-3993.

Second Wednesdays

Infertility Support Group of Ellis County:

Open to women who have experienced infertility, miscarriage and stillbirth. 7:00-8:30 p.m., Gateway Church Midlothian, 555 N. Walnut Grove Rd. Contact amy@sarahs-laughter.com.

Thursdays

Midway Composite Squadron of Civil Air Patrol/ U.S. Air Force auxiliary:

Cadets ages 12-18 and Senior Members 18 plus. 6:45-9:00 p.m., Mid-Way Regional Airport, 131 Airport Dr. Visit www.gocivilairpatrol.com.

Celebrate Recovery Meetings:

A Christ-centered recovery program designed to help those struggling with hurts, habits and hang-ups. 7:00-9:00 p.m., The Lighthouse Church, 1400 N. 9th St. Email jason@dfwlighthouse.org.

Fridays

Ellis County Democrats Coffee and Talk Open House:

8:00 a.m.-Noon, Democrat HQ, 215 E. Main St., Waxahachie. Call (972) 937-9039.

Preschool Storytime:

Story, craft and snack provided. 11:00 a.m., A.H. Meadows Public Library, 923 S. 9th St. Call (972) 775-3417.

Second Fridays

Downtown Business Association Meeting:

8:30-10:00 a.m., Woodrow's Coffee Shop, 116 N. 8th St.

Third Saturdays

Midlothian Opry Country Music Show:

Old country and gospel music. \$5 admission. Midlothian Civic Center, 224 S. 11th St. Call Davonnia 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 event details to angel.morris@nowmagazines.com.

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Crossword - Sudoku Solutions

1	S	A	S		4	C	T	S		7	W	M	9	D		
10	N	S	C		11	A	H	A		12	H	O	E			
13	I	C	E		14	M	E	L		15	A	W	E			
16	F	I	N		17	E	R	E		18	C	T	E	D		
19	F	I	E		20	S	T	A		21	O	A	R	S		
					22	P	O	P		23	I	N				
24	C	E	D		25	E		27	E	N	G		28	U	L	F
31	D	R	A		32	W	N	U	P			33	S	E	E	
34	R	I	D		35	C	T	A								
37	O	C	D		38	A	I	R				39	N	U	T	
40	M	A	Y		41	A	C	T				42	G	P	S	

Easy

1	3	6	2	7	5	8	4	9
7	8	9	3	4	1	2	6	5
4	5	2	9	6	8	1	7	3
9	1	8	6	3	7	4	5	2
5	6	3	4	8	2	9	1	7
2	4	7	5	1	9	3	8	6
8	9	5	1	2	6	7	3	4
6	7	4	8	9	3	5	2	1
3	2	1	7	5	4	6	9	8

Medium

9	6	1	2	7	8	3	5	4
2	4	5	3	9	6	8	7	1
8	3	7	5	1	4	9	6	2
1	8	2	7	4	9	6	3	5
3	7	6	8	2	5	1	4	9
5	9	4	1	6	3	2	8	7
6	1	9	4	3	7	5	2	8
4	2	8	6	5	1	7	9	3
7	5	3	9	8	2	4	1	6

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