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# SouthwestNOW

A G A Z I N E

MAY 2022

## Bridge of Understanding

Teen Superintendent Skylar Wesley serves CHISD

## Law Day

Local students learn about their rights

In the Kitchen With Christopher Symank

Also inside:  
Scavenger Hunt  
Crossword

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## **ON THE COVER**

*Skylar Wesley communicates for CHISD.*

**Photo by**  
Shane Kirkpatrick.

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Photo Credits: Camarion Johnson and Elijah Baker, Duncanville High School Media Students



*Adam*

Adam Walker  
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## EDITOR'S NOTE

### *Out of sight ...*

Recently, I moved most of my worldly possessions from one storage building to another closer to where I live now. I'd been intending to do this for months, but what made me finally do it was when my old storage building came under new ownership and stopped sending reminder notices about upcoming payments. I needed those reminders.

When I started pulling stuff out of the old building, I found that rats had gotten into several boxes of Christmas ornaments and some of my many boxes of books, eating some of them. Water had gotten to some other stuff. I lost a few bookshelves. They were just particle board, but I'll have to replace them at some point. That was the painful part.

The fun part was finding my chunk of obsidian among my rock collection. I found coins I had forgotten. There were musical instruments, like my Chinese erhu and dizi, and the broken accordion that belonged to a family friend but is similar to one my grandmother used to play. I found board games I had forgotten and shoes I could be wearing now. There were crochet projects that my great-aunt made and my hats from all over the world. I got to look at my arm wrestling table that I bought off a guy on Craigslist and the rebar that I bent into curlicues with just my hands, before they went into the new building.

The two units are the same size, and I put less stuff in the new one than was in the old one. Still getting all my stuff to fit in the new building required taking stuff out and putting it back a few times. It nearly drove me ...

### *Out of (my) mind ...*

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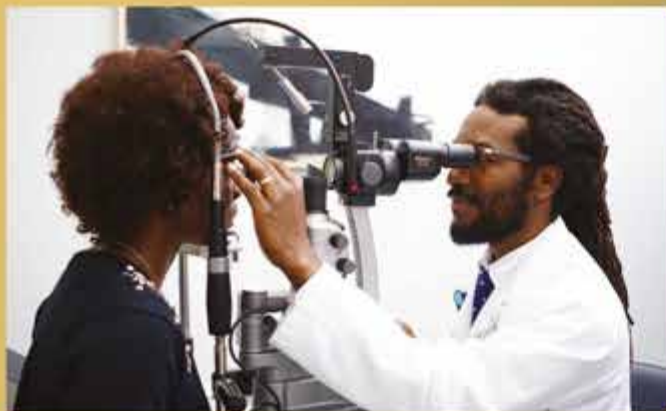
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# BRIDGE OF UNDERSTANDING

— By Adam Walker

*When Cedar Hill ISD decided to implement a new position to improve communication between its students and its school board, Skylar Wesley decided that sounded like something she was interested in. “I heard about the opportunity and said, ‘Why not?’ So I applied and went through the interviews, including one with Dr. Hudson, the superintendent of Cedar Hill ISD. When Dr. Hudson called me to tell me I had been chosen as the very first teen superintendent, I couldn’t believe it. It’s really an honor.”*

As the teen superintendent, Skylar is tasked with visiting all the campuses in CHISD and meeting with students to discuss the issues they have. Her job is to find out what the students at the elementary, middle school and high schools think is going well, and what needs improvement. “I hear all kinds of stories from the students,” Skylar reported. “Some of them are about very serious things going on in students’ lives. Some are requests to have all-day recess. It’s my job to go to the campuses and ask questions about what the students like and what needs to change. I’m their voice in the district. I really like how the elementary students were very comfortable with me and talked about everything. They have serious concerns about real issues like bullying and things that happen at home or away from school that follow them to school. Some of them are worried about fights that start on social media and follow them to school, or parents who aren’t involved. Stuff you used to think about in junior high happens in elementary now.

“I haven’t visited every school, yet. Once I’ve been to all of them, I’ll take my findings to the board, so we can create solutions. But right now, I’m still collecting data. It’s a lot of work. I have weekly meetings at schools.”











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All that work, being a bridge of understanding between students and the school board, is in addition to her class work, which she takes very seriously. "I don't like B's. I hate B's. My grades are important. I maintain a high GPA and take AP and honors classes. School comes first. I love my position, what I'm doing for CHISD, but my grades come first. I'd like to attend SMU, and I plan on pursuing a career in either chiropractic care or dentistry," Skylar said. In addition to her class work and her job as teen superintendent, she also holds down a part-time job as a chiropractic assistant administrative intern at a local chiropractic practice, exploring one of those options, which she's been doing for almost a year.

She also stays busy with plenty of extracurricular activities, both in school and out in the community. "I'm a part of the National Honor Society, National Technical Honor Society, Longhorn Futures Committee, Health Occupations Students of America and on the varsity tennis team. Tennis is much tougher than I thought, but I love it. I'll be testing for my second brown belt in taekwondo at the American Karate Academy this year. I'm a greeter at Zion Apostolic Temple church, and I'm also a praise dancer. God is the head of my life. Because of Him, I am where I am today. And in the tech theater class, I got to design the sets for our production of *SpongeBob SquarePants: The Broadway Musical*. That put my love of art to use."

Teen superintendent is a new position, so Skylar, Dr. Hudson and the board are still exploring what can be achieved. "I'm hoping to accomplish one thing. I want to help those who







need to be helped. What the elementary students talk to me about touches me. I was surprised by the things they're dealing with. They feel like they're not listened to. They have serious questions. Sometimes, they don't understand the rules or why we have them. Then I need to go find out why that rule is there to explain it to them. There usually is a real reason, and it's usually because someone, a long time ago, did something crazy.

"Doing this is pretty cool, actually, getting to meet the superintendent. Dr. Hudson is amazing. He's very busy, but I get to email him about stuff, when needed, and he replies," Skylar said. "We're doing something new here. I've heard from other school districts in other states about how they're thinking about doing something like this in their districts. One of the most challenging things about this job is communicating properly with students from age 6 to 18. I make weekly videos talking to the students about different topics. I have to be able to explain to second-graders without confusing them, while not being boring or insulting to the seniors. I have to let students know they can trust me, and I can help."

"Skylar Wesley is an exemplary representative of Cedar Hill Independent School District, who is able to communicate important messages to her fellow scholars with expertise and empathy," Dr. Hudson said. "She relates extremely well to her peers, as she has shown during a districtwide tour, in which she visits each of the district's 13 campuses. Ms. Wesley was chosen out of several candidates who applied for the position and went through a rigorous selection process. We are honored that she is the inaugural teen superintendent, and we know that she is setting the standard for future Cedar Hill ISD teen superintendents." **NOW**

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# LAW DAY

— By Sandra Walters

*Thelma Clardy said, “I became an attorney 43 years ago because I wanted to help people. I graduated from Thurgood Marshall School of Law at Southern University with a heart to help in 1979. Therefore, as the president of the Best Southwest Bar Association, the other lawyers and I simply desire to assist individuals with understanding their rights. People should receive what they are entitled to. We do pro-bono work with Legal Aid, and I mentor University of North Texas Law students weekly,” Thelma added.*

She continued, “I was honored to be the first African-American female to be elected on the DeSoto City Council. I really enjoy serving this community, so I stepped up to be the president when our previous president moved to another area. As the president of the Best Southwest Bar Association, I get the pleasure of organizing Law Day.”

Congress established May 1 as the official day for

commemorating Law Day in 1961. People can participate in discussions about the law and its role in society on Law Day. The American Bar Association provides resources for schools, state and local bar associations, civic organizations and others to provide programs, lessons and activities for a variety of public audiences, both in person and online.

The Best Southwest Bar Association uses Law Day to give students in the area the opportunity to focus on law through friendly competition by writing essays, creating posters and photography with the theme as the emphasis. Thelma mentioned, “The theme for this year is Toward a More Perfect Union: The Constitution in Times of Change.”

“This Law Day Project has reinforced my understanding of the Constitution, as well as helped me recognize the importance of having the Constitution in our society,” Cedar Hill High School student, Zachary Boring, explained. “Furthermore, the prompt, ‘Toward a More Perfect Union: The Constitution in Times of Change,’ emphasizes societal progression as a whole and how this country can and will change, which in turn has expanded my knowledge on the founding principles of this nation.”

Classmate, Marion Smith agreed. “I’ve gained a better understanding of how our nation’s past still holds significant authority over how our country is shaped today and how continuing this practice will continue growing our union in the right direction.”



"The Constitution has been a major milestone for us as citizens of America. Seeing all the changes to the Constitution has made me have a better understanding of the development we have achieved as a country," Alexandra Roy added.

Legislation, court judgments, amendments, lawyers and American citizens have attempted to make the "more perfect union" a reality through the years. That work still continues, with current leaders and ordinary citizens raising their voices as loudly to fulfill the Constitution's promise. Defining and refining the terms of the Constitution may be the oldest national tradition, and it is how we work together to make this a better place.

Traditionally, Lancaster, Cedar Hill and Duncanville students take part in this learning opportunity. The last two times the competition was held, students from Cedar Hill won the contest. Thelma added, "On Law Day, I make an appearance in front of the class or classes who participated and give a speech about laws, the importance of evaluating them and letting their voices be heard. The students may ask questions to better understand the laws of our nation. We celebrate the winners by awarding monetary gifts and taking pictures of the participants."

Students from ninth through 12th grade are invited to participate. Students can create art posters and write essays. Students in these grades may also contribute photography based on the theme. The standards vary from one city to the next, as well as from one state to another.

This program provides national recognition to exceptional state and local programs. Awards are presented to programs that have developed innovative ways to reach out to schools and the community, as well as solid collaborations with other organizations to spread the word about the importance of the rule of law. Thelma Clardy concluded, "The purpose of Law Day is to educate the public on their legal rights. Reach out to the Best Southwest Bar Association. We want to help!" **NOW**



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## Zoomed In: Omar Arvizu

By Adam Walker

Omar Arvizu is a young man with plans. “I’ve been at Village Tech since fourth grade. It’s been a long journey growing up with my classmates. We’ve been together a long time and seen each other grow a lot. My dad let me help him, working on vehicles, so I thought the welding class sounded cool. Honestly, it’s really cool how you can put two pieces of metal together. Now, we’re learning about different kinds of welding.

“One of our recent projects was making the trophies for the car show we just had at Village Tech.” After he graduates, he is planning on joining the Marines. He will likely find many uses for his welding skills, both during his service and in civilian life afterwards.



Drew Barrymore stops by Harris Bar-b-cue.



Best friends, Ella Johnson and Kasdidy Crook spend time volunteering at Good Street Baptist Church during spring break.



Tulane cheerleaders and coaches thank Cedar Hill's Red Army Marching Band for subbing in during a March Madness game at the Dickies Arena.



Ruby Young Elementary School students complete their drone piloting certifications.





*Pink York celebrates its ribbon cutting with the Duncanville Chamber of Commerce.*



*Theodore Allen and Monica Hignojo drive buses for CHISD.*



*Sandi Vera hosts the Teen Paint and Snack at the DeSoto Library.*



*Cedar Hill High School Highsteppers Dance Team heads to the American Dance/Drill Team Nationals.*

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# BusinessNOW

## Sacred Funeral Home

— By Adam Walker

### Sacred Funeral Home

1395 N. Hwy. 67 South  
Cedar Hill, TX 75104  
(214) 376-7273  
sacredfuneralhome.com  
sacredfh@live.com  
Facebook: Sacred Funeral Home  
Sacred Limousine Service

**Hours:** Monday-Saturday: 9:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m.  
Sunday: By appointment.  
Phone answered 24 hours a day.



Dedrick and Chandra Jennings want to provide “A Platinum Experience” for every aspect of the services they provide. “Our motto is: ‘Where Platinum Services Are Rendered.’ We are a Christian-based organization, but we provide services for anyone who needs service, of any faith or no faith,” Dedrick explained. “We were established in 2006 in Oak Cliff and moved to Cedar Hill in 2017. Our goal is to raise the bar of professionalism in the funeral industry as a whole by making all our services platinum level — meaning every aspect of our service should be the best you can receive.”

Chandra considers death care to be a calling. “Death is a sacred transition. It’s our last chance to care for what God created. Between the two of us, we have over 60 years of experience in funeral services. My father was a minister. It seemed like he was in a funeral home every day, and I always wanted to go with him, to see how he soothed the families. It’s important how the decedent is treated. The focus can’t be just on the survivors. This is the last presentation of the deceased. We want to celebrate the life that was lived. We want to take



the dreariness out. This is a bright place that doesn't feel like a funeral home. It's a place of healing, to take your mind away from your pain."

To that end, Sacred Funeral Home is decorated with style, providing a spa-like atmosphere. And everything is platinum, from the soft gray walls to the black and silver striped flooring in the bathrooms, to the metal of the lamps, crystal chandeliers and clocks. All of the viewing parlors are named for various jewels, whose colors carry over in the decorating. The Amethyst Suite is purple. The Crystal Suite is white. And the Amber Suite is brown.

"All florals are displayed on pedestals, never on the floor. Someone paid for that tribute to express their feelings. And all our funerals are white glove," Dedrick reported.

**"OUR MOTTO IS:  
'WHERE PLATINUM  
SERVICES ARE  
RENDERED.'"**

Sacred Limousine Service offers a number of vehicle choices for the family and the deceased. They have a four-door sedan, a 12-passenger Mercedes Sprinter, Cadillac and Lincoln limousines. They also have a 2018 reproduction of a 1934 Prizing Rosewood carriage car for transporting the coffin. "It's for those who want an added touch to the final transportation of their loved one," Dedrick explained. All of their limousines are also available for rental for weddings, proms, quinceañeras or nights on the town, through Sacred Limousine Service.

Dedrick explained some of the other services Sacred offers. "We also run a full-service florist. We're not just for funerals, but for any occasion. You can call in an order or come in to look, and we offer delivery." Additionally, they provide printing services for small runs of fliers, church bulletins, pamphlets, business cards and other small pieces.

"Platinum service is not determined by how much you spend at Sacred. It's determined by calling Sacred," Dedrick said. "We serve the whole community. You could have chosen someone else. We are honored that you chose us." **NOW**

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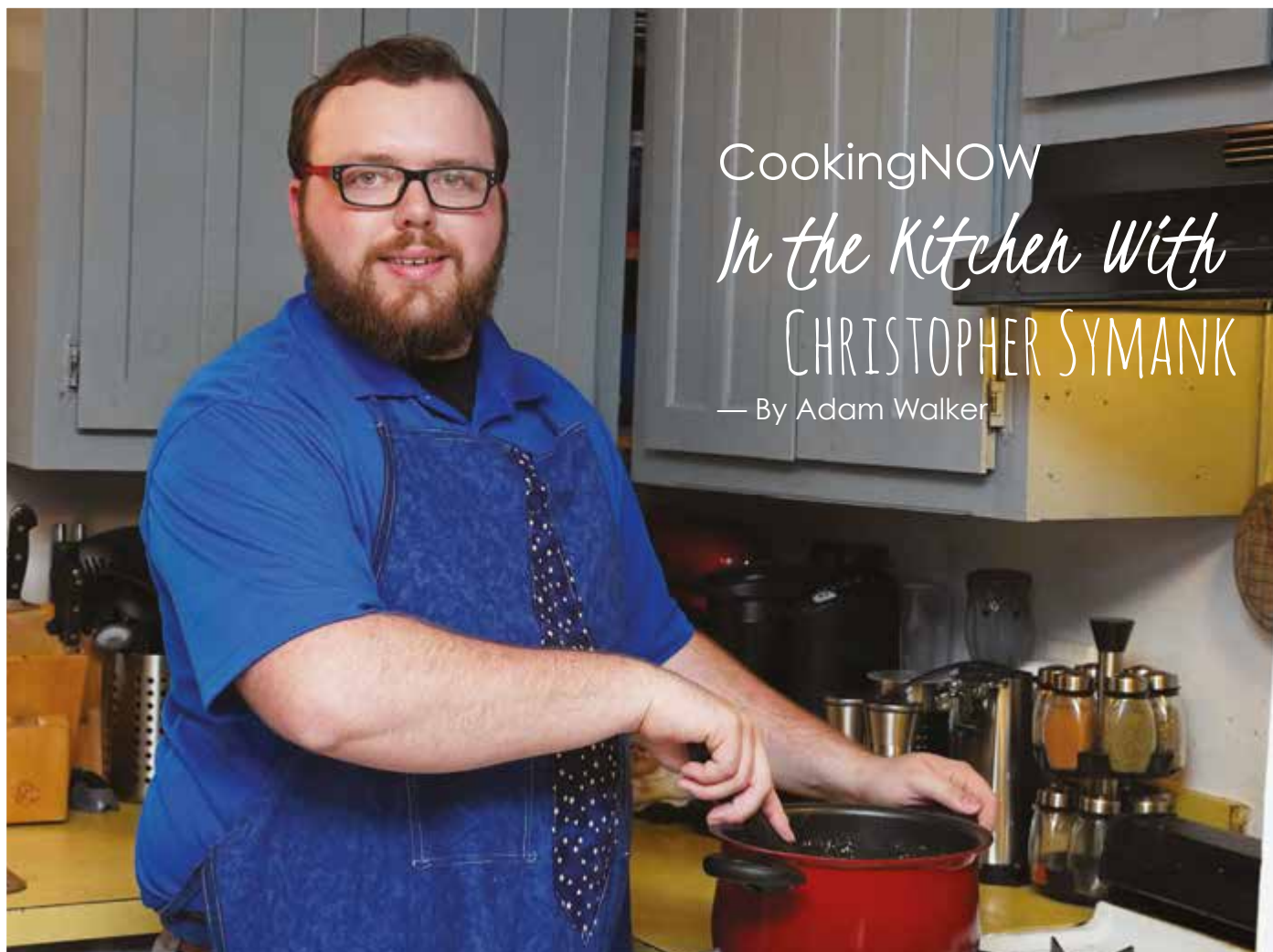


# CookingNOW

## *In the Kitchen With*

### CHRISTOPHER SYMANK

— By Adam Walker



Christopher Symank's mom, dad and stepdad inspire him and give him freedom to explore cooking. "I was conditionally accepted to the Art Institute of Dallas for culinary. However, I decided that I didn't want my hobby to be my career for fear I'd lose interest. I love to eyeball my cooking. I'm not huge on set amounts because sometimes that little bit extra could make all the difference. I'm pretty experimental. I am not so much a baker as I am a griller or Southern-style cook, but if you give me the right recipe card, I'll make some magic happen."

When not cooking, he enjoys video games, sports and photography. "I enjoy being social and photographing the beautiful scenery Texas has to offer." **NOW**

### Cajun Sausage Penne Pasta With Garlic Toast

2 sticks butter (divided use)  
3/4 Tbsp. thyme  
3/4 Tbsp. basil  
3/4 Tbsp. oregano  
1/2 Tbsp. garlic powder, plus more  
to taste (divided use)  
1/2 Tbsp. onion powder, plus more  
to taste (divided use)  
8-10 slices bread of your choice  
1 16-oz. box penne pasta

Dash olive oil  
Pink Himalayan salt, to taste  
(divided use)  
1 Tbsp. Old Bay Seasoning  
2 14-oz. pkgs. Zatarain's Cajun Style  
Smoked Sausage  
Tony Chachere's Creole Seasoning,  
to taste (divided use)  
1 8-oz. pkg. Neufchâtel or cream cheese  
3/4 cup milk, or more as needed  
Paprika, to taste  
Cracked pepper, to taste  
2 Tbsp. Parmesan or Romano cheese,  
grated

**1.** Put 1 stick of butter in a bowl. Add the next 5 ingredients; mix with a fork. Microwave for 5 seconds at a time to soften (not melt). Spread on the bread.

**2.** Fill a large pot with water according to the pasta box; add olive oil, salt and Old Bay Seasoning.

**3.** While the water is heating, slice the sausage into 1/4-inch-thick slices. Put in a pan on medium-low; lightly season with Tony Chachere's Creole Seasoning. Cover; stir periodically until browned.

**4.** When the water boils, add the pasta; boil for about 11 minutes.

**5.** In a smaller pot, on medium heat, mix together the remaining butter and the crumbled Neufchâtel or cream cheese. Whisk until a creamy consistency; pour in the milk. Add more milk as needed to control the thickness of the sauce. Season to taste with onion powder, garlic powder, paprika, cracked pepper, salt, grated cheese and Tony Chachere's (heavier on this one). The sauce should have a robust taste, with a burst of



flavor. Keep whisking until thick and barely starting to bubble. Move to low heat.  
**6.** When the pasta is al dente, add the sausage and sauce; stir.  
**7.** Toast the bread on a hot pan and serve.

## Birdie's Dry Rub

**3** chipotle cubes  
**1** cilantro cube  
**1 1/2 tsp.** onion powder  
**1 1/2 tsp.** garlic powder  
**1/4 tsp.** salt  
**Pinch** of pepper  
**1 1/2 tsp.** chili powder  
**1/8 tsp.** ground jalapeño  
**1/2 tsp.** paprika  
**3/4 tsp.** cumin

**1.** Place all ingredients in a mortar and grind together. Flavors about 1 1/2 lbs. of meat.

## White Cheddar Maple Breakfast Burritos

*These freeze well. Heat for about 2 minutes in the morning, if you're on the go.*

**1 lb.** maple bacon  
**10** brown eggs  
**Salt**, to taste  
**Pepper**, to taste  
**Dash** of milk  
**Garlic powder**, to taste (optional)  
**Onion powder**, to taste (optional)  
**1 lb.** maple sausage  
**1 pkg.** spinach herb tortillas  
**Sargento Aged White Cheddar**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 400 F
- 2.** Line a baking sheet with aluminum foil. Lay the strips of bacon vertically next to each other. Bake 15-16 minutes or until it reaches your liking.
- 3.** Crack the eggs into a large bowl; season with salt, pepper, a dash of milk, garlic powder and onion powder (go really light with this). Whisk together.
- 4.** In a pan, brown the sausage; drain the grease. Add the eggs; scramble until nicely incorporated.
- 5.** Heat the tortillas to your preference. Layer in the order of: tortilla, eggs/sausage mix, bacon, cheese. Fold into burritos.

## Fire Corn

**1** 30-oz. can whole kernel corn  
**4 Tbsp.** butter  
**1/2 tsp.** cayenne  
**1 tsp.** garlic powder  
**1 tsp.** onion powder  
**1 tsp.** paprika  
**1 tsp.** salt

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- ▶ *I believe in high academic standards and the importance of co-curricular and extracurricular activities.*
- ▶ *I believe all children regardless of race or socio economic background deserve a quality education.*
- ▶ *I have lived and worked in Duncanville for 35 years.*

POLITICAL AD PAID FOR BY TOM KENNEDY SHERRY KENNEDY TREASURER



1 tsp. pepper  
1 tsp. cumin  
1 tsp. chili powder

1. Mix and heat all together in a pot until it simmers. Can be done in a Crock-Pot on low for 2-4 hours.

## Smoked Sausage and Rib Sandwiches

3-4 lbs. St. Louis pork spareribs  
(or other ribs of your liking)

1 Tbsp. mustard

Fiesta Rib Rub, to taste

Garlic powder, to taste

Onion powder, to taste

Paprika, to taste

Cracked pepper, to taste

Cracked pink Himalayan salt, to taste

Brown sugar, to taste

Honey, as needed

Stubb's Original Bar-B-Q Sauce, as needed

14-16 oz. beef smoked sausage

Pecan smoking chips

32 oz. apple juice

8 buns

4 Tbsp. bacon grease

1. Lay the ribs across a sheet of aluminum foil; pat them dry. Flip and peel off the membrane. Discard the membrane.

2. As a binder, rub mustard all around the ribs until there's a nice, faded, yellow coat.

3. Take generous amounts of the Fiesta rib rub and the next 6 ingredients and apply evenly across the ribs.

4. Add 1 Tbsp. of honey to every 3-4 Tbsp. of barbecue sauce; microwave. Mix until the honey is melted into the barbecue sauce. Apply a thin layer across the ribs; brush it over. Wrap the ribs in aluminum foil.

5. Slice the sausage diagonally longways; add all the same rib spices (except the mustard) into an aluminum pan. Let the ribs and sausage marinate separately for up to 24 hours (or just throw them on the grill).

6. Soak the pecan chips in apple juice in a heat-resistant bowl for 30 minutes; put them inside the grill. Maintain internal grill temperature of about 250 F. If using gas, light one outside burner in your grill and place the meat above unlit burners.

7. Stick a probe thermometer into the thickest part of the rib; place on the unlit portion of the grill. Place sausage inside the grill, close the hood; let it cook low and slow until the ribs hit an internal temperature of 200-205 F. Take out and rest for 10-15 minutes.

8. Debone the rib meat and toss it around with the sausage.

9. Toast the buns in 1/2 Tbsp. bacon grease, adding more as needed. Serve.

Cajun Sausage Penne Pasta With Garlic Toast




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- ✓ Autoimmune diseases
- ✓ Vitamin deficiencies
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- ✓ Underactive thyroid
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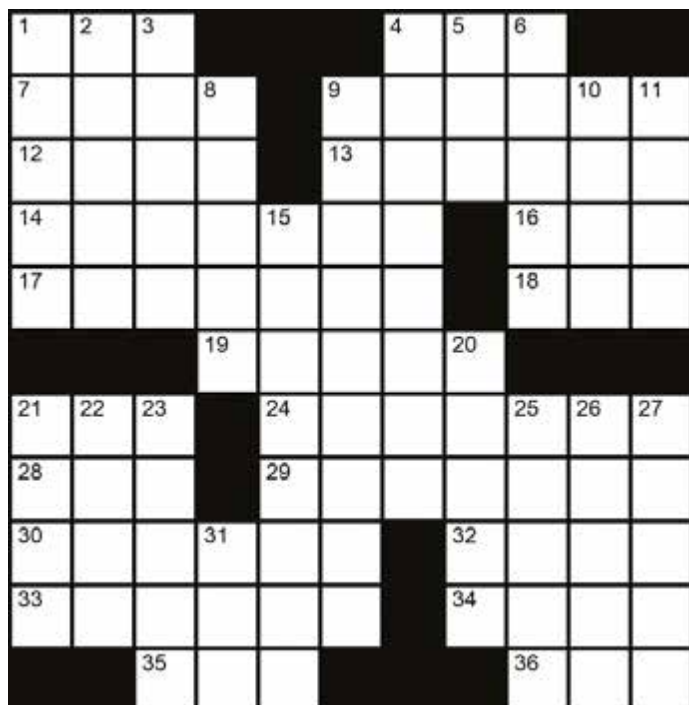
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# Crossword Puzzle



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## Across

- 1 "---" in "Sierra"
- 4 Turn in a horizontal plane
- 7 European peaks
- 9 Duelist's assistant
- 12 Suffer from the heat
- 13 Wonder Woman's General, Steven -
- 14 This crowd controller's a real weepie
- 16 First of her kind
- 17 Iroquoian word for "beautiful water"
- 18 Scientific truth
- 19 "I --- be sedated" (Ramoness)
- 21 Jayhawk state
- 24 Got agitated
- 28 Lawyers' league
- 29 Merry
- 30 Alamo commander
- 32 Travail
- 33 Cat shy about floaters
- 34 Took --- loan
- 35 Tire inflation measure
- 36 Enunciate

## Down

- 1 Looked after
- 2 Unfamiliar
- 3 Bug's last sound
- 4 Public faces
- 5 Poker bullet
- 6 Original
- 8 No-one wants the short one
- 9 Durable type of steel
- 10 Old Chevy model
- 11 Pulled a gun
- 15 Tagger's art
- 20 "I shall not find myself so --- die":  
(Antony, "Julius Caesar")
- 21 Houston suburb
- 22 Start of an incantation
- 23 Civil rights org. since 1909
- 25 Religious
- 26 Short-lived Argentinian First Lady
- 27 Holdup
- 31 Old tape letters

Solutions on page 44

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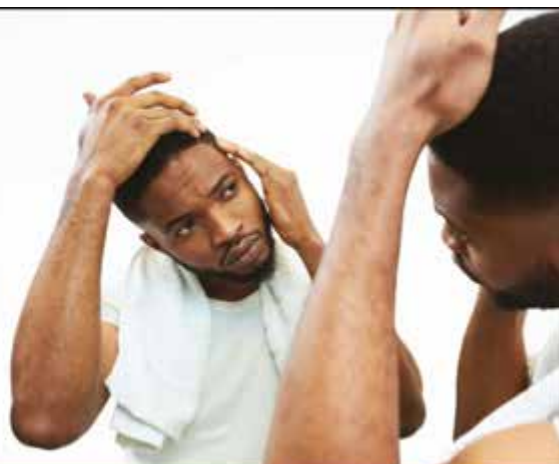


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# HAPPY Mother's Day

MAY

Due to COVID-19, 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.

5/1-5/30

## Scarborough

**Renaissance Festival:**  
Saturdays, Sundays and  
Memorial Day Monday:  
10:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m.,  
2511 FM 66, Waxahachie.  
For more information, visit  
<https://www.srfestival.com>.

5/5

## Cinco de Mayo in Downtown D'ville:

Face painting, bounce houses,  
vendors, live dance and music.  
Free. 5:00 p.m.-2:00 a.m., Main  
Street Station, 100 S. Main St.

5/7

## Mother and Daughters

## Day Brunch:

Come for the fashion show, food  
and fun. Free. 11:00 a.m.-2:00  
p.m., LaQuinta Inn and Suites,  
641 N. I-35 S., DeSoto.  
See Eventbrite to register.

## Mommy and Me Tea:

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5/14

## The Black Excellence Men's Empowerment Summit and Red Table

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5/30

## Memorial Day Ceremony:

Commemorate those who  
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10:00-11:00 a.m.,  
101 N. Main St., Duncanville.

6/4

## Pancake Breakfast and Fly-In:

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## VIBEZ:

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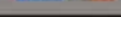
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|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|---|
| 1  | S | A | S |   |   |   | 4  | P  | A  | N  |   |
| 7  | A | L | P | S |   |   | 9  | S  | E  | C  | O |
| 12 | W | I | L | T |   |   | 13 | T  | R  | E  | V |
| 14 | T | E | A | R | G | A | S  |    | 16 | E  | V |
| 17 | O | N | T | A | R | I | O  |    | 18 | L  | A |
|    |   |   |   |   |   |   | 19 | W  | A  | N  | N |
| 21 | K | A | N |   |   |   | 24 | F  | L  | A  | P |
| 28 | A | B | A |   |   |   | 29 | F  | E  | S  | T |
| 30 | T | R | A | V | I | S |    | 32 | T  | O  | I |
| 33 | Y | A | C | H | T | S |    | 34 | O  | U  | T |
|    |   |   |   |   |   |   | 35 | P  | S  | I  |   |
|    |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    | 36 | S |
|    |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    | A |
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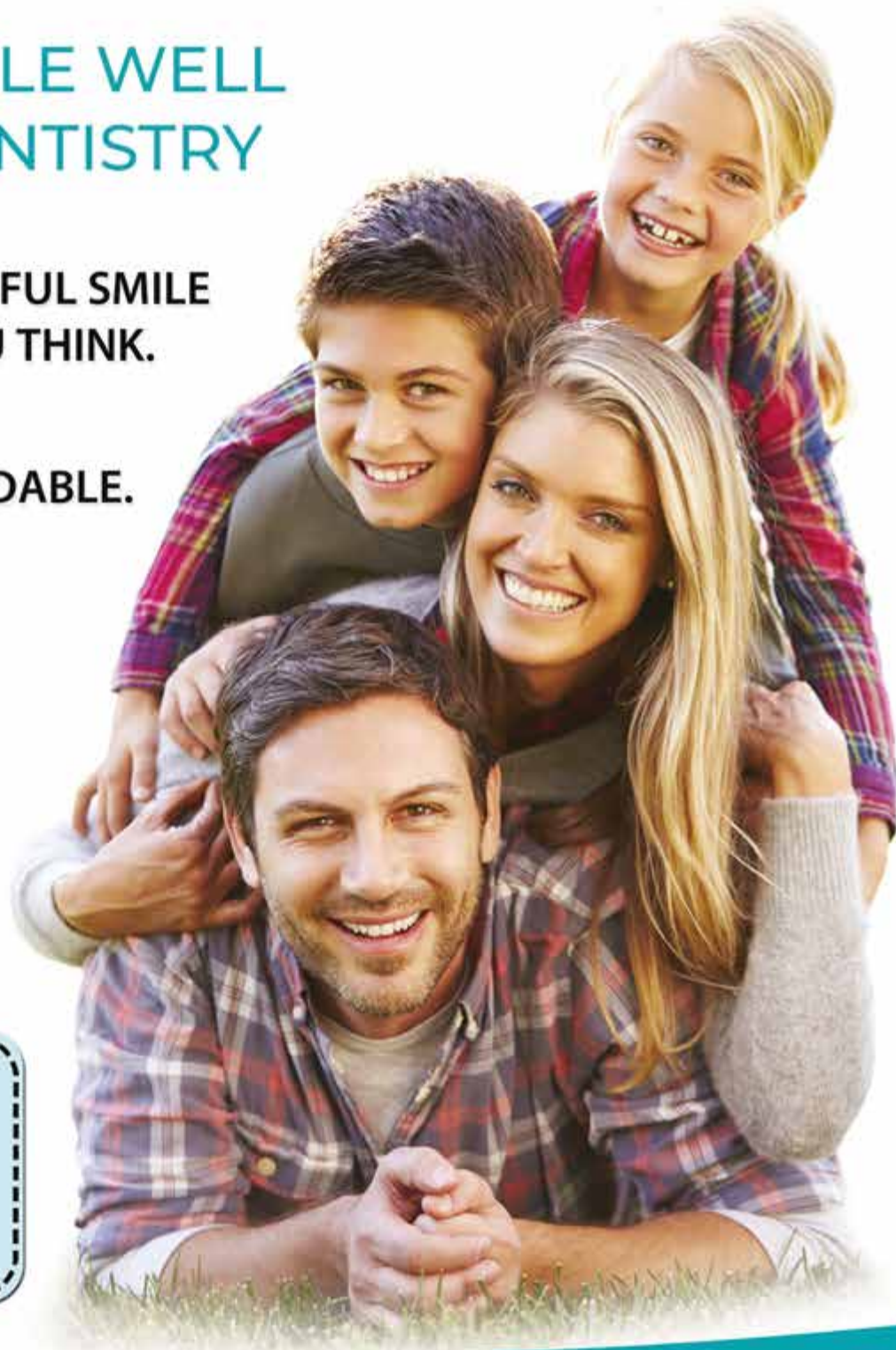
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