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APRIL 2024



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Ericka Thompson

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Cedar Hill First
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Church celebrates
170 years of service

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For the past 16 years, whether serving as president of a POA, chairman of the planning zoning commission, City Councilman, or member of the bond recommendation committee, I've dedicated myself to ensuring citizens understand the reasoning behind our city's decisions. Collaborating with city staff and council members, we've actively engaged the community in numerous projects, from revitalizing neighborhood parks to constructing the new library, city center park and The Lagoon, as well as downtown street renovations and the revision of our award-winning comprehensive plan, Cedar Hill Next. This commitment to openness and involvement exemplifies transparency. Join me in continuing to enhance this legacy together.

- Chad McCurdy



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Rev. Preston Weaver believes in community service.

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EDITOR'S NOTE



Adam

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The eclipse is coming!

As a kid, I was fascinated with astronomy. In second grade, I got into an argument with one of the librarians at the Hampton-Illinois Branch Library over whether or not I was old enough to check out *Voyage to Jupiter*, the NASA report on the *Voyager* flybys of the giant planet. She insisted that I couldn't read such a book, so I read it to her standing there in line. I got to take the book home. I probably checked out every book that library had on any of the nine planets (Pluto was still a planet back then), comets, asteroids or stars during my little school's second and third grade field trips to the library.

As a teen, I subscribed to *Astronomy* and read all the articles on backyard sky watching, memorized star charts and read up on all the latest reports from the *Voyager* encounters with Uranus and Neptune. I took the bus to Fair Park to watch the live feed from the Neptune flyby. Many evenings in the backyard were shared with my youngest brother, 12 years my junior, pointing out Venus (his favorite) and the other planets. Now he does that with his little girls.

I wish I had taken star charts with me, so I could have picked out more of the southern sky constellations when I was in Solomon Islands. It's such a different panorama. There were lots of cloudy evenings, but on the clear nights the Milky Way was glorious!

So you can probably guess that I'm pretty excited about this month's eclipse. It's gonna be cool! We all have our safe-viewing glasses ready to go. Don't be surprised if you hear me talking too much about it afterwards!

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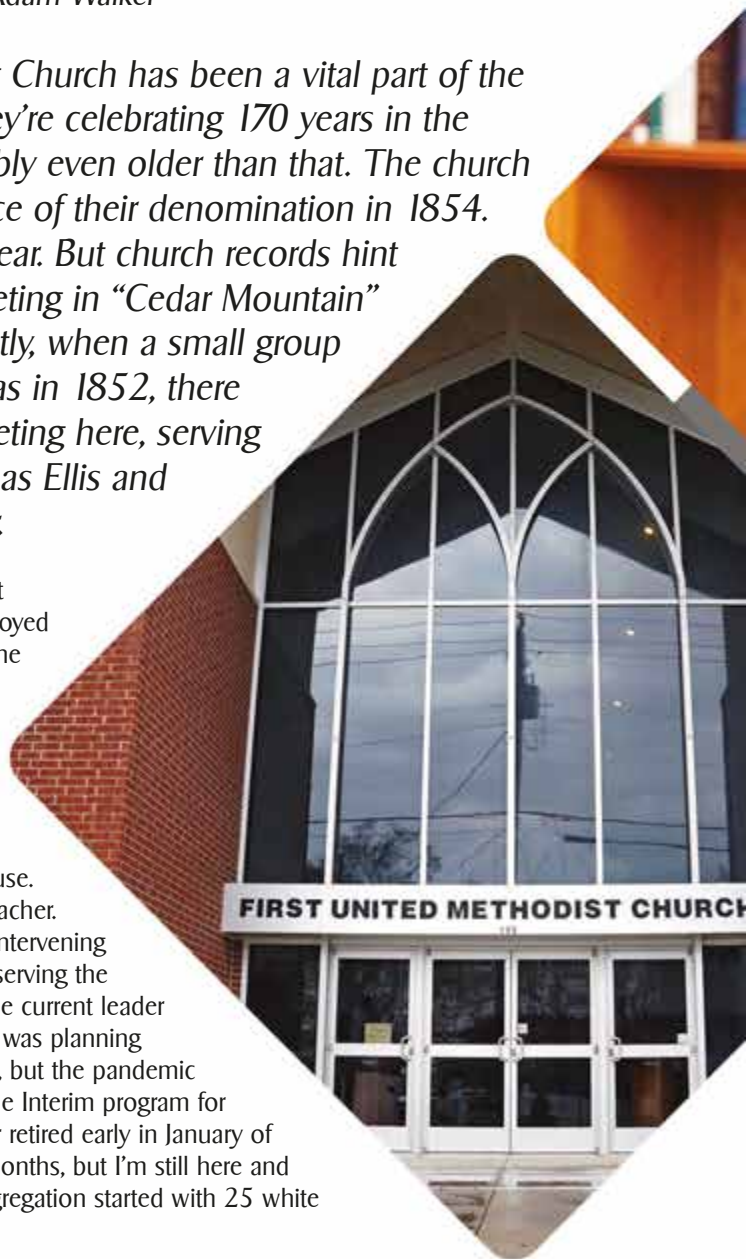
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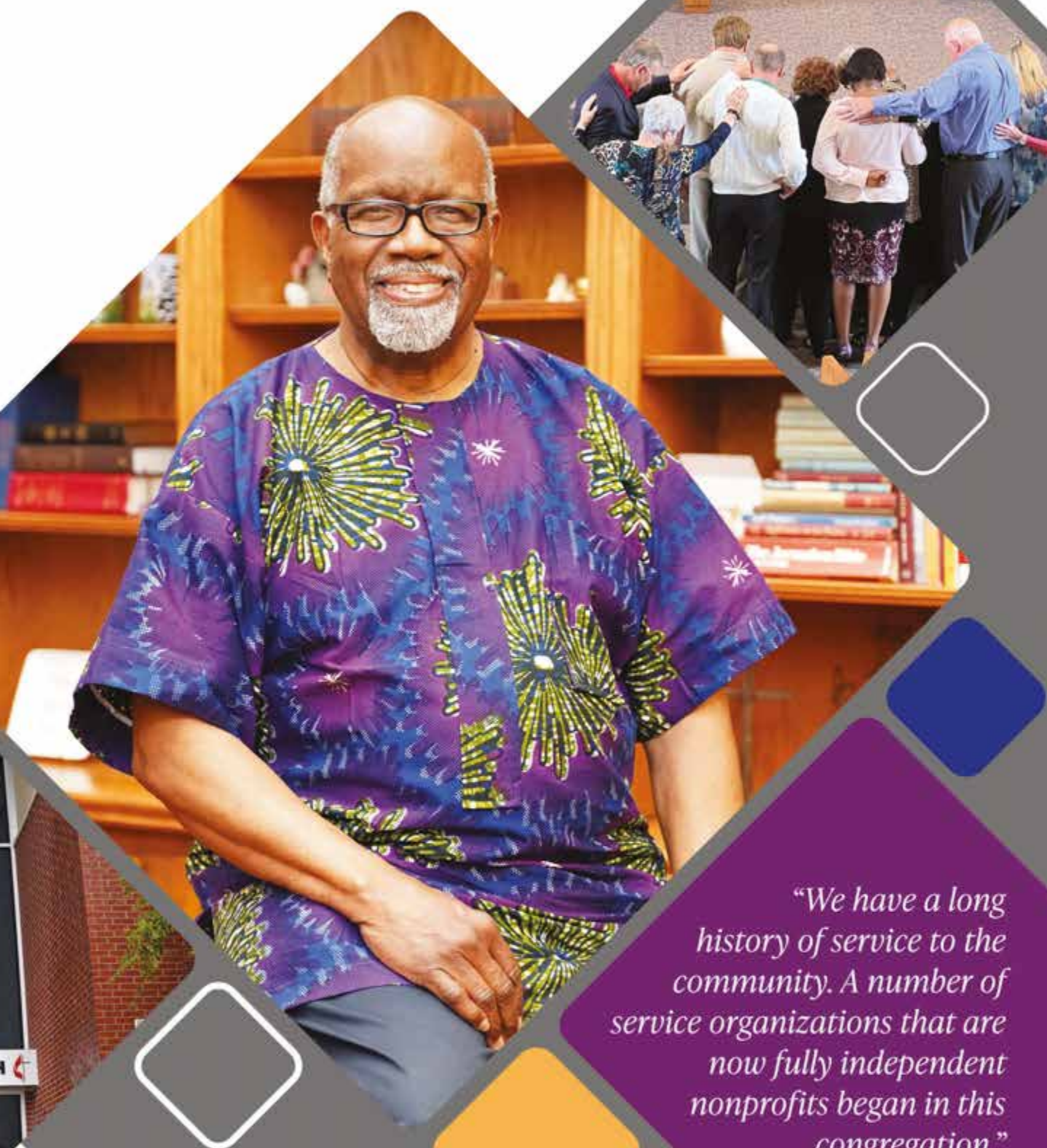
— By Adam Walker

Cedar Hill's First United Methodist Church has been a vital part of the community from the beginning. They're celebrating 170 years in the community, but the church is probably even older than that. The church first reported to the Texas Conference of their denomination in 1854. That's why they're celebrating this year. But church records hint that the congregation had been meeting in "Cedar Mountain" for some years before that. Apparently, when a small group of Methodists arrived from East Texas in 1852, there was already a Methodist church meeting here, serving people who came from as far away as Ellis and Tarrant counties to worship together.

There were several different buildings at different locations in the early days. One of these was destroyed by the tornado of 1856, which nearly obliterated the community. Only two houses were left standing. Robert Crawford, one of the early pastors, donated a plot of land, next to where the church had stood, to bury the dead. Both the town and the church rebuilt. As was common in those early days, many of the church's early buildings also served as the community schoolhouse. Robert Crawford was also the town's first schoolteacher.

Cedar Hill has grown and changed a lot in the intervening years. But 170 years later, this congregation is still serving the community in vital ways. Rev. Preston Weaver is the current leader of this historic congregation. "I retired in 2017 and was planning to move to Tennessee, to be near one of my sons, but the pandemic stopped that. I was asked to come here through the Interim program for retired clergy to help out when the previous pastor retired early in January of 2023. At first, I only expected to be here for six months, but I'm still here and now plan to stay through June of 2025. This congregation started with 25 white





"We have a long history of service to the community. A number of service organizations that are now fully independent nonprofits began in this congregation."



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members. Now it's 30 percent African American and 10 percent Hispanic. We have a long history of service to the community. A number of service organizations that are now fully independent nonprofits began in this congregation," he explained.

High Rise Day Habilitation Center provides services to adults with developmental challenges. Most services provided by the state only provide help for minors. Once you're an adult, you're on your own. Cedar Hill First United Methodist Church understood the need, so they helped High Rise get started in their mission to provide training for life skills and vocational training. The church still provides space for them to operate.

Cedar Hill Shares Food Pantry is another vital community service that has its roots in this congregation. It started in the church kitchen and grew from there. Cedar Hill Shares was vital in serving the community during the worst days of the pandemic. The church continues to donate and provide volunteers to this organization.

Bridges Safe House and Family Resource Center provides both practical needs, like diapers, baby food and formula, for struggling families and a safe house for women and their children escaping from the worst of circumstances. This is yet another lifesaving service that began within these walls and grew to impact the entire community.

"Our CEP, the Community Education Program, is in the process of becoming a private business providing child care," Rev. Weaver explained. "We also participate in the Adopt-a-School program. Bray Elementary was our

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school, until they closed it. Now we're adopting Lakeridge, because the principal there has a relationship with us. The Rotary Club meets here now. And the Boy Scouts have always met here. We're a host for National Night Out, and we participate in the annual Block Party. For 20 years, we've been selling apple dumplings at Country Day on the Hill, and this coming year, we'll have a float in the parade. This faith community has had many members involved in city government. Traphene Hickman, whom the new library is named for, was a member here. Many of our members volunteer at Tri-City Animal Shelter.



“We want to continue to be involved in the community,” Rev. Weaver reported. “One of my young clergy friends told me, ‘Instead of retiring, you put new tread on the tires!’” That’s what this historic congregation is doing as well, as they seek new ways to serve the community around them. “Our vision is to continue to expand our work in the community.”

April 21 will kick off the weeklong celebration of their anniversary. “The mayor will read a proclamation, and we’ll have a guest speaker. We’ll be giving tours of the historic 1900 sanctuary. In the evening, a choir drawn from churches in Duncanville and DeSoto will give a concert to help us celebrate. We’ll close out the week of celebration with proclamations from Dallas County officials.” It will be interesting to see what the next 170 years of service brings. **NOW**

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Soarin' OVER TEXAS

— By Emma McKay

As the frost begins to melt and flowers bloom once again, humans and animals alike emerge from their shelters to bask in the warmth of the sun. After a long, harsh winter, spring brings about beautiful things to remind us that life is resilient. One of the joys that the April winds carry is the return of the Monarch butterfly.

Like birds, Monarchs migrate south to survive the winter months. These fragile creatures will spend months fluttering through the trees of Central Mexico, until eventually making the journey back north — a journey that only their great-grandchildren will see the conclusion of.

At the beginning of March, Monarchs begin their flight to Texas, where they find a suitable milkweed plant on which to lay the eggs of the first generation of offspring. As the overwintered Monarchs' flights end, the first generation continues the expedition to the Midwest and Northeastern states, spending their two to six weeks of life repopulating old breeding grounds. During the summer months, the second and third generations continue this cycle of growing, flying, breeding and dying. By August, the fourth and final generation of this months-long flight will embark on its southward journey.

Whereas its predecessors only lived a handful of weeks, so they might reproduce the next generations, the fourth generation goes into a reproductive diapause, meaning they will not mature and reproduce until the spring. Due to the energy this lack of breeding conserves and the cool overwintering climate slowing its metabolism, the fourth generation can live up to nine months, allowing the butterflies to see the next spring and begin the journey all over again.

Despite having never known their next of kin, Monarchs will take the same flight paths through the East Coast and the Midwest down through Texas and into central America. After years of research on the migratory patterns of the Monarch, biologists attribute this navigation instinct to the utilization of the sun and the Earth's magnetic field. By using both the sun as a compass and their own internal magnetic compasses, Monarchs can find their way in just about any weather. However, one innate habit of Monarchs stumps biologists to this day. Throughout their journey, they will roost in the same exact trees their ancestors did in previous years.

While the nectar of flowers is a great way to attract just about any sort of butterfly, if you are hoping to lure Monarchs into your garden this spring, be sure to plant lots of *asclepias*, otherwise known as milkweed. Milkweeds are poisonous plants, which contain cardiac glycosides.



Monarchs prefer to lay their eggs on the leaves of these plants. When the larvae ingest milkweed, the toxins will linger inside of them as they grow, making them poisonous and therefore protected against predators.

Antelope-horns milkweed (*asclepias asperula*) is a hardy plant that grows best in soils that allow drainage. Native to Texas, this species of milkweed can weather dry seasons gracefully, provided the occasional watering. Antelope-horns milkweed requires direct sunlight, so it might reach its full 2-foot height. This species of milkweed blooms from March to November, allowing passing Monarchs to drink its nectar when stopping to lay eggs. Despite its Texas-strong resilience, replanting already-grown antelope-horns can be tricky due to their brittle roots. For the best results, grow this type of milkweed from seeds.

Beloved by many Monarch enthusiasts, green milkweed (*asclepias viridis*), another Texas native, thrives in similar sunlight, varied soil and low-watering conditions to those preferred by its cousin, the antelope-horns milkweed. Unlike antelope-horns milkweed, green milkweed can reach up to 3 feet in height. It also sports larger leaves than other species of milkweed, gifting young caterpillars a feast as they grow.

If you neither have the space nor green thumb to maintain a butterfly garden, there is another way to attract this regal insect. Butterflies love the juice from old fruits. Place scraps of fruit — melon rinds,



strawberry tops, apple cores, spoiled peaches, etc. — outside, and watch as butterflies flock to your backyard.

Whether you plan on spotting Monarchs at a public park or attracting them to your own backyard, take a moment to enjoy their presence. Although their flights are fleeting, your time spent with them doesn't have to be. **NOW**

Sources:

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Zoomed In: Mercer Holton

By Adam Walker

Mercer Holton is a 5-year-old student at First Methodist School. Recently, he got to meet United States Secret Service Senior Special Agent Garcia when he came to talk to the kids. Mercer even got to try on a bulletproof vest. "It was very, very heavy, but it helps protect them," he said. Mercer might have to grow into it just a bit.

"He showed us a \$10 and a \$1 because he wanted to show us if it was fake," Mercer said. "We learned about real and fake money by feeling it and looking at it. You put it in the light. If you see the face on the side, then it's real. He had us feel paper and the money. Then I feelled it, and money feels different."



Best Western Plus wins the Duncanville Chamber of Commerce's Business of the Month for February.



Stephanie Dixon does her civic duty in DeSoto.



Justin Schaefer, the Cedar Hill Chamber of Commerce Chair of the Board, wins the adult-size pedal car at CHAT's charity raffle.



The B shift at Duncanville FD Station #2 meets with city officials for breakfast and discussions about the future.



The people of Cedar Hill turn out for the annual block party.



City Councillor Nicole Raphiel congratulates Joseph Omobogie on the opening of his new Marco's Pizza in DeSoto.



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— By Adam Walker

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Saturday: By appointment.

Thelma Clardy practices family and probate law for clients in Dallas County and surrounding counties. Family law is mostly cases like divorce, child custody, child support and adoption. “I also handle premarital and post-marital agreements, and I do also handle same-sex divorces,” Thelma informed.



Probate law deals with how to divide your estate after you die. “Probate cases can be long and messy. I have one case in Collin County that has been going on for eight years now, and it still isn’t finished. It’s much better to have a will. Probate is very expensive, while drawing up a will is simple and cheap. I really emphasize how important it is to have a will, and do it when you’re young. There have been cases of caregivers tricking elderly people in their care into signing a will when they didn’t know what they were doing. I have helped family members break invalid wills.”

It’s not uncommon for a person’s estate to involve properties in several counties, or for a divorce or custody case to involve people currently living in different counties. So it’s nice to know that Thelma Clardy is familiar with the courts in all the counties in North Texas. She has occasionally argued cases in Texas courthouses far from the Metroplex.

Thelma didn’t start out planning to be a lawyer. “My first plan was to be a doctor, like my father, but in college, I decided to go into law. At first, I practiced civil rights law. I had a part in two different civil rights cases that eventually

made their way to the Supreme Court. I never argued before the Court, but I got to see the arguments before the Court, while Thurgood Marshall was on the bench.” One of those cases involved the rights of physically handicapped students and the services school districts are required to provide. The other involved the rights of deaf students at universities to have interpreter services.

She has been involved in DeSoto life for a long time. “I was the first Black woman elected to the DeSoto City Council, back in '02. And I served my last year as the mayor pro tem.”

“I really emphasize how important it is to have a will, and do it when you’re young.”

Thelma Clardy is the current president of the Best Southwest Bar Association. “I’ve been doing this a long time, and I get a lot of referrals from other lawyers. You have to know about many areas of the law to handle some of these cases. You may have to know about real estate law for a divorce or for a probate. Other areas of law can come into these cases. My greatest strengths are my compassion and empathy. Some of these cases get really emotional. And you have to have the strength to tell a potential client when they just don’t have a case. I’ve been licensed to practice law for 45 years, since November of 1979. Next year will be 30 years that I’ve had my own firm. Lawyers have a bad reputation with some people. There are bad apples in every profession. But the reason I’ve lasted so long is my integrity.” If you need legal representation, The Clardy Law Firm is ready to talk to you. **NOW**

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CookingNOW

In the Kitchen With

ERICKA THOMPSON

— By Adam Walker

Born and raised in Oak Cliff, Ericka Thompson has lived in Cedar Hill and DeSoto for the last 27 years. After 35 years of marriage, she has two adult children and a grandson who calls her LoveE.

“My household has been vegetarian for five years now. I enjoy cooking for the creativity. I have accumulated hundreds of recipes, as well as creating my own. My favorite spices are basil, garlic, onion and curry. Most recipes I try turn out very well, except for that one time ... I attempted to make a very simple Japanese clear onion soup. It was an epic failure. My husband took one bite, and oh, my, the embarrassment! Some of my recipes may seem weird, but trust me, they are delish!” **NOW**

Mediterranean Stuffed Peppers

6 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling (divided use)

2 bell peppers (any color), halved and seeded

Salt, to taste (divided use)

1 4.7-oz. box pearl (Israeli) couscous

1/2 lb. broccolini

1 shallot, halved and thinly sliced

Pepper, to taste (divided use)

1 lb. plant-based Italian sausage

1/4 oz. fresh parsley, finely chopped (divided use)

Italian seasoning, to taste

1/8 cup feta cheese

2 Tbsp. red wine vinegar or white wine vinegar

Pinch sugar

1. Preheat the broiler on high (500-550 F) with the rack in the upper third of the oven. On a rimmed baking sheet, drizzle oil on the outside of the peppers; sprinkle

lightly with salt. Broil until slightly charred and tender, flipping halfway through, 10-15 minutes. (Watch closely as broilers vary.)

2. Cook the couscous as directed on the package.

3. Trim the ends of the broccolini; finely chop. Heat 1 Tbsp. of oil in a medium skillet over medium-high heat. Add the shallots and broccolini; season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are softened and a bit charred, about 5 minutes.

4. Brown the sausage in a skillet with 2 Tbsp. of oil.

5. Combine the sausage, couscous, shallots, broccolini and half of the parsley in a bowl; stir well. Season with salt, pepper and Italian seasoning.

6. Stuff the peppers with the couscous filling; spoon the remaining filling onto plates. Crumble the feta cheese over the stuffed peppers. Broil on the upper oven rack until the peppers are soft and warmed throughout, about 5 minutes.

7. In a small bowl, whisk together 3 Tbsp. of oil, vinegar, remaining parsley and a

pinch of sugar. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Drizzle over the peppers.

Potato Nachos With Plant-based Ground Meat

- 2 Russet potatoes, sliced in 1/4-inch rounds
- 2 Tbsp., plus 1 tsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- Salt, to taste (divided use)
- 1 jalapeño, deseeded and thinly sliced
- 1 lb. plant-based ground meat
- 1/4 cup scallion whites, thinly sliced (reserve the greens)
- 1 1/2 tsp. ground cumin
- Pepper, to taste
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 Tbsp. ketchup
- 2 plum tomatoes, cored and diced
- 1/2 Tbsp. fresh cilantro, coarsely chopped
- 1 tsp. apple cider vinegar or red wine vinegar
- 4 oz. guacamole
- 4 oz. shredded cheddar Jack cheese
- Pico de gallo

1. Preheat the oven to 450 F.
2. On a rimmed baking sheet, toss the potatoes with 2 Tbsp. of oil and a generous pinch of salt, spreading into an even layer. Roast on the lower oven rack until golden and crisp, about 18-20 minutes.
3. Finely chop 1 tsp. of the sliced jalapeño.
4. Heat 1 tsp. of oil in a medium skillet over medium-high heat. Add the plant-based ground meat; fry, breaking up with a spoon, until browned. Stir in the scallion whites, cumin and a pinch each of salt and pepper. Stir in the water and ketchup. Cook until the skillet is nearly dry, 5-6 minutes.
5. In a small bowl, stir together the chopped jalapeño, tomatoes, 1/4 each of the cilantro and scallion greens and vinegar. Season with salt.
6. In another small bowl, combine the guacamole, salt and pepper to taste. Thin with water until desired consistency.
7. Arrange the potatoes on a baking sheet into a tight rectangle. Spoon the plant-based meat mixture over the potatoes. Sprinkle with cheese and sliced jalapeños.
8. Bake the nachos on the upper oven rack until the cheese is melted and bubbling, about 5-7 minutes. Serve topped with pico de gallo, seasoned guacamole and the remaining cilantro and scallions.

Spinach and Tomato Lasagna Rolls

- 1 28-oz. can whole-peeled tomatoes
- 1/2 lb. lasagna sheets
- 4 oz. basil pesto (divided use)
- Salt, to taste (divided use)
- Pepper, to taste (divided use)

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- 2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup shallot, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup water
- 4.5 oz. ricotta
- 2 oz. roasted red peppers, finely chopped
- 1 1/2 Tbsp. Parmesan cheese, finely grated
- 3 oz. baby spinach

1. With the rack in the center of the oven, preheat to 425 F.
2. Use kitchen shears to finely chop the

- tomatoes directly in the can.
3. Prepare the lasagna sheets as directed on the box.
4. In a small bowl, combine 1 1/2 Tbsp. of the pesto; season with salt and pepper. Set aside.
5. Heat 1 Tbsp. oil in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the chopped shallots; cook, stirring until just beginning to brown. Add the tomatoes, water and a pinch of salt; boil over high heat. Remove from heat; stir in the remaining pesto.

- Season to taste with salt and pepper.
6. In a medium bowl, combine the ricotta, roasted red peppers, half of the Parmesan, 1 Tbsp. of oil and salt and pepper, to taste.
7. Spoon 1/2 cup of the sauce into a medium baking dish. Arrange the lasagna sheets on a work surface. Divide the ricotta filling evenly among the sheets, spreading to cover. Spoon 1 Tbsp. of the sauce over each sheet; top with some of the spinach leaves. Starting at the short ends, roll the lasagna sheets tightly over the filling. Arrange in the baking dish, seam sides down. Spoon the remaining tomato sauce over the lasagna rolls; sprinkle with remaining Parmesan.
8. Bake until the cheese is golden and the sauce is reduced, about 15 minutes. Cover; let sit for 5 minutes before serving. Drizzle with pesto.



Mediterranean Stuffed Peppers

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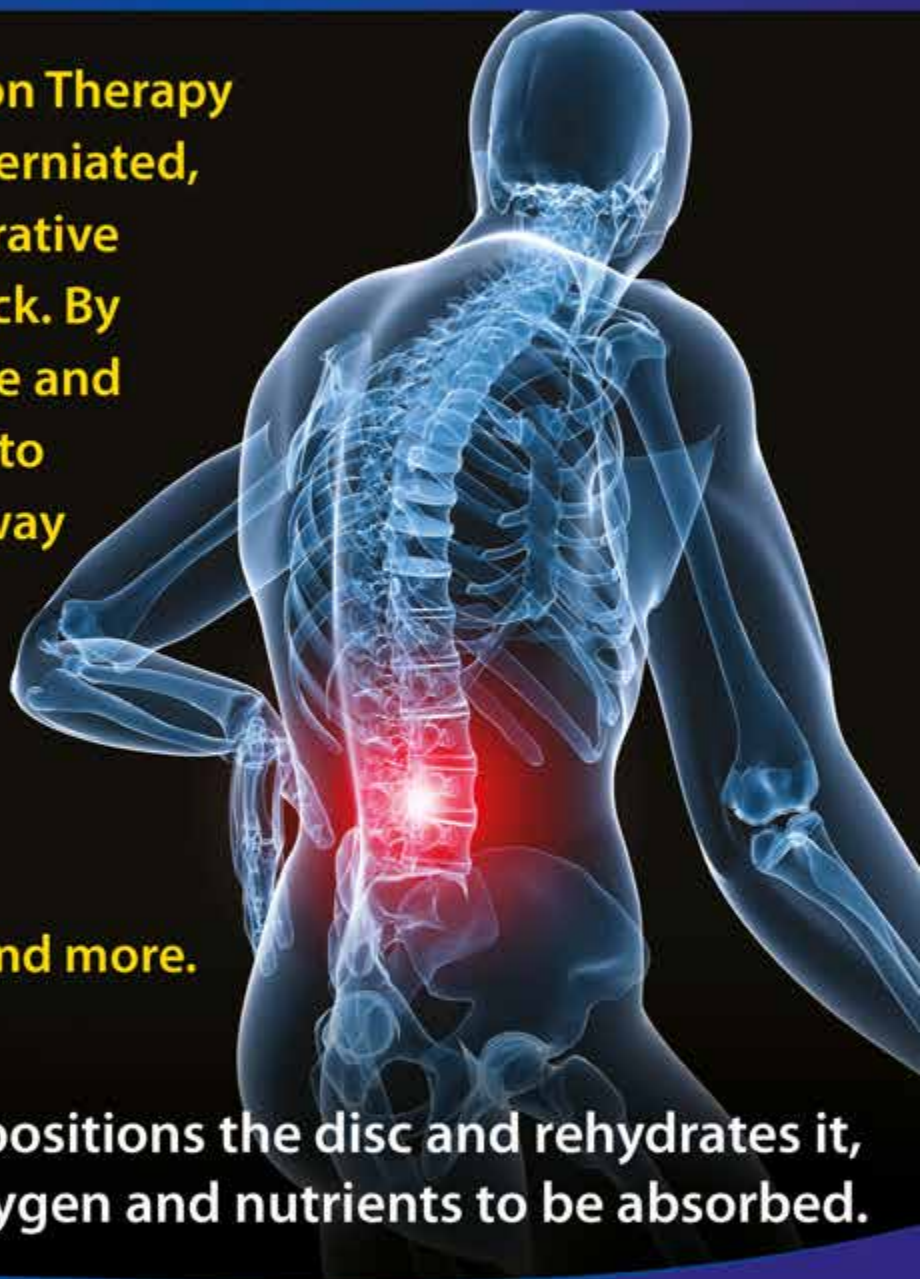

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Bringing the best of the community home.

Hurricane Ian brought winds in excess of 100 miles per hour and a storm surge of about 14 feet in September 2022. The damage to Fort Myers Beach, Florida, was devastating, but just 100 days after the storm, news anchors were reporting that the community was “bouncing back.” A more recent news interview with Sanibel Mayor Richard Johnson indicated that recovery is taking place, as evidenced by the bridges that have been rebuilt, but there is still a long way to go. While there is a tremendous challenge ahead, the climate beckons visitors, and other attractions and beaches in the area continue to draw vacationers to southwest Florida.

The Fort Myers area has been known for its shelling for many years, and while some beaches may remain closed, there are other beaches in the area that offer much of the same experience. Tigertail Beach on Marco Island is about an hour away and offers white sand with shelling, bird-watching and great sunsets.

A trip to Fort Myers would not be complete without a visit to the Edison and Ford Winter Estates. The two great inventors and innovators of the late 19th and early 20th centuries had vacation homes in Fort Myers, and they are

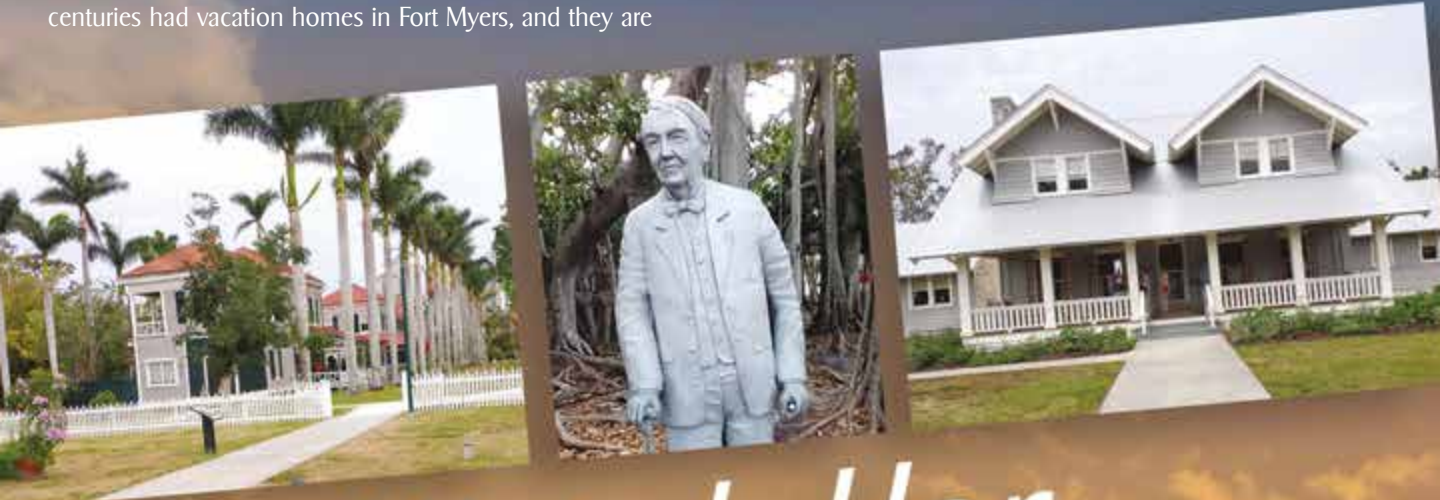
well worth the time and tickets to view and explore.

When Edison traveled to Florida in search of a place with warmer weather than his northeastern home offered in the winter of 1885, the population of Fort Myers was about 350 citizens. (A recent census reported 95,949, but the county population is over 820,000.) He purchased 13 acres for \$2,750 and drew plans for his winter home, including guest and servant quarters, a laboratory and extensive gardens. Edison named the home Seminole Lodge and was visited by friends Henry Ford and Herbert Hoover, as well as many other well-known names of the period.

Ford and Edison’s friendship began with Ford working for Edison at the Detroit Edison Illuminating Company in the 1890s. Ford visited Seminole Lodge in 1914, and a couple of years later, he purchased the estate adjacent to Edison’s. The Ford estate was known as Mangoes and still includes a citrus orchard. The estate’s website indicates that Ford made it a point to visit his winter home on one significant day each year — February 11th — Edison’s birthday.

Both of the estates have large, comfortable rooms with huge porches. You can just imagine these great men and their families enjoying their time on the front porch watching a few of Ford’s Model T and Model A vehicles pattering down a dirt road in front of the estates.

Just across that road, which is now a nicely paved two-lane street, is the site of the museums that display the prolific work of these brilliant men. Examples of Edison’s many inventions are displayed throughout the museum, as well as perfectly restored Ford automobiles dating back to the Model T. The grounds are complete with larger-than-life statues of the men, and Edison’s laboratories and darkroom are replicated in the museum.



*Watch Her
Bounce Ba*

If one is interested in the flora and fauna that is native to southern Florida, a visit to the Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve offers an interpretive center, as well as guided or self-guided tours. A boardwalk of over 1 mile circles through the slough, giving visitors the opportunity to view Otter Pond, Gator Lake and Wood Duck Pond. While these ponds are prominent with landing areas that allow visitors to pause and view the plants and wildlife, stay alert along the boardwalk, as the slough is teeming with a variety of native creatures.

There is no doubt that Fort Myers and its beautiful beaches are building back from the destruction left by the hurricane. Southwest Florida is still a worthy vacation destination and has a lot to offer the savvy traveler. **NOW**

Sources:

1. <https://youtu.be/oJJE2P33VLA?si=z uoniPXFajEaWChb>.
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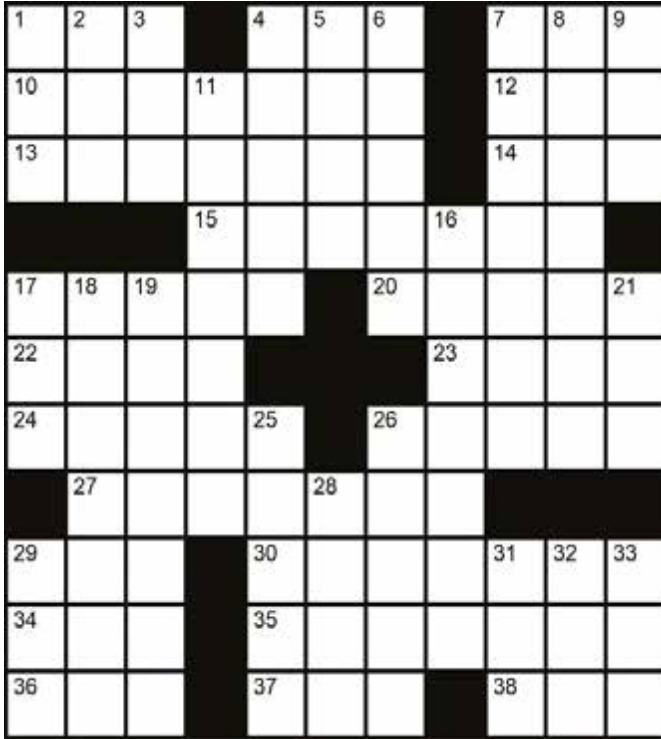
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Across

- 1 Bat wood
- 4 "... Roy" (Sir Walter Scott)
- 7 Prior night
- 10 William Faulkner novelette
- 12 Stat!
- 13 Souvenir
- 14 Be recumbent
- 15 Like the Baal Shem Tov
- 17 Challenger
- 20 "The Stepford Wives" author
- 22 Sch. of higher learning
- 23 Noted car collector
- 24 Art supporter?
- 26 Sudden pains
- 27 Flippant fellow
- 29 Automated performer of computer tasks
- 30 Way in
- 34 Indignation
- 35 Cared to restyle style
- 36 Uneven?
- 37 Scale divs.
- 38 In fourth grade, perhaps

Down

- 1 Now, in textspeak
- 2 Yonder lass
- 3 Drape edge
- 4 Kidney-related
- 5 Mares and does eat them
- 6 Grill
- 7 Animate
- 8 Adjusting an organ
- 9 Animal you heard on the farm
- 11 Conducts oneself
- 16 Depressing word on an arrival board
- 17 Road in Reims
- 18 Briefly
- 19 Called upon
- 21 Figures
- 25 OK with the cops
- 26 Strokes on the green
- 28 Attire
- 29 Short life story
- 31 Moisten
- 32 Very skilled person
- 33 Hither and ---

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Easy

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

Medium

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

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Some events may have been cancelled or rescheduled while we were at press. Check with individual organizations or your city or Chamber websites to verify dates and times.

APRIL

4/5

75th Anniversary Gala:

A special night to celebrate DeSoto's Golden Anniversary! Dress code: Black tie. Doors open: 6:30 p.m.; event starts: 7:00 p.m., DeSoto Civic Center (Bluebonnet Rooms), 211 E. Pleasant Run Rd. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/desotos-75th-anniversary-gala-tickets-835996075767?aff=oddtcreator>.

4/6

The Traphene Hickman Library & Cedar Hill Museum Grand Opening: Ribbon-cutting ceremony, live music, children's activities, food trucks and a scavenger hunt. 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., 450 Pioneer Trail, Cedar Hill.

4/7-4/8

Dark in the Park:

An exhilarating Solar Eclipse Festival. This eagerly anticipated two-day event, set to coincide with the 2024 solar eclipse, promises an unforgettable experience for residents and visitors alike. **Sunday:** 6:00-9:00 p.m.; **Monday:** Noon-3:00 p.m., Armstrong Park, 100 James Collins Blvd., Duncanville.

4/8

Solar Eclipse Watch Party:

Join us for an unforgettable celestial experience! Immerse yourself in the awe-inspiring

beauty of a solar eclipse while enjoying a day filled with education, fun and community spirit. Free admission. Educational vendors and food trucks on-site. 10:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Valley Ridge Park, 2850 Park Ridge Dr., Cedar Hill.

4/13

Cedar Hill Beautification and Arbor Day Celebration:

Clean up activities, native planting, tree walk, free trees giveaway. 8:00 a.m.-noon, Signature Park, 285 Uptown Blvd., Cedar Hill. Register at <https://cedarhill-city-forms.app.transform.civicplus.com/forms/39299>.

Cedar Hill ISD's Longhorn Job Fair:

Looking for qualified teachers, librarians, police officers, counselors, nurses and much more! Free. 9:00-11:00 a.m., Maddox Teaching and Learning Center, 1533 High Pointe Ln., Cedar Hill.

4/17

Security and Safety Presentation:

Police Liaison Michelle Arias will share tips for staying safe. 7:00-8:30 p.m., Trinity United Methodist Church, 1302 S. Clark Rd., Duncanville.

4/20

Plant Swap:

Bring your excess plants, cuttings, or seeds and join us for a delightful afternoon of swapping, chatting, and cultivating connections. 11:00 a.m.-noon, Traphene Hickman Library Rooftop Deck, 450 Pioneer Trail, Cedar Hill.

Duncanville 300 Jr.

Grand Prix:

11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Duncanville Recreation Center, 201 James Collins Blvd.

4/23

Spoken Word Night:

Free. 7:00-8:30 p.m., Traphene Hickman Library Rooftop Deck, 450 Pioneer Trail, Cedar Hill.

4/25

Strengthening Our Neighborhoods – Pawsitive Change:

Join the Neighborhood Advisory Board & Tri-City Animal Shelter to explore ways to make a pawsitive change in our neighborhoods. Free. 6:00 p.m., Cedar Hill Government Center, 285 Uptown Blvd. Learn more and register at cedarhilltx.com/nab.

4/26-4/28 and
5/1-5/3

Mean Girls:

Presented by Village Tech School, 402 W. Daniieldale Rd., Duncanville. Call the school for

times and ticket prices.
(469) 454-4441

4/27

Free Yard Sale:

If you would like to give items, bring them to the church by 7:30 a.m. All donations will support the Duncanville Outreach, Soup Mobile and Kiva. 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Trinity United Methodist Church, 1302 S. Clark Rd., Duncanville. For information, contact June Hairston at (972) 298-2472.

Heart of Duncanville 5K:

Run for education, raising funds for the Duncanville ISD Foundation. There will also be a 1-mile fun run. **Fun Run:** 8:00 a.m.; **5K:** 8:30 a.m. For information about registration pricing and deadlines for either race, visit <https://www.disdef.org/events-1>.

Best Southwest

Everything Teen Expo:

Mega teen event featuring live performances, meet and greets, karaoke dance party, motivational speakers and more! 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., DeSoto Town Center, 207 E. Pleasant Run Rd. Register at www.desototexas.gov/teenexpo.

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



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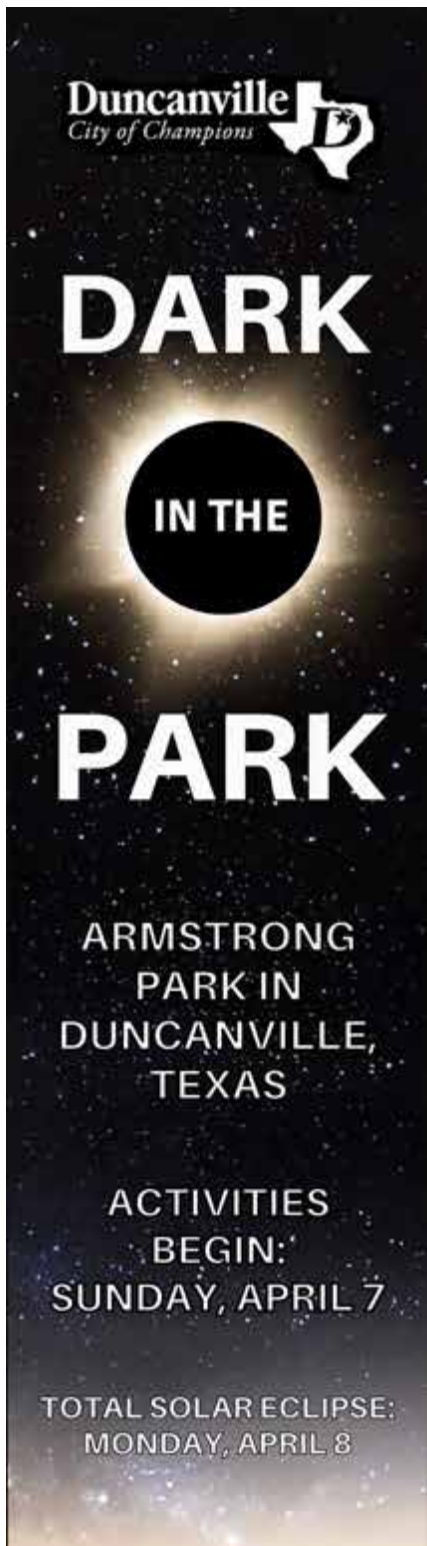

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"I was so nervous about going to a new doctor, but as soon as I walked into the office I was happy I came. The office is very nice and clean. The front desk receptionists were so friendly and greeted me with smiles. I didn't feel rushed when speaking with the nurse, and she listened to everything I was concerned about. Dr. Peters was a breath of fresh air. Her bedside manners are excellent, and she took time and addressed every single concern and issue I had. I am so glad I found her, and she will be my family's new PCP." - Lezley

"From the front staff, Alexis and Janet were both very nice and assisted me with the forms. Dr. Tomi was amazing. She took her time and listened to my concerns. I didn't feel rushed at all. I can feel the comforting spirit that permeates the whole office!! I am so excited to continue my health journey." - Sharon

"This was my first visit to see Dr. Peters, and she was amazing. She was attentive, patient, a good listener and wanted to give top notch overall care. Her staff was friendly and professional. I just found my new PCP doctor! I highly recommend her." - Leah

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Serenity Advanced Dentistry

If you are an adult who is afraid of going to the dentist, or even just a little extra anxious, Serenity Advanced Dentistry may be just what you are looking for. "We do a lot of sedation dentistry, mostly for adults," Dr. Allala explained. "It's kind of my niche. Many adults may have some pretty serious anxiety about going to the dentist. They may not even seek care. They'd rather be in pain. I provide a place to take care of these people. When patients elect to get treatment, we lower the statistics of people living in pain. I like being able to contribute to improving people's lives."

"Coincidentally, a lot of people who are anxious about going to the dentist are also people who don't have good insurance. That's a bad combination. I have membership plans for patients without insurance, and really good discounts on implants and dentures. A membership might not be necessary if you only need one simple procedure, but if you need sedation and a lot of work, it really pays for itself."

Dr. Allala is a graduate of the Texas A&M School of Dentistry. "When I started there, it was still Baylor. My diploma has both names on it," she recalled. "I specialize in oral surgery, and we're really good at it. I'm nothing without my team. We do everything in dentistry. I like being well rounded. I enjoy being an overachiever, so I'm constantly taking continuing education, keeping up with all the

newest techniques and technology. I'm also a native Spanish speaker. I grew up speaking both languages. Our YouTube videos explaining procedures are available in both English and Spanish."

Dr. Allala is proud of the service they provide at Serenity Advanced Dentistry. "I think we give five-star service. And I know my staff is five-star. We know what works and what doesn't. I know it sounds corny, but this is my life's work. Most of my staff have been with me for years, at different locations around DFW, before I came to Cedar Hill. I met Mariela seven years ago, in Pleasant Grove. It was my first job out of school. Racine has been with me four years, and Jazmine three years, both in Red Oak. Our newest team member is Jessica. She found us three months ago when she emailed me looking for an opportunity to shadow a dentist."

"I LIKE BEING WELL ROUNDED. I ENJOY BEING AN OVERACHIEVER, SO I'M CONSTANTLY TAKING CONTINUING EDUCATION, KEEPING UP WITH ALL THE NEWEST TECHNIQUES AND TECHNOLOGY."

Serenity Advanced Dentistry has all the newest technology to make your experience convenient. "We have hospital-grade blood pressure machines, so we can do sedation. We also have intraoral scanners, so I can see inside your mouth, from every angle, before I ever go in for your procedure. We print dentures and place implants right here in the office. With our skills and strategies, most patients don't even feel our injections. We have TVs in every room to keep you entertained while we work. It's all about efficiency — working smarter, not harder. That's why I designed the floor plan of the office myself. And we're really big on sanitation and sterilization. It's important to maintain a sterile environment, which is why we're closed every Friday for deep cleaning the office and training."



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Dr. Cristina Allala
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