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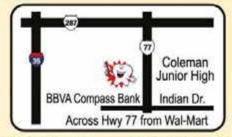


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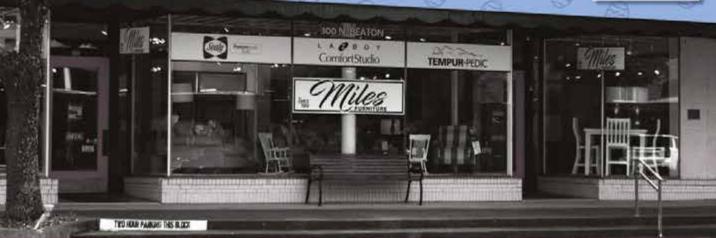


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ON THE COVER



All Llamas to the front! Lindsay Taylor is on the mic.

Photo by Kobbi R. Blair.

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Adam Walker

WaxahachieNOW Editor
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EDITOR'S NOTE

Food is an adventure ...

I'm really glad H-E-B started stocking some Chinese vegetables recently, things like Chinese bitter melon (the smooth, light green one), long beans and Chinese eggplant. I've noticed several Indian vegetables as well: Indian bitter melon (the spiky, dark green one) and methi or fenugreek leaves. And Chinese okra, also called loofa or Indian ridge gourd, which is used in both cuisines. I'm used to having to drive to Arlington to get these things, and while I still have to go there to get some of the leafy vegetables I remember from Taiwan, it's really nice to have some of them closer to home now.

It's also nice to have a Chinese restaurant that serves eggplant dishes and scallion pancakes and some of the desserts I remember. When I first came back from Taiwan, no one had the foggiest notion what boba was or milk tea, but now there are lots of places to get fun drinks flavored with taro, winter melon and dragon fruit.

I still have to go searching for some things ... or even order them from stores in the big Chinatowns in other states, but it's getting easier to indulge my gastronomic memories ... and explore new flavors. It still isn't easy to find any of the dozens of different kinds of tofu that I remember, like the thin sheets and the spongy cubes and the hard-pressed stuff or the stuff that's dried like jerky. But there's always a trip to Arlington for those — and the taro, sweet potato and red bean ice cream.

Some days I really crave all that food. Other days I just want a plate of biscuits and gravy and a bowl of vanilla ice cream.

Explore the world with your plate!

P.S. If you like to cook — with an international flare or down-home favorites — let's talk about getting your recipes in the magazine!

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"WE'RE AN '80S TOP 40 TRIBUTE BAND.
WE SING HIGHLY RECOGNIZABLE SONGS.
WE PLAY A LOT OF QUIRKY '80S HITS
THAT OTHERS DON'T DO."



MELIDS — By Adam Walker Andy Hinz, Mike and Lindsay Taylor, Derek Howton and Trey Glaspy are area musicians who have been playing instruments and singing hither, thither and yon whenever and wherever they could until fate brought them together and turned them into llamas. So how did they become the Java Llamas?

"We played small venues at first. We started as a threepiece band. Now we're five," Andy, the keyboardist and one of the vocalists, explained.

"We were a coffee cup-sized band," Derek, another vocalist and the drummer, interjected.

"Coffee ... java ... What rhymes with java? Llamas stuck," Andy continued.

"Because Cappuccino Alpacas was already taken," Mike, the guitarist, added. "And we do still fit in small spaces, both physically and acoustically." He's also a sound engineer.

The Java Llamas used to play a huge range of music from Jimi Hendrix to Lady Gaga. "But when you tell people you play everything, it's the same as saying you play nothing specific," Andy reported. "Tribute bands are really big right now. And this was our way to become a tribute band with the music we enjoy the most. We're an '80s Top 40 tribute band. We sing highly recognizable songs. We play a lot of quirky '80s hits that others don't do."

"It's Jack FM meets Mix 102.9," Lindsay, the vocalist, explained. "I'm living my elementary school dream." She gets into the groove when she parties like it's 1999 and can't help dancing as she sings. "Sometimes, the audience gets a little wild, and some of them try to come on stage to join in! I'm a stay-at-home mom and homeschool our kids, so this gives me a piece of myself back."









They don't stick strictly to the '80s, but include a few songs from the '70s that were still getting play on the radio and in movie soundtracks. "Fleetwood Mac was not '80s, but no one stopped listening," Trey, the bass player, said. "I have no idea how many times that was played in the '80s. It was like every 30 seconds. I'm the newest member of this band. I've been with them just over a year. But I've been playing in bands since I was like 15 or 16. I love to play with these guys."

They also include a few newer songs that feel like the '80s or are just too fun to pass up. "Friends in Low Places' is '90s, but everyone loves to dance to it," Lindsay added. "When one of us thinks of another song we'd like to try performing, we add it to the bucket list. When we want to start learning a new song, we pick something off the list to practice. Andy keeps us on track."

"I'm the one who gets us off track," Derek exclaimed. "I think most musicians have ADD. When we first started, we played slowed down, loungey versions of songs. We Llamafied the songs. Now we do most of the songs closer to the originals. If we change them, we change them enough that we can say, 'That's our version,' like playing 'Sweet Child o' Mine' on the keyboard."

"We put some Llama sauce on it," Andy added.

"Quality music made by quality musicians is transportive," Mike put in. "Powerful music moments happen." His favorite song the band does is "Everybody Wants to Rule the World," but his favorite thing about the band is a one-word answer, "Lindsay!" Their upstairs practice studio houses a lot of Mike's guitars. "I have 60 guitars of all





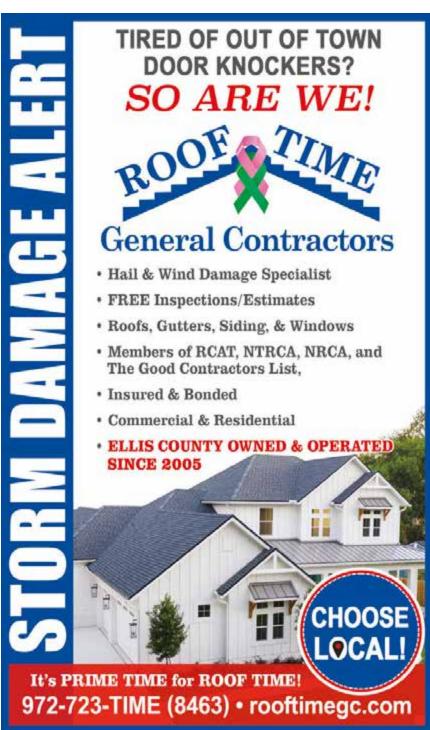


kinds. I buy them in bad shape and fix them up." There are also a couple of banios on the wall.

"I have the same disease with harmonicas," Andy admitted. "This is not a full-time job for any of us. Cork House wanted us to write a song for them, so we do that song when we perform there. We're just trying to have a good time. We practice two hours a week. But I spend an unbelievable amount of time thinking about the band. They say you are what you think about all day."

"One thing that distinguishes us," Derek claimed, "is that we can do harmonies. We have three lead singers in this band, and the other two join in on harmonies. I've been in a lot of bands that never knew I could sing. One of my favorite songs we do is 'Take on Me.' I'm not exactly Mariah Carey, but I have the range to sing it."

"In the past, we have done a threehour set in the afternoon, followed by another three-hour set in the evening. It's been a while since we did that on purpose," Andy recalled. "It's easier with three of us to share the leads. Collaborating is so much better than doing things by yourself. We get to enjoy this friendship while reliving the '80s." NOW

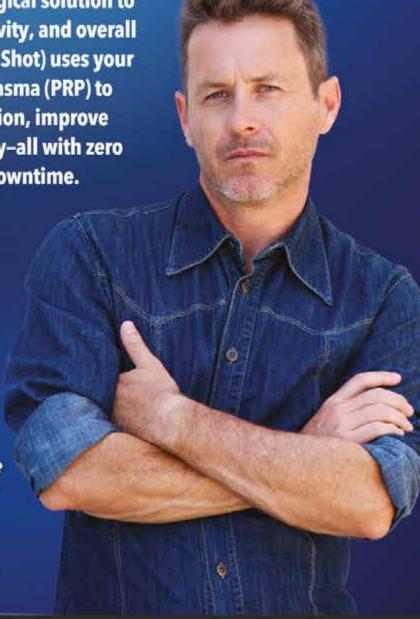


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A symbol of springtime and new life, the bunny rabbit is thought to align with the meaning of Easter and the celebration of Christ's resurrection in its own, whimsical way. If you're looking for how to partner the biblical story with bunny traditions,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







Around Town



Alberto Garcia and Keya Tucker find some awesome blossoms at Tulipalooza.

Zoomed In: Shane Brandt

By Adam Walker

Nine-year-old Shane Brandt tried something new at the Hatchie Critter Carnival. With bow and arrow in hand, Shane scored three bullseyes. "This was my first time," he said. "I enjoy shooting the arrows and hitting the targets. It was fun." The instructor was impressed with Shane's skill. But when asked if he wanted to do it again, Shane's answer was a simple, "No."

"We came for the Creature Teacher," his father, Eric, explained. "We heard he was going to be here at the park. When we got here, we saw all this other stuff that they have here." The other stuff included several American Ninja-style bounce houses, the Sims bookmobile, free hot dogs and more. "When we saw the archery area, we thought it was neat."



Local author Alex Allred enjoys a cup of coffee at Bloom & Pour.



Elmwood Homes at Waterfall Ranch holds their ribbon cutting.



Waxahachie ISD holds the grand opening ceremony of Wilemon STEAM Academy with the Chamber of Commerce.



Life High School Waxahachie Mustangs finish their season 27-9, 2nd in district play.



Professor Pop reveals the magic and science of bubbles.



Kathy Thomson (L) and Jacques Auxenfanas (R) of PennyPaws help Joe Constancio and Storm with some lowcost vaccines.



The Hatchie 50 brings out runners' competitive sides.







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Wiley's Diamonds and Fine Jewelry

By Adam Walker

Wiley's Diamonds and Fine Jewelry

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Hours: Monday-Friday: 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Saturday: 9:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Sunday: Closed

Wiley's Diamonds and Fine Jewelry has been serving the people of Waxahachie for over 30 years, but this January, Karen Escudero became the new owner of the establishment. "We came here in 2022, from Arkansas, to learn the business side of a jewelry store, and buy it when Kendall Wiley retired. I already knew the jewelry side. I have 24 years of experience, and my husband, Jorge, has 40. We met 17 years ago doing diamond shows around the U.S. and Canada. Jewelry is all I know!"

They carry all kinds of fine jewelry. "We focus on diamonds and gold. We carry a lot of bridal and engagement rings. We use both lab-created and natural diamonds. But we also carry other kinds of rings, including mother's rings, necklaces, bracelets and more.

"We create custom jewelry. In-house repairs are available, and if we need to send your piece out for the setting to be made, your stones stay here. Jewelry is very sentimental. If you want to have grandma's stone reset, it stays here, safe, not lost in the mail. If you have a piece of jewelry with a stone you don't like, we can replace the stone. Or if it's the stone you like and the ring doesn't please you, we can remount the stone. We can help you recreate a piece that has been lost or stolen. We use CAD/CAM to create a virtual version of the ring, so you can keep making changes until it's perfect, before we have the actual ring cast. We can

make anything, and we work with all colored stones as well as diamonds."

In addition to wedding sets and custom jewelry, Wiley's carries bracelets, necklaces and earrings. "We can make any kind of jewelry," Jorge emphasized. "And we carry a full line of Inox men's jewelry, including necklaces, bracelets and rings. It's good quality men's jewelry, but it's affordable. We also carry Seiko watches."

"We focus on diamonds and gold. We carry a lot of bridal and engagement rings. We use both lab-created and natural diamonds."

"In our men's section, we have leather chairs and coffee, cokes and beer to relax while your wife or girlfriend shops," Karen informed. They keep the beer locked up, so it's also a place where the children can wait.

"We are a locally owned, in-house jewelry store," Karen continued. "We offer fair prices and quality jewelry. You can feel the quality when you touch it. We're a full-service shop, so if your jewelry needs cleaning, bring it to us. We also buy gold. Our staff have been the same for five years. They're loyal to Wiley's and this town."

Wiley's has been in Waxahachie for over 30 years, but under the leadership of Karen and Jorge they are becoming more involved in the community. "We're a member of the Chamber of Commerce, and we're taking more of an interest in community events," Karen said. "We are participating in the Navarro College Foundation, and we donated a luxury purse for Red Oak ISD's Handbags for Hawks bingo."

If you are looking for a ring to say, "I do," or something to say, "I love you," or something special for yourself, jewelry is a traditional choice. Karen, Jorge and the rest of the team at Wiley's Diamonds and Fine Jewelry would like the opportunity to help you make the right choice. NOW









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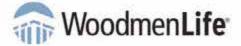




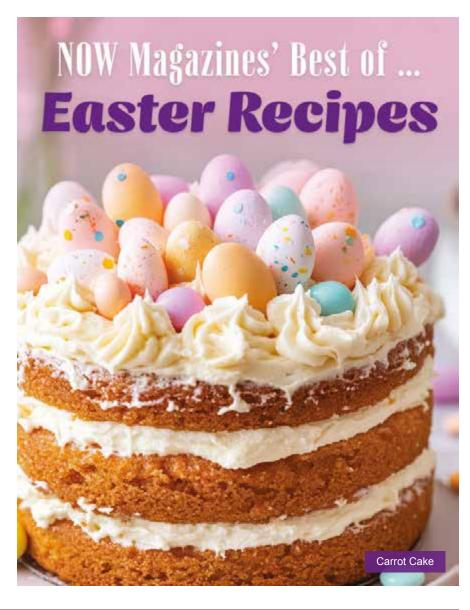












Easter is a special time of celebration around the world. Some of these recipes are considered traditional Easter foods in some cultures. Others are more contemporary creations that just say "springtime," and would make a wonderful addition to your holiday table. Enjoy! Now

Peanut Butter Easter Eggs

Provided by Amy Lane for the April 2022 issue of WaxahachieNOW Magazine.

cup peanut butter
 stick butter
 tsp. sea salt
 tsp. vanilla extract
 cups powdered sugar
 oz. chocolate melts

1. Place peanut butter and butter in a microwave-safe bowl; warm in 30-second increments for about 1 to 1 1/2 minutes until melted. Add the salt and vanilla extract; stir until combined.

- **2.** Slowly stir in the powdered sugar to avoid it billowing out of the bowl. Divide the dough into eight pieces; shape into egg forms. Place the eggs onto a baking sheet covered with waxed paper; cool to room temperature.
- **3.** In a microwave-safe bowl or on a double boiler, melt the chocolate. Dip each egg into the chocolate; place back on the waxed paper to dry. Once all eggs are dipped, place the baking sheet in the refrigerator for about 1 hour or until set. Enjoy!

Carrot Cake

Provided by Sharon Tolar for the July 2022 issue of EnnisNOW Magazine.

Cake:

4 whole eggs

2 cups sugar

1 1/4 cups cooking oil

2 tsp. baking soda

1/2 cup buttermilk

3 cups sifted flour 1 tsp. cinnamon

1 tsp. lemon extract

3 cups carrots, finely grated

1 1/2 cups pecans, chopped (optional)

Glaze:

I cup orange juice

1 cup sugar

1/2 cup grated orange zest (optional)

- **1.** For cake: Mix together the eggs and sugar. Add oil; blend until smooth.
- 2. In a bowl, stir the soda into the buttermilk.
- **3.** Alternately add the flour and the buttermilk to the egg mixture, always beginning with the dry ingredient and ending with the dry ingredient. Blend completely after each addition.
- **4.** Stir in the cinnamon and lemon extract; stir in the carrots and pecans, if using.
- **5.** Bake at 250 F for 1 1/2 hours until a toothpick inserted into the cake comes out clean. Let the cake cool a few minutes; invert the warm cake onto a plate.
- **6.** For glaze: Heat the juice and sugar until the sugar is dissolved completely. Mix in the orange zest.
- **7.** Punch holes with an ice pick into the top of the cake; slowly drizzle the glaze over the cake until saturated. You may not want to use all of the glaze.

Grilled Asparagus

Provided by Melodie Wisdom for the June 2020 issue of North Ellis Co.NOW Magazine.

2 lbs. asparagus, stalks trimmed 2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil Kosher salt, to taste Black pepper, freshly ground, to taste

- **1.** Toss the asparagus lightly in oil; season generously with salt and pepper. Let the asparagus sit for 20 minutes.
- 2. Heat a grill or grill pan to high heat.
- **3.** Grill, turning occasionally, until the asparagus is tender and charred, about 3 to 4 minutes.

Broiled Lamb Chops With Red Wine and Oregano Marinade

Provided by Jill Matthews for the October 2014 issue of MidlothianNOW Magazine.

Lamb chops

1/4 cup onion, finely chopped1/4 cup fresh oregano, finely chopped or 2 tsp. dried oregano leaves

6 garlic cloves, minced 1/4 tsp. pepper 1/4 cup dry red wine 3 Tbsp. soy sauce

1 Tbsp. olive oil

- 1 Tbsp. red wine vinegar
- **I.** Place lamb rib, loin or shoulder chops on broiler pan. Place pan so that chops are 4-6 inches from heat. Broil 1-inch thick chops 10-12 minutes; 2-inch chops 20-22 minutes, turning once during cooking.
- **2.** Meanwhile, in a blender, combine all other ingredients. Blend well.
- **3.** Pour mixture over chops. Let stand at room temperature to marinate.

Bird Nest Dessert

Provided by Jamie Norwood for the March 2017 issue of MansfieldNOW Magazine.

- 1 12-oz. bag butterscotch mini chips 1 Tbsp. butter
- 1 12- to 14-oz. bag Chinese noodles Assorted jelly beans, green-colored coconut, malted Easter egg candy
- **I.** In a 2-qt. saucepan, melt the butterscotch and butter.
- **2.** Prepare a layer of waxed paper on a flat surface for the melted solution.
- **3.** Mix the noodles into the hot solution until the butterscotch and noodles are malleable.
- **4.** You can use mini muffin pans or regular muffin pans to mold the "birds' nests." Press warm noodle and butterscotch mixture against the insides of the muffin pans to form nests.
- **5.** Let the nests cool; then place them on waxed paper.
- **6.** You may store in the refrigerator and fill them later, or fill them immediately with green-colored coconut for "Easter grass," jelly beans or small, malted egg-shaped candies while still warm.



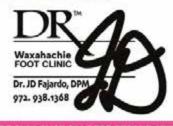


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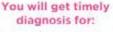
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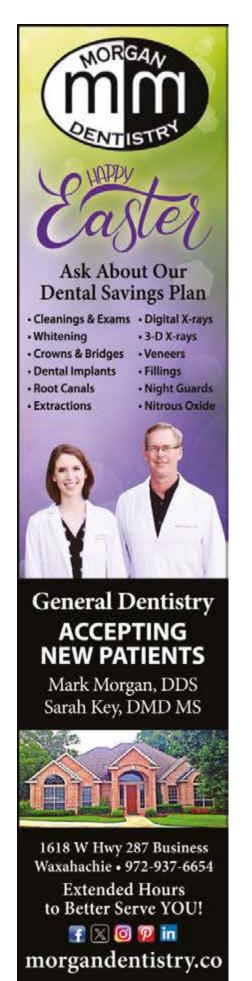
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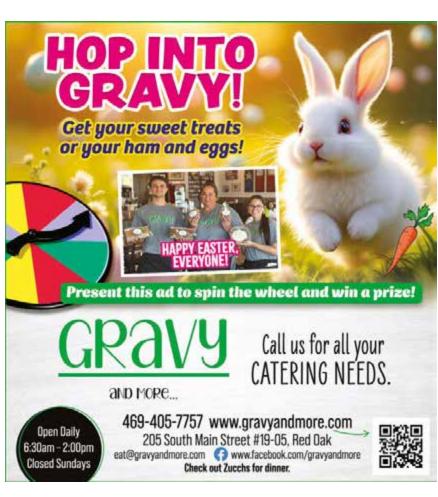








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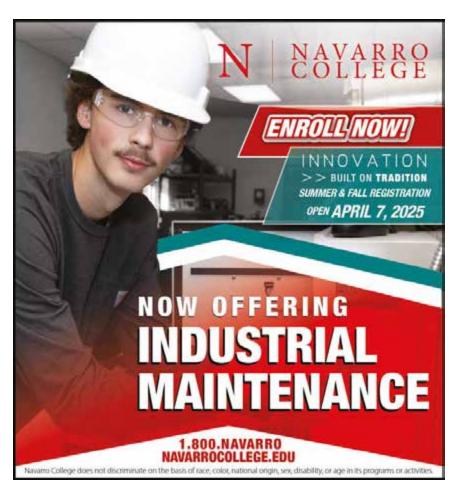
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— By Amber D. Browne

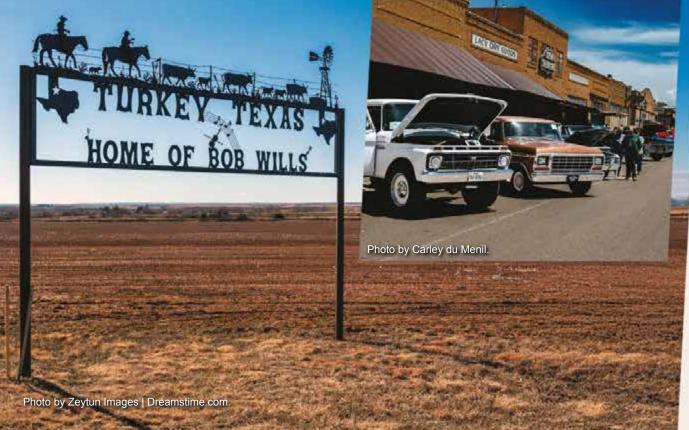
Widely known as the "King of Western Swing," the late Bob Wills is alive and well in Turkey, Texas. Each year, on the last Saturday of April, Bob Wills Day celebrates the Texas musician and his contributions to American Western Swing. This spring, Turkey, Texas, is expected to host more than 8,000 visitors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





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 smalltown 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."

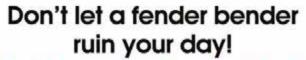
Local restaurants and activities also entice visitors to spend time in Turkey. Turkey Creek Winery offers an extensive wine list and pizzas; Letty's Café provides Tex-Mex; and Tona's Mexican Kitchen offers grub for hungry guests. Visitors won't want to miss the charming little general store, Lacy Dry 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."

Source:
I. bobwillsday.com.



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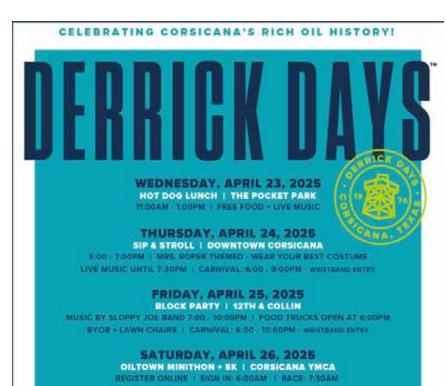
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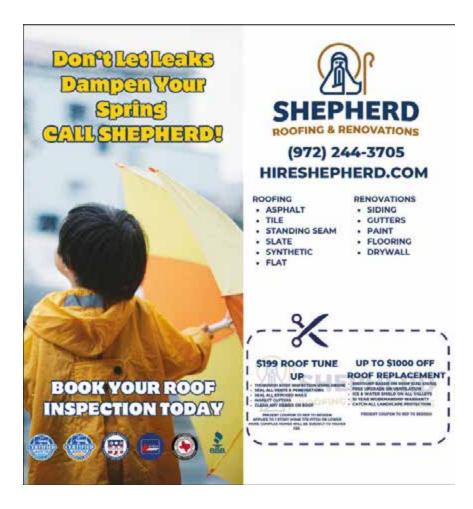
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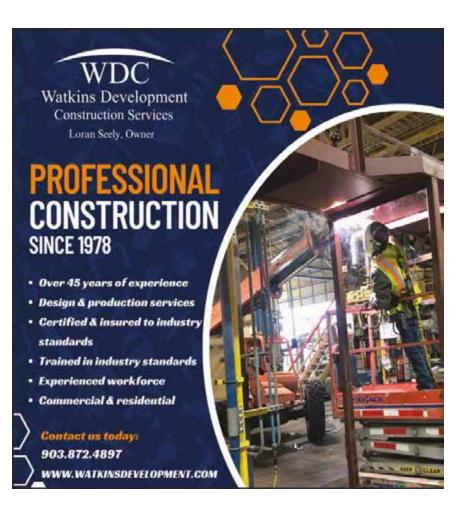
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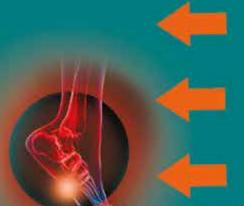
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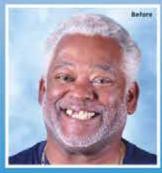
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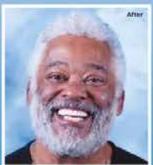




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VFW Easter Egg Hunt:

Open to the whole community, ages 0-10. Free. 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., 1405 N. I-35E.

4/5-4/6

Big Top Shopping Festival:

9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Downtown Waxahachie. 4/5-5/26

Scarborough **Renaissance Festival:**

Jousting, dancing and more. Adults: \$38; kids 5-12: \$18; under 4: free. Saturdays and **Sundays:** 10:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m., 2511 FM 66.

4/12

Brilliance, Boots & Bling Bingo:

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

4/16

Heart Smart Conference:

Keeping Ellis County residents' hearts healthy. 8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Waxahachie Senior Center, 122 Park Hills Dr.

4/18

Easter Egg Hunt:

The Avenue Church welcomes you to hunt 40,000 eggs. Free. 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., 1761 N. Hwy. 77.

4/19

Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra:

Beethoven and Mendelssohn. Adults: \$30; under 18: \$15. 7:30 p.m., Nelson University, 1600 Sycamore St.

4/26

2025 Swap Meet:

The VFW post hosts this event to raise money for a new ice machine. 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., 1405 N. I-35E.

4/27

Prairie Wildlife and Wildflower Adventure:

Free. 2:00-4:00 p.m., Ellis County Rural Heritage Farm, 130 Cummings Meadow Rd.

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







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