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APRIL 2025

Taking Her Shot

Payton Grimes
aims at long-
range rifle goals



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ON THE COVER



Payton Grimes becomes a two-time world champion in long-range shooting.

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Angel

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EDITOR'S NOTE

April and almanacs ...

April is the birth month of Robert B. Thomas, founder of *The Old Farmer's Almanac*, who was born April 24, 1766. If you're too young to remember the popular publication with its signature pale yellow cover, let me introduce you to its appeal, in its own words ... "*The Old Farmer's Almanac* has spoken to all walks of life: planting charts for those who grow their own food; recipes for those who live in the kitchen; Moon- and sunrise times for those who watch the skies; and forecasts for those who don't like the question of weather left up in the air."

The oldest almanac in the country was first printed in 1792, when George Washington was president. It is still proudly published in the U.S., now offering a digital monthly magazine, with a new release early every September. "An almanac, by definition, records and predicts astronomical events (the rising of the sun, for instance), tides, weather, and other phenomena with respect to time," according to www.almanac.com. "Each edition calculates the tides and times for fishermen, travelers, sailors, bookkeepers, beekeepers, gardeners, prognosticators, pollsters, politician, cooks, and really anyone who walks this Earth, including farmers."

Besides its uncanny astronomical accuracy, folks were also enticed by its treasury of trivia, puzzles, poems and amusements, like anecdotes about hypnotizing chickens or ways *not* to rob a bank. Today, *TOFA* produces a kids' almanac, cookbooks, gardening books and magazines, plus an annual calendar. Its guiding principle still honors its founder: "Our main endeavour is to be useful, but with a pleasant degree of humor." Sounds like a publication, and a purpose, worth pursuing.

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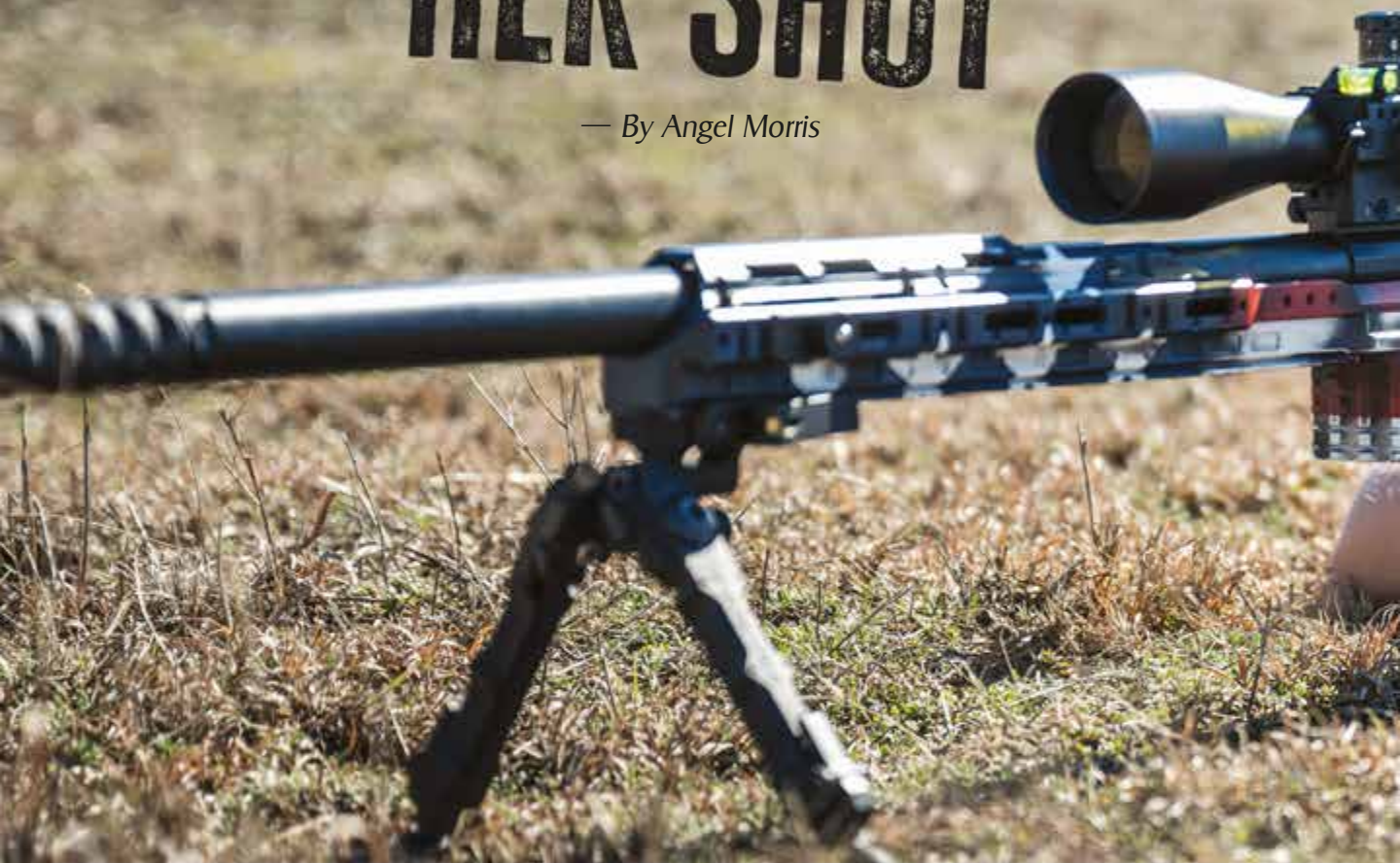


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TAKING HER SHOT

— By Angel Morris





The Texas State Rifle Association defines long-range shooting as “a division of high-power rifle shooting where shooters compete at ranges between 800, 900 and 1,000 yards, in the prone position.” Military snipers may come to mind, as long-range shooters are typically depicted lying on rooftops or the ground as a source of stability, using specialized equipment to reach targets at great distances.

Growing in popularity as a sport, however, long-range shooting has become of interest beyond the military. A 2023 Midlothian Heritage High School graduate, in fact, has taken the sport to new levels. “I’d wanted to hunt since I was young, so my parents took me to learn to shoot a rifle at Gunwerks Long Range University, which is where I fell in love with it,” 19-year-old Payton Grimes, recalled.

After a few years of training with Phillip Velayo, an instructor who molded her into a long-range hunter, Payton competed in her first shooting match in 2019. “I enjoyed prone shooting so much and wanted to try something new, which meant learning everything about competition,” she noted. “My first match, I was literally learning as I went through the two-day centerfire competition. I’d not done anything like it before.”

With much practice and shooting many small regional matches, Payton learned pacing that set her up for success in larger competitions. From ballistics and breathing, wind speed and trigger control, to sighting and shooting position, she has discovered how to deal with the elements.

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Since then, Payton has had many achievements in the sport. She finished 16th overall out of 247 men and women competitors from 26 different countries and received Top Lady at the International Precision Rifle Federation Centerfire World Championship held in France in 2022. At the 2023 IPRF Rimfire World Championship in Italy, she placed third overall out of 179 men and women competitors from 24 different countries and received Top Lady again, making her a two-time world champion.

At the 2022 Precision Rifle Series Rimfire Finale, Payton placed sixth overall and received Top Lady and Junior for the match and series. In 2023, she received third overall, earned Top Lady and Top Junior for the Central Region rimfire season and match. Last year, she received 10th overall, Top Lady, and Junior for the Central Region centerfire season. Today she is a Pro member (top 20 percent of competitors) of the Precision Rifle Series organization.

While Payton may seem like a natural, it has not always been easy. “One challenge I overcame in the sport was dealing with the pressure during competitions. I used to get really nervous and have high expectations for myself, but I learned to channel that energy into focus, and it made a huge difference in my performance,” Payton shared. “This sport has taught me patience, discipline and the importance of staying calm under pressure.”

Payton is no stranger to athletic pressure, having been a member of the MHHS Varsity Soccer team

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that won the state championship title her sophomore year. “That’s a favorite Midlothian memory for me,” she admitted.

With the support of her mom, Rachel, and dad, Wade, Payton’s dedication to the sport of long-range shooting has taken her and her family around the globe. “I enjoy traveling and meeting people from all around the world and making lifelong memories I otherwise would never have made,” she noted.

As a female, Payton joins a growing segment of the sport, with calculations suggesting women make up a third of long-range shooting participants today. Payton appreciates that the sport is also not limited by age. “I met Carole Wyatt through shooting, and she inspired me. It was incredible to see her dedication and passion for shooting at 84 years young,” Payton credited. “Learning and growing in different shooting disciplines, she showed me that age is just a number and that you can always keep learning and improving, no matter what stage of life you’re in. It was awesome to have someone like her to look up to!”

Currently a student at Texas A&M University studying marketing, Payton enjoys Aggie football games and attending concerts. Long-range shooting, however, is still at the forefront of her interests. “My future goal for the sport is to continue to represent the United States in World competitions and balancing my professional life with competing,” she said. “At my first match, the goal was to have fun and do my best, both of which are the same today!” **NOW**



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Bunny in a Bag!

— By Angel Morris



A symbol of springtime and new life, the bunny rabbit is thought to align with the meaning of Easter and the celebration of Christ's resurrection in its own, whimsical way. If you're looking for how to partner the biblical story with bunny traditions, these paper craft carriers may be your answer.

As the perfect holder for classroom party treats or a way to distribute goodies to friends and neighbors, paper bag bunnies are simple and inexpensive. The required supplies are few, and younger children have the necessary skills to create them with minimal supervision.

What you'll need: Brown or white paper bags; pencil; scissors; Easter basket grass, crinkle paper or bag filler of your choice; twine or ribbon; Easter candy, treats or trinkets of your choice; pom-pom for bunny tail; and paste or hot glue. (You can also get more creative using crayons, markers or craft paper and a hole puncher and note cards.)

Place your paper bag flat on a table. Starting at the open side/top of the bag, sketch the two curved ears of a bunny (see photo). You can pencil in a 1-inch flat line between where the ears meet at what will be the bunny head, or you can sketch the ears in more of a V, where they come to a point at what will be the bunny head.

Carefully cut along the interior lines of your drawn ears, discarding the excess paper. Now, flatten out the creased sides of the bags so it is not folded inward on either side.

At this point, craftier kids might be interested in drawing a rabbit face on one side of the bag. This adds crayons, markers or craft paper to your supply list. The bunny face can be as simple as some lines to represent whiskers, or an entire face of eyes, nose, mouth and whiskers. (Encourage children to be as creative as they wish, but remind them you'll be adding a bunny tail and ribbon to the bag later, and it will be just as cute if left without a face.)

Now it's time to stand your bag up, opening from the top. Put Easter grass or crinkle paper in the bottom half of the bag, leaving enough room to fill as much as you wish with candy, treats or trinkets. The more grass/crinkle paper you use, the fewer treats you'll need to fill the bag, of course. (Eco-friendly idea: Fill the bottom of your Easter bunny bag with the paper from things you've been shredding all year. It's earth- and budget-conscious.)

Next, consider who the bags will be delivered to when determining what items to put inside. A few pieces of candy and a small toy are good for class parties. For friends and neighbors, you might tailor the items to their interests. Things like packets of flower seeds, earrings, lotions, votive candles, hair accessories, themed socks, art supplies or gift cards are potential paper bag stuffers. The possibilities are endless, as long as they fit in your bag without making it too heavy.

Once you have stuffed your bunny bags, it's time to apply



the tail. Using paste or hot glue (just a dot to prevent the bag and anything inside from getting burned!) attach the pom-pom tail to the lower portion of your paper bag. Hold it on until the glue has dried.

Gently gather together the sides of your bag until clasped in the center. Secure with twine or ribbon, but before tying the bow, consider attaching a note with an Easter Bible verse, quote about spring or note of encouragement. Hole punching a note card is the simplest way to create and secure your card. Pull one side of your ribbon through the card's hole and tie your bow.

There you have it — a simple, inexpensive bunny paper bag to share the treats and trinkets that remind you of Easter, as well as an opportunity to explain to children how the bunny somewhat symbolizes the meaning behind the holiday. Delivering these to classmates, friends and neighbors is a special way to share something handmade with care while delivering the special message of the day! **NOW**



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Zoomed In: Michelle Randall

By Angel Morris

Michelle Randall recently made a lifelong dream come true. After submitting an online application in January 2024, she learned she'd been accepted as a *Wheel of Fortune* contestant at year's end. "Walking into that studio made me cry. It was such a surreal moment," she shared. "My mother and grandmother played the show every night together, and they are no longer with us, so my heart was full of joy, sadness and celebration."

Married for 16 years to husband, Jason, and the mom of three, Michelle is a local Realtor, as well as a wedding and event planner. She impressively joins the 0.06 percent of applicants to make it onto *Wheel*, with her episode airing in February. "Taping day was nothing short of amazing. The contestants, producers, Vanna and Ryan were all incredible," she noted. "Although luck wasn't on my side, I would do it all again in a heartbeat!"



Anthony Velasquez enjoys the play equipment at Midlothian Community Park.



Sissy Franklin hands over the Manna House executive director reins to Norma Belcher.



Class of 2024 Midlothian Athletic Hall of Honor inductees Nick Hankins, Lily Escamilla, Dawn Burge, Joey Wadsworth and Gerald Slovacek with Midlothian ISD Director of Athletics Todd York.



NotJustPiano Music Studio performs for the residents of Legacy Oaks of Midlothian Senior Living.



Melissa Spoelstra and Karen Martin visit following the filming of an upcoming Bible study about angels.



Mayor Justin Coffman thanks Maurice Osborn for his years of service on Midlothian's Planning & Zoning Commission.



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When it comes to painting and remodeling in Midlothian, few names carry as much experience and dedication as Big Al's Paint Pros. A father-and-son duo, Allan and Jay McKeever lead the company with a passion for craftsmanship, design and serving the community.

For Allan McKeever, painting and remodeling have always been second nature. With more than 40 years of experience in home building, he has constructed and renovated countless homes in

the area. Alongside his wife, Julie, he founded McKeever Real Estate, specializing in buying, selling, leasing and building new homes.

Through the years, Allan found himself remodeling and painting homes for his real estate clients. Recognizing the demand for high-quality painting and renovation services, Big Al's Paint Pros was born — focusing specifically on interior and exterior painting as well as kitchen and bath remodels.

Bringing a unique artistic touch to the business, Jay McKeever contributes his background as a designer and artist. His keen eye for color and detail ensures that each project is visually stunning and perfectly tailored to the homeowner's vision. Whether it's curating the perfect color palette, designing a custom paint job, or reimagining a kitchen or bathroom space, Jay helps transform homes with both precision and creativity.

Big Al's Paint Pros offers interior and exterior painting, kitchen and bathroom remodels, custom painting and design, fence staining and wood varnishing, cabinet refinishing and painting, door painting and woodwork enhancements. With expertise that

extends beyond just painting, the team brings a deep understanding of home construction to every project, ensuring superior craftsmanship and durability.

With a background in home building and remodeling, the McKeever family doesn't just apply paint — they understand the structure and integrity of the homes they work on. This means every project is executed with precision, using industry-leading materials and techniques that exceed standard expectations.

But beyond skill and experience, what sets Big Al's Paint Pros apart is their commitment to treating every home as if it were their own. As proud members of the Midlothian community, Allan and Jay take pride in delivering high-quality work that enhances the neighborhood they love.

The McKeever's reward is seeing a homeowner's reaction when a project is completed. "Every day is a new challenge, and that's what makes this business exciting. Whether it's a full remodel or a simple paint refresh, it's satisfying to see a home transform before our eyes," Allan said.

Jay added, "It's incredibly rewarding to take someone's vision and not only bring it to life but exceed their expectations. Seeing that 'wow' moment when a homeowner walks into their newly painted or remodeled space is why we do what we do."

Big Al's Paint Pros serves the community by working with a government assistance program to help families with disabilities receive home modifications to improve accessibility. Through this program, they install walk-in showers, widen doorways for wheelchair access, build ramps and make other essential modifications based on medical recommendations. For many families, these changes make an enormous difference. "Being able to help these families finally get the assistance they've needed for so long is an incredible blessing," Allan admitted.

Outside of their work, the McKeever's also give back by coaching local youth soccer and basketball teams. Having grown up in Midlothian themselves, they cherish the opportunity to mentor young athletes — just as they were mentored by the coaches in their own childhoods.

Whether it's refreshing a home with a new coat of paint or creating a dream kitchen or bathroom, Allan and Jay McKeever are ready to bring their expertise and passion to every project. They look forward to seeing what they can do for you. **NOW**



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Creamed Corn Au Gratin

Creamed Corn Au Gratin

Serves 8.

- 1 lb. sweet frozen corn**
- 1 1/2 cups heavy cream**
- Pinch of white pepper**
- 1/2 tsp. salt**
- 2 Tbsp. sugar**
- 2 Tbsp. butter**
- 2 Tbsp. flour**
- 3 Tbsp. Parmesan cheese**

- 1.** Combine the frozen corn, heavy cream, white pepper, salt and sugar in a pot; bring to a boil. Simmer for 5 minutes.
- 2.** Make a roux of butter and flour; add to the corn. Mix well; remove from the heat.
- 3.** Transfer the corn mixture to a casserole dish. Sprinkle with the Parmesan cheese; brown under the broiler.

Broccoli, Grape and Pasta Salad

Serves 8.

- 8 oz. farfalle pasta**
- 1 lb. fresh broccoli, chopped**
- 1 cup mayonnaise**
- 1/3 cup sugar**
- 1/3 cup red onion, finely chopped**
- 1/3 cup red wine vinegar**
- 1 tsp. salt**
- 2 cups seedless red grapes, halved**
- 8 bacon slices, cooked and crumbled**
- 1 cup pecans, chopped and toasted**

- 1.** Cook the pasta to al dente, so it's firm enough to hold its own when tossed with salad dressing. Meanwhile, cut the broccoli florets from the stems; separate the florets into small pieces using the tip of a paring knife. Peel away the outer layer of stems; finely chop the stems.
- 2.** Whisk together the mayonnaise and the next 4 ingredients in a separate large bowl; add the broccoli, hot cooked pasta and grapes, stirring to coat.
- 3.** Cover; chill for 3 hours. Stir the bacon and pecans into the salad just before serving.

Cinnamon Polar Bear Cookies

Makes 4 dozen.

- 1 cup sugar**
- 1 cup butter, softened**
- 1 egg**
- 2 1/3 cups flour**
- 1 tsp. cinnamon**
- 1/4 cup powdered sugar**
- Miniature chocolate chips, for eyes**
- Cinnamon red hot candy, for nose**

- 1.** In a large bowl, combine the sugar and butter; beat until light and fluffy. Add the egg, continuing to beat.
- 2.** In a separate bowl, add the flour and

CookingNOW

IN THE KITCHEN WITH

MAXINE FARRAR

— By Angel Morris



Maxine Farrar has always loved cooking. “Even as a young girl, I remember pulling up a chair to reach the stove. I enjoy both following recipes and creating my own,” she noted.

Cooking for family and friends brings Maxine great joy. “I especially enjoy cooking with my grandkids, as it creates special memories, listening to their interests and concerns while making Cinnamon Bear Cookies,” she shared. “My hope is that it will be a special memory for them, as well.”

Maxine has two favorite side dishes for spring and summer barbecues, which she includes here and in her own cookbook. “I created a hardcover recipe book to have all my favorite dishes in one place,” she noted. “Some other interests I enjoy include being part of the background in *The Chosen* TV series, gardening, sewing and hosting people in my home.” **NOW**

cinnamon; blend together. Slowly add the flour mixture to the wet mixture. Divide and cover the dough with plastic wrap; refrigerate for 1 hour for easier handling.

3. Preheat the oven to 350 F. For each bear cookie, shape the dough into a 1-inch ball; flatten for the face. Then shape 2 smaller balls; flatten for ears. Attach the ears to the top of the face. Roll 1 smaller ball; flatten it for the nose. Set each bear about 2 inches apart on a cookie sheet.

4. Bake the cookies in a preheated oven at 350 F for 11-15 minutes, or until slightly brown on the edges. Immediately use a sifter or strainer and lightly sprinkle powdered sugar over the cookies. Press 2 chocolate chips into each cookie for the eyes and 1 cinnamon candy in the center of the nose.

Mocha Punch

- 1** 1/2 qts. water
- 1/2** cup Instant Ovaltine
- 1/2** cup sugar
- 1/4** cup instant decaffeinated coffee
- 1/2** gal. vanilla ice cream
- 1/2** gal. chocolate ice cream
- Chocolate curls, for garnish**
- Whipped cream, for garnish**

- Boil the water; add the Ovaltine, sugar and coffee, stirring until dissolved.
- Transfer the mixture to a pitcher; refrigerate for 4 hours or overnight.
- Let the ice cream sit out for about 15 minutes to soften. Thirty minutes before serving, pour the liquid into a punch bowl. Add the ice cream by the spoonful. Stir until slightly melted.
- Garnish with chocolate curls and whipped cream. I make this decaffeinated, but you can always change the coffee to caffeinated.

To search for more great recipes from any of the **9 NOW Magazines** publications, visit www.nowmagazines.com.

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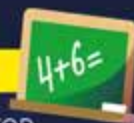
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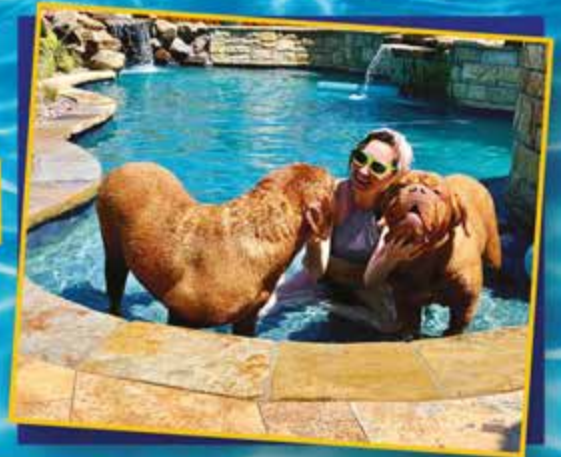
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Carrying the Torch Forward: Blue Mint Thai and Asian Cuisine Expands with Heart, Heritage, and Big League Ambitions



Mike Wilson always has irons in the fire. A retired Arlington Police detective, a retired Air Force Commander, a real estate investor, financial and mindset educator, a charitable book author, business owner, philanthropist and entrepreneur — he's worn many hats. But his proudest title these days might just be "torchbearer." Since partnering with the Amaratana and Ochajaroen families — founders of the award-winning Blue Mint Thai and Asian Cuisine in Mansfield, Texas — Mike has not only honored their legacy, but ignited a new chapter of growth, recognition, and community impact that's putting this family-run restaurant in the national spotlight.



From Bangkok to Blue Mint Thai: A Story of Heritage

The Amaratana and Ochajaroen family's culinary roots stretch back decades, starting with their first Thai restaurant in New Jersey in 1989 before planting Blue Mint Thai in Mansfield, Texas, in 2008. With recipes passed down through three generations, and authentic dishes crafted with care, the brand earned its loyal following and multiple accolades.

When Mike Wilson joined forces with the family, he didn't just step into the restaurant — he stepped into a legacy. "It's amazing how they've embraced my roots and supported me in continuing to build Blue Mint Thai to a nationally recognized brand," Mike shared. "I never imagined a poor kid with a single mom from South Florida would be entrusted with this kind of legacy. It's a surreal honor."

So much so that he recently journeyed with the family to Thailand, where he met their extended relatives, absorbed the culture, and traced the origin of the dishes. "It deepened everything — the connection, the responsibility, the authenticity, and the love they put into their recipes," he said.

Expanding the Brand, Deepening the Impact

Now, Blue Mint Thai is on the move. With its original home in Mansfield still thriving as a beloved family-style dine-in spot, the Company is preparing to open three new locations: a **fast-casual experience in Midlothian this May**, and a second fast-casual location in the **Entertainment District of Arlington, Texas, opening later this year. AND, HOT OFF THE PRESSES**, Blue Mint Thai will have a kiosk at **Globe Life Field** for the next three years in section 126.

"We're excited to bring something special to each city while maintaining the incredible quality our customers know," Mike said. "Mansfield is our heart. Midlothian is my current hometown, and the support there has been overwhelming. And Arlington — that's my family. I served that community for nearly 20 years as a detective and patrol officer. Giving back to Arlington is personal."

Each location will feature core Blue Mint Thai staples — takeout, catering, and the signature dishes fans rave about — while adjusting the vibe to fit its environment. Arlington, for example, is targeting a walk-up, indoor-outdoor bar experience to sync with the vibrant, walkable development on Front Street.

Big League Flavor: Partnering with the Texas Rangers

In a move that's sure to stir massive excitement, "Alisa Dodenhoff, the Director of Business Operations for Blue Mint Thai, was able to secure a three year deal with the World Series winning Texas Rangers." Blue Mint Thai was recently named as the **Proud Asian Restaurant and Official Partner of the Texas Rangers**.

"Relationships, faith and grit got us here," Mike said. "The Rangers were looking for a high-quality restaurant partner and a brand that aligned with their values, and Blue Mint Thai answered that call."

From Rangers Radio Network ads, Rangers emails and social media blasts to Blue Mint Thai signage in the outfield and hosting events with the World Series Trophy, the partnership is a home run for brand visibility — but it's also a value match. "The Rangers represent excellence, discipline, and grit — values we live by every day at Blue Mint Thai," Mike noted. "Unconquerable mindset. Servant leadership. Integrity first. Extreme accountability. That's how you win championships — and run a champion restaurant concept."

Franchise Opportunities: Sharing the Legacy

With high demand and a proven operational model, Blue Mint Thai is now franchising.

"There are two types of partners we're looking for," Mike explained. "Owner-operators who want to be hands-on, and smart investors looking for a solid growth opportunity. Either way, it's about alignment with our values and an appreciation for our authentic cuisine."

Backed by a strategic growth plan aimed at scaling to 1,000

Blue Mint

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locations over 10 years, Blue Mint's franchise model offers comprehensive support — from operations and training to AI-powered dashboards and performance audits. "We've built a world-class system that builds great people, great processes, and leverages great technology," Mike added.

Serving More Than Food: A Mission to Give Back

If you think Blue Mint Thai is just about noodles and curry, think again. The Company is deeply embedded in its communities — supporting causes and charities from child advocacy and education to veteran and first responder programs and local athletics.

Recent initiatives include financial contributions to the Ellis County Child Advocacy Center, sponsorship of Midlothian sports teams, support for the Arlington Police "Back the Blue" program, and speaking engagements at Ellis County's Thrive Leadership event and local high schools. "Nearly every leader in our organization is a veteran or a first responder," Mike said. "We understand what it means to serve. It's not just about food or profits — it's about always taking care of people."

In 2025, the Company will launch the **Blue Mint Thai Foundation**, focused on empowering youth leaders, veterans, and law enforcement officers.

Culture That Wins

Every step of the way, the team is guided by its **core values**, which are embedded into everything — from hiring decisions to daily service:

- **Unconquerable Mindset**
- **Servant Leadership**
- **Integrity First**
- **Extreme Accountability**

"These values aren't posters on a wall," Mike said. "They're lived. They shape our training, our partnerships, our food — and they're non-negotiable. That's how you build a national brand."

What's Next?

With three corporate locations in DFW and our Texas Rangers kiosk, franchise opportunities across the Metroplex, a major-league sports partnership, and a thriving team of leaders, the future of Blue Mint Thai looks nothing short of extraordinary.

"Our mission is simple," Mike said. "To create an amazing experience by delivering award-winning Thai and Asian food at an exceptional value — and to give back to every local community we're privileged to be a part of."

And if you haven't yet tried their Crazy Drunken Noodles, Crispy Spring Rolls, Pad Thai, or Golden Pouch (crab rangoons) yet...

"Just stop by," Mike smiled. "You'll see what the hype is about."



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WESTERN SWING IS ALIVE AND WELL

— By Amber D. Browne

Widely known as the “King of Western Swing,” the late Bob Wills is alive and well in Turkey, Texas. Each year, on the last Saturday of April, Bob Wills Day celebrates the Texas musician and his contributions to American Western Swing. This spring, Turkey, Texas, is expected to host more than 8,000 visitors at the 53rd annual Bob Wills Day.

The event will feature three days of Western Swing dances and kicks off on Thursday, April 24, with a performance by Asleep At The Wheel. “Joining them will be Joshua Hedley. It will be his first time at Bob Wills, and we could not be more excited for him to join us,” said Carley du Menil, volunteer with the Bob Wills Foundation.

Friday night has long been reserved for former Texas Playboys involved in Bob Wills’ bands since the 1930s. “Bob had some of the best musicians play with him over the years,” Carley said. “Almost all of the people that actually played with Bob Wills are no longer with us.” But the tradition continues with the newly reconstituted Bob Wills Texas Playboys under the direction of Jason Roberts. “We just think Bob Wills would have thought they were a pretty spectacular band, so Friday night is their night.”

On Saturday, Jody Nix and the Texas Cowboys and Jake Hooker and the Outsiders will host a dance battle, playing on opposite sides of the dance hall at Bob Wills Community Center. Saturday is full of other events, including a parade



Photo by Carley du Menil.



Photo by Carley du Menil.



down Main St. in Turkey, a historic outdoor concert, a car show and a fiddle contest.

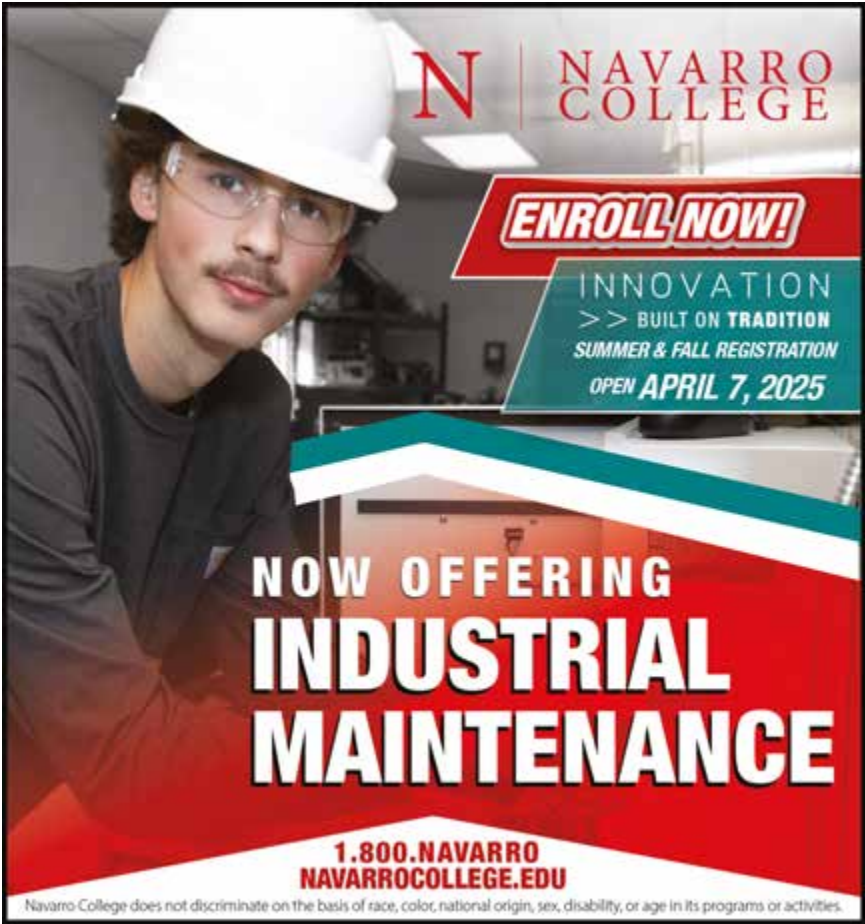
Bob Wills was not born in Turkey, but he spent much of his childhood there. “He always claimed Turkey, Texas, as his home. Then he went off and became Bob Wills and became the hero of Western Swing,” Carley said. In the early 1970s, local business leaders and volunteers launched Bob Wills Day to honor the singer-songwriter. “We’ve continued this event not only to celebrate Bob Wills but to preserve, continue, promote and bring to the next generation Western Swing music because it is just such a vibrant part of our country’s musical history,” Carley said. “We are here to celebrate small-town America, which is Turkey, Texas, that western culture of life.”

Bob Wills Day attendees can find accommodations at RV parks, house rentals and Hotel Turkey, which sits downtown. The hotel will be busy in April, but music lovers can enjoy live music there each weekend throughout the year. Carley fell in love with Turkey after playing at the hotel about seven years ago. “I moved here to be a part of what we’re doing.”

Local restaurants and activities also entice visitors to spend time in Turkey. Turkey Creek Winery offers an extensive wine list and pizzas; Letty’s Café provides Tex-Mex; and Tona’s Mexican Kitchen offers grub for hungry guests. Visitors won’t want to miss the charming little general store, Lacy Dry Goods, and they can catch a glimpse of the Texas State Bison Herd at the nearby Caprock Canyons State Park. The Church of Western Swing in Turkey offers visitors another unique option during their stay. “You never know who will show up there to play music. It’s just an absolutely wonderful time of fellowship and friendship, and it’s all based around Western Swing music.”

For 53 years, the Bob Wills Foundation has hosted the event, and with the addition of sponsorships and new volunteers over the past few years, the event will continue for the next generation. “They will make sure this event is going to happen over the next 50 years.” **NOW**

Source:
I. bobwillsday.com.



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Winner must pick up prize
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Hats were found on pages
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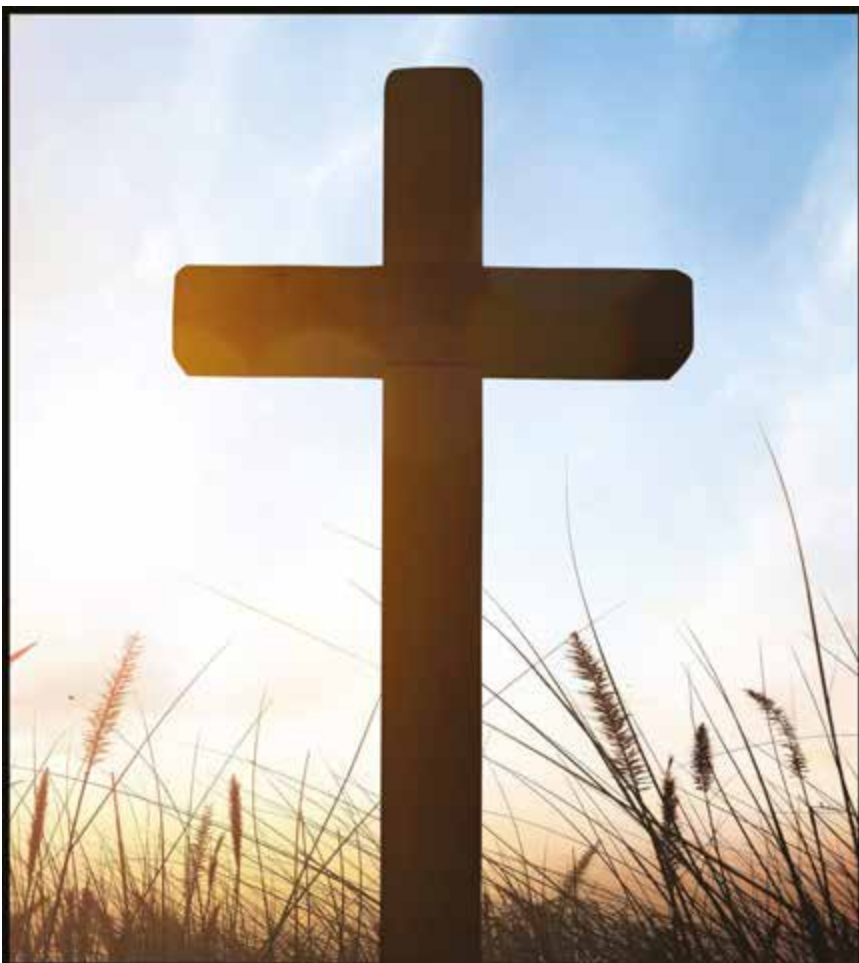
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Have a Happy and Blessed Easter

 **HOLCIM**

Debbie Reynolds, movie and television actress and onstage performer, is well-known for her breakout performance alongside Gene Kelly in *Singin' in the Rain*, as well as other roles on the silver screen. What many might not know is that Ms. Reynolds was born in El Paso. On April 1, 1932, Ms. Reynolds made her first appearance in this world as Mary Frances Reynolds to parents Raymond and Maxine Reynolds. She would spend her early childhood in the far West Texas town before her family made the move to California in 1939. On the West Coast, she would cultivate her natural talents in acting, singing and dancing to showcase to the world.

According to an *El Paso Times* article, after a visit to El Paso for a funeral in the early 1950s, it would take another 50-plus years for Ms. Reynolds to return to her place of birth. Her visit to El Paso in 2010 included a reception in her honor and an appearance at the annual El Paso Community Foundation Plaza Classic Film Festival to highlight a viewing of *Singin' in the Rain*. "It was a pretty big deal," said Doug Pullen, program director for the film festival and the El Paso Community Foundation. "She's Hollywood royalty, and guess what? She was born here."

Her career spanned nearly seven decades and included movie and onstage musicals, comedies and animated films, television appearances in shows such as *Will & Grace* and a starring role as Grandmother Aggie Cromwell in the Disney Channel Original Movie series, *Halloweentown*. "You had different generations who knew her from different things. A lot of people, I don't think, knew that she was originally from here," Doug said.

At the time of her film festival appearance, Doug worked at *El Paso Times* and conducted a telephone interview with Ms. Reynolds prior to the event. She shared with him memories of playing in the dirt and neighbors sharing food while living at their home on Magnolia St. on the east side of El Paso. She lived her teenage years in California and competed in beauty pageants. She was noticed by Warner Bros. and later signed with MGM, kicking off her career toward Hollywood icon status.

If programming allows, the Plaza Classic Film Festival in El Paso attempts to feature one of her movies each year. The festival highlights films in the historic Plaza Theatre, the Philanthropy Theatre and other locations scattered throughout the Downtown area.

The Plaza Theatre pays homage to the actress with its largest dressing room — the Debbie Reynolds Dressing Room. "It has some various images of her on the walls. The decor has changed somewhat over time.

{ TALES OF TEXAS }

The Legacy of DEBBIE REYNOLDS

— By Amber D. Browne



Courtesy of the El Paso
Community Foundation.



Courtesy of the El Paso
Community Foundation.

DEBBIE REYNOLDS



Photo by Carriehenson1 |
Dreamstime.com.

When it was first dedicated,” Doug explained, “it had a lot of pink. I think over time, they’ve toned that down a little bit.”

Throughout her career in the entertainment industry, Ms. Reynolds received multiple nominations for her talents including a 1965 Academy Award Best Actress nomination for her performance in *The Unsinkable Molly Brown* and the 1951 Golden Globe Most Promising Newcomer nomination for *Three Little Words*. During her lifetime, she was honored with several awards including the Hollywood Chamber’s Lifetime Achievement Award, becoming the first woman to receive the recognition, and the Screen Actors Guild Lifetime Achievement Award.

Although she is remembered for her celebrity status, Ms. Reynolds was also known as a mother and grandmother. During her first of three marriages, she had two children with singer Eddie Fisher — Carrie Fisher, best known for her role as Princess Leia in the original *Star Wars* trilogy, and Todd Fisher.

Just one day after the passing of her daughter, Ms. Reynolds died of a stroke on December 28, 2016. Her granddaughter, Billie Lourd, continues the family’s acting legacy with roles in movies and television series such as *American Horror Story* and *Scream Queens*.

Ms. Reynolds’ legacy also lives on in the far West Texas metropolitan area of El Paso. Although she only lived there during her early childhood, her ties to the community will not soon be forgotten. “I think a lot of her legacy has to do with not only her star power but her versatility,” Doug said. “People like her were instrumental in starting to create some of the opportunities that some of today’s actors and actresses get to enjoy.” NOW

Sources:

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3. <https://plazaclassic.com/archives/2010-festival>.
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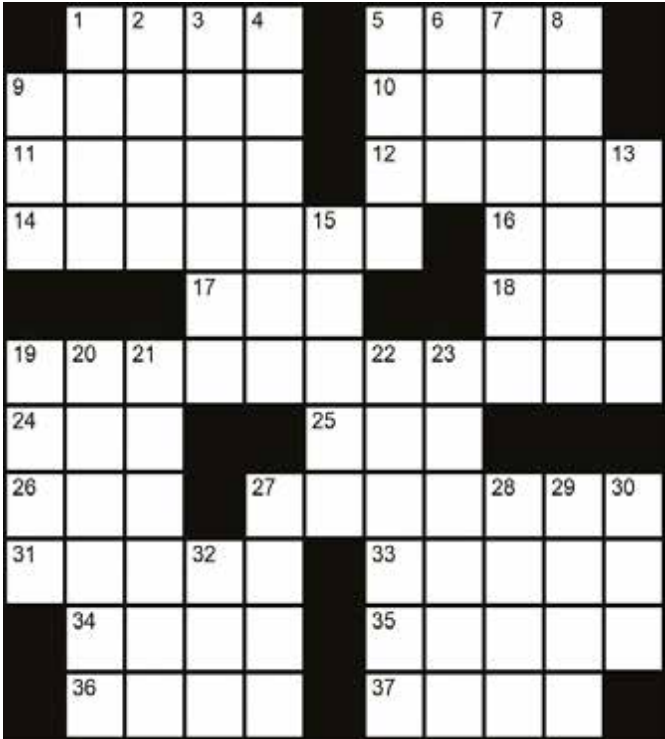
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Across

- 1 "Just the facts, ---"
- 5 Window section
- 9 1970s and 80s music style
- 10 Charlie ---, fictional Honolulu 'tec
- 11 Single things
- 12 Persian Gulf port
- 14 Deals in unusual disclaimers
- 16 "Cursed" team, informally
- 17 Contend
- 18 Entirely
- 19 Item for future historians

Down

- 24 20 Down's temperature
- 25 Fish eggs
- 26 Alpha wave chart, for short
- 27 It's not ---, according to Tom Jones
- 31 Complains bitterly
- 33 Fleet
- 34 Grating
- 35 Mosque leaders
- 36 Poet --- Wheeler Wilcox
- 37 Brings home
- 1 Battlefield booby trap
- 2 "B --- boy"
- 3 On the go
- 4 Where tesserae are found
- 5 Banned contaminants
- 6 "By George, I think I've got it!"
- 7 Bahamian capital
- 8 Become a member
- 9 Turkey
- 13 Wheel shaft
- 15 Get familiar with renal change
- 19 Ballpark level
- 20 Mammoth cold spell?
- 21 1991 Macaulay Culkin coming-of-age drama
- 22 Enter en masse
- 23 Seed found on Kaisers sometimes
- 27 Farming agency
- 28 --- the crack of dawn
- 29 Intentions
- 30 Many Salt Lakers
- 32 "--- Abner" (Comic strip)

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Easy

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

Medium

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

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Fire

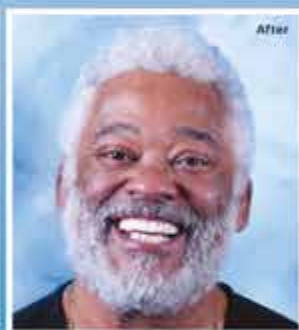
Mold

Biohazard



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Hello, Spring

APRIL

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.

4/3

Candidate Meet-and-Greet:

Hear from the Midlothian City Council and Midlothian ISD School Board candidates. 5:30-8:00 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center, 1 Community Circle Dr. Learn more: www.midlothianchamber.org.

4/12

Free Community Clean-Up Day:

For Midlothian residents (residency proof required) to dispose of bulk items (trash, electronics, furniture and more). No hazardous waste or paint. 8:00 a.m.-noon, Public Works Service Center, 1050 N. Hwy. 67. Visit www.midlothian.tx.us/721/Cleanup-Day-Events for more information.

Community Egg Hunt:

Kids 12 years old and younger scramble across ball fields to collect toy-filled eggs and prizes. An inclusive area also provides an alternative hunt. Bring your baskets and cameras! Photos with Mr. and Mrs. Bunny after the hunt. Promptly at 10:00 a.m., Midlothian Community Park baseball fields, 3601 S. 14th St.

Rain-Out Date: April 18.

Spring Market and Egg Hunt:

Shop small businesses, enjoy a petting zoo and egg hunt. Midlothian High School Band fundraiser photos with the Easter Bunny. 10:00 a.m.-

2:30 p.m., Midlothian Civic Center, 224 S. 11th St. See full schedule: www.facebook.com/midlothiantxciviccenter.

Brilliance, Boots & Bling Bingo:

Presented by the Navarro College Foundation. Doors open: 6:00 p.m.; dinner: 6:30 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center, 2000 Civic Center Ln., Waxahachie.

4/19

Wildflower Walk:

One-half mile nature walk led by Texas Master Naturalists to learn about the wildflowers, native plants and animal life of the park. Closed-toe shoes, comfortable outdoor clothing and insect repellent recommended. Open to children and adults but be aware most trails are natural surface. In case of rain, walk is canceled. 9:00-11:00 a.m., Mockingbird Park, 1361 Onward Rd. Learn more: www.midlothian.tx.us/706/Nature-Activities.

4/22

Earth Day Celebration:

Our Power, Our Planet. Come out for fun and games, information, souvenirs and more! 4:00-7:00 p.m., Community Park, 3601 S. 14th St.

4/26

Hazardous Waste Drop Off:

The Fort Worth Crud Cruiser will collect and provide safe disposal of household chemical waste

(no commercial waste allowed).

Voucher required from Midlothian City Hall, Utility Billing Department. \$20 for residents; \$95 for nonresidents. 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., 1050 N. U.S. Hwy. 67. For more details, call (972) 775-1083.

MidloFest:

Fine wines, art displays and food offerings. 2:00-8:00 p.m., Downtown Midlothian. Learn more: www.midlothianchamber.org.

Weekdays

Library Events:

Daily events for a range of ages. Midlothian Library, 215 N. 8th St. Visit <https://midlothian.libcal.com/> for schedules.

Second and Fourth Wednesdays

Jesus Feeds Us:

Free grocery distribution. 2:00 p.m. until supplies run out, Midlothian Church of Christ, 1627 N. Hwy. 67.

Thursdays

Celebrate

Recovery Meeting:

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

St. For more details, email CR@dfwlighthouse.org.

Saturdays

Midlothian

Farmers Market:

9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Downtown Heritage Park, 234 N. 8th St.

Second Saturdays

Resilient Together:

Connect with others who understand the challenges of living with MS. 10:00 a.m.-noon. Harvest Hill Church (first floor, red room), 1250 Walter Stephenson Rd. RSVP to mallory.msfriends@yahoo.com.

Third Saturdays

Urban Well Food Pantry:

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