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May 2026
Volume 16, Issue 5



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ON THE COVER

The WOW Girl Initiative celebrates teens for their character and community service.



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Subscriptions are available at the rate of \$35 per year or \$3.50 per issue. Subscriptions should be sent to: NOW Magazines, P.O. Box 1071, Waxahachie, TX 75168. For advertising rates or editorial correspondence, call (817) 613-1533 or visit www.nowmagazines.com.



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WOW, GIRL!

— By Amber D. Browne



The importance of building self-esteem and confidence in young women is undeniable. "When young women are seen, celebrated and encouraged, they rise, and in turn, elevate others," said Alyce Bixby, founder of the WOW Girl Initiative (Wonderful Outstanding Women in the Making) in Parker County. The WOW Girl Initiative is a community-driven mentorship in which business owners recognize a local teenager each month and highlight the teen's character, initiative and service within the community.



Alyce became inspired to found the organization when her house sitter went above and beyond the normal job requirements. "There were flowers on the counter. The dishwasher was emptied, which she didn't need to do," Alyce shared. "The house was probably cleaner than when I left. I was really pleased with what she had done and wanted to do something special for her." As owner of House of Colour in Weatherford, Alyce offered Kate Griffith a complimentary color analysis. This sparked an idea to spotlight other young women making a positive impact in Weatherford and surrounding communities.

"When I first met Alyce and shared my goals, dreams and the things I was actively working toward, she seemed genuinely surprised," Kate said. Kate believed most girls her age had the drive to work toward their goals. "Alyce helped me see that what I had was something meaningful and out of the ordinary." Kate's house-sitting business is growing, and she is studying business management at Weatherford College. "It means so much to know that my journey inspired Alyce and helped spark something bigger. If my story can encourage even one other young woman to pursue her goals boldly, then that is exactly my hope."



Alyce partnered with other local businesswomen who had the same desire to elevate young women in the community. Owners and representatives from local businesses such as Queen B Boutique & Designs, Delta South West Funding, CB Air Conditioning & Heating, Keller Williams Heritage West, Plexus Groupe, Park Lane, Piamonte Coffee, Bright Side Goods and Mary Kay joined together to mentor, encourage and pamper the WOW Girl Initiative recipients each month. Gift certificates and services are provided to help boost confidence and educate them about style and networking.

Building confidence is an important part of the WOW Girl Initiative. "I think confidence comes through seeing yourself the way others see you. I think so many times, we pick ourselves apart," Alyce explained. "For



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me as a Christian, I believe as God says we are fearfully and wonderfully made. I believe it for them, too," she explained.

The WOW Girl Initiative encourages its recipients to network and build connections within the community. The mentors often accompany them to luncheons and networking events in the area to instill in the girls the importance of building relationships to help them grow. "I think that's something that they're doing for a lot of us," Alyce explained. "It keeps me young."

The WOW Girl Initiative recognizes girls who are involved in their schools, churches and community. One recipient, Lilah Starr, is a senior at Brock High School, a volunteer firefighter with the Brock Fire Department and currently enrolled in EMT school through Parker County Hospital District. "The WOW Girl Initiative has helped me so much with getting myself more out there and showing girls so many things are

possible at a young age no matter what you set your mind to," Lilah shared. "This program is important to me because it is showing that everyone has a reason and to never give up."

Alyce said it has been a blessing to give back to these young women because of the women who helped mentor and guide her when she was younger. Her vision is to continue building a group of young women who can support one another. "There's so much going on, especially nowadays with social media, all the pressures that they have," Alyce said. At the first WOW Girl Initiative luncheon, she could see the young women building connections with one another. "They all sat down. They started chatting, and it was heartwarming."

Other young women recognized as WOW Girls by the initiative include a photographer with her own sourdough bread baking business and a young woman who is known for her notes of encouragement. Community

members can nominate young women ages 15-18 through the initiative's website, wowgirlinitiative.com. "Our hope is that they're not just going to be a WOW Girl and be gone, but that they're going to want to come back and be a part of that program as an adult and pour back into these young girls," Alyce shared.

The WOW Girl Initiative will celebrate its one-year anniversary in June. Alyce hopes to continue to build the multigenerational approach of local businesswomen actively participating with the younger generation to encourage and mentor them. "This creates a powerful ripple effect of women supporting women, modeling confidence, leadership and service," Alyce shared. She hopes to expand mentorship opportunities and partner with more local businesses, schools and organizations to offer scholarships, workshops and educational resources to the monthly WOW Girl Initiative recipients. **NOW**

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Discovering LONDON'S Treasuries

— By Virginia Riddle



Today's London, England, is still a collection of small, old hamlets dating back to prior centuries. Visitors can still stroll the streets, relish the cultural diversity of modern London and drift into pubs for a pint or cup of tea to go with fish and chips, but most of London moves very quickly 24/7 in these modern times.

It's easy to get around London, from arrival at Heathrow Airport or the docks to the city center by bus, taxi, commercial tours or Uber. And, yes, those famed double-decker buses are still in use along with the British taxis, which hold six people and their luggage with room to spare. The underground Tube is worth the ride to sights. Food service and hotels are available to fit every palate and purse.

Whether sightseeing on one's own or arranging for guided tours, must-sees include the following:

- *The Tower of London* — View the Royal Crown Jewels, the tower's museum and the White Tower. Use the photo op to document a memory of Tower Bridge. Yeoman Warders, also known as Beefeaters, lead the Tower of London tours. This is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- *Westminster Abbey* — Built in the 1200s, the abbey

is part of a monastery dating to A.D. 960. Almost every British monarch since 1066 has been crowned here. The crypts are full of deceased royals and famous writers and artists.

- *The National Gallery* — Located at Trafalgar Square in the heart of the city, visitors can view some of the most famous art in the world.
- *Shakespeare's Globe* — If one has time to travel to Stratford-upon-Avon, the birthplace of William Shakespeare, that is great, but if not, this re-creation of the famed Elizabethan theater is the next best thing. Attend one of The Bard's performances.
- *St. Paul's Cathedral* — Designed by Sir Christopher Wren and completed in the 1700s, the cathedral's beauty and history is unparalleled. Guided tours are available.
- *Green Park, Buckingham Palace and Piccadilly* — Located between Mayfair, Hyde Park and St. James's Park, Green Park is a meadow framed by trees from which one can see Buckingham Palace. Arrive early to watch the famed changing of the guards at the palace, and then shop and dine along Piccadilly. Take in the opulence of the palace while on tour.
- *Churchill War Rooms* — Located near 10 Downing Street, these rooms in the treasury's basement were where Prime Minister Winston Churchill hunkered down while leading the country through WWII. At the war's end, everything was left intact, making this museum an interesting time capsule.

If time allows, take in a football (soccer) game or cricket game. Or perhaps a game of polo is better.



Plays, musicals, concerts and art of every kind are available in London. The city is very walkable by using the Tube for long distances.

Weather can be an issue, since the British Isles receive an abundance of rain and fog. Plans can change, and one should always carry rain gear and at least a light jacket. Experience high tea one afternoon at one of the many hotels which offer the tradition.

Finally, great day trips from London abound to Windsor, Eton, Bath, Cambridge, Stonehenge and Salisbury, Highclere Castle of Downton Abbey fame and Canterbury. Schedule a guided tour bus or DIY through Britain's National Express or National Rail train. **NOW**

Sources:

1. Frommer's London. 2023, 8th Edition, FrommerMedia LLC.
2. Davidson, Martin. A Visitor's Guide to A History of Britain. 2002, St. Martin's Griffin, New York.
3. Foder's Travel. 2023, 36th Edition, www.fodors.com.

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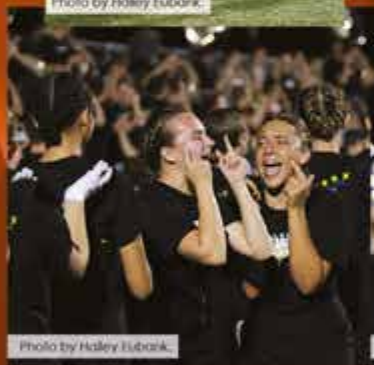


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Zoomed In: Kimberlee Yates

By Amber D. Browne

As an intern with the Parker County Master Gardeners Association, Kimberlee Yates learns gardening and landscaping tips through classes at the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Weatherford. Kimberlee and other volunteers use their experience to maintain nine local gardens.

"We have those as demonstration gardens for what plants are really good in Parker County, so people can see that and then know what to put in their own gardens," Kimberlee explained. Monarch butterfly waystations are included in most of the gardens. "We're trying to increase the ability for the monarchs to come through, have a place to eat and stay as they're making that migration."

Kimberlee also volunteers with the Gardeners Club of Parker County. They oversee the community garden at St. Francis of Assisi Anglican Church.



Elmi and Leroy Martinez with Frosted Flute Mobile Tap Truck serve beverages to attendees at the Kick Off Weekend event in Willow Park.



Shannon Sabot is pampered with a manicure from Thai Ninh at Aledo Nails & Spa.



Lyn Walsh of the Careity Foundation receives the Legacy Member Award during the Parker County Chamber of Commerce 2026 Annual Awards Gala.



The Weatherford Art Association recognizes the winners of its March Artist of the Month competition with Debra Strandberg in first, Diana Bennett in second and Patricia Harder in third.



Emmalyn, Auden and Corey Sylvis grab lunch at Yesterday's Sandwich Shop in Aledo.

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Zoomed In: Mark Henderson

By Amber D. Browne

A drive assisting mothers who have experienced domestic abuse runs through May 4 in Parker County. Mark Henderson, manager of TWO MEN AND A TRUCK Weatherford, encourages locals to drop off donations at their storefront for Movers for Moms benefiting Freedom House of Parker County.

"It's for moms who go through normal everyday struggles in life but have had it harder, obviously, due to the domestic abuse," Mark said. "They're taking care of their own families. They're trying to make it themselves and essentially operating in what I call survival mode." Suggested donations include diapers, non-perishable food, hygiene products and household supplies.

Mark encourages locals to donate to other campaigns throughout the year including Movers for Military, MOVERS FOR MUTTS and Truckload of Warmth. "If it's important to the community, it's important to us."



Weatherford High School's Maverick Neal finishes fourth in state in the 242 lb. Unequipped Division for powerlifting.



Mercedes and Donna Muncy, Karen Winterrowd and Cathy Langford volunteer at Tarrant Area Food Bank West.



Rita Porter, Norra Kost-Lambert, Sonia VanGilder and I'Ann Washington catch a free show by Poo Live Crew at The District at Willow Park.



Aledo High School Principal Michael Martinak grills burgers for faculty and staff to kick off the home season of the Texas Rangers.

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While Cinco de Mayo (the commemoration of Mexico's victory over French forces at the Battle of Puebla in 1862) is a relatively minor holiday in Mexico, it has become a vibrant celebration of Mexican culture and cuisine in the United States. These authentic recipes showcase the bold flavors that make Mexican food so beloved around the world. **NOW**

Homemade Guacamole

- 4 ripe avocados
- 1 lime, juiced
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 cup onion, diced
- 3 Tbsp. fresh cilantro, chopped
- 2 Roma tomatoes, diced
- 1 tsp. minced garlic
- 1 jalapeño pepper, minced
- 1 pinch ground black pepper

1. Cut the avocados in half. Remove the pits; scoop the flesh into a mixing bowl. Mash with a fork until the desired consistency is reached, leaving some chunks for texture.
2. Immediately add the lime juice and salt, stirring to prevent browning.
3. Fold in the onions and cilantro; mix well.
4. Add the tomatoes, garlic and jalapeños; stir gently to combine.
5. Season with black pepper; adjust the salt to taste. Serve immediately with warm tortilla chips.

Chicken Tacos With Fresh Salsa

- 2 lbs. boneless chicken breasts
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil

- 1 tsp. chili powder
- 1 tsp. cumin
- 1/2 tsp. paprika
- 1/2 tsp. garlic powder
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 4 medium tomatoes, diced
- 1/2 cup white onion, chopped
- 1/4 cup fresh cilantro, chopped
- 1 jalapeño, seeded and minced
- 2 Tbsp. lime juice
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 12 corn tortillas
- 1 cup lettuce, shredded
- 1 cup queso fresco, crumbled

1. Brush the chicken breasts with the olive oil on both sides.
2. In a small bowl, combine the spices; rub the spice mixture generously over the chicken.
3. Grill or pan-sear the chicken over medium-high heat for 6-7 minutes per side until cooked through.
4. While the chicken cooks, prepare the salsa by combining the tomatoes, onions, cilantro and jalapeños in a bowl.
5. Stir in the lime juice and salt; mix well.
6. Once the chicken is done, let it rest for 5 minutes before slicing into thin strips.
7. Warm the corn tortillas in a dry skillet or over an open flame until pliable and slightly charred.

8. Assemble the tacos by layering sliced chicken onto each tortilla and topping with fresh salsa, shredded lettuce and queso fresco.

Mexican Cinnamon Ice Cream

- 2 cups heavy cream
- 1 cup whole milk
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 4 large egg yolks
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon

1. In a saucepan, heat the cream, milk, sugar and cinnamon sticks over medium heat until steaming.
2. Remove from heat; let steep for 30 minutes, then remove the cinnamon sticks.
3. Whisk the egg yolks in a bowl. Slowly add the warm cream mixture while whisking constantly.
4. Return to the saucepan; cook over low heat, stirring constantly, until thickened.
5. Stir in the vanilla extract and ground cinnamon; chill completely.
6. Churn in an ice cream maker according to the manufacturer's instructions. Freeze until firm.

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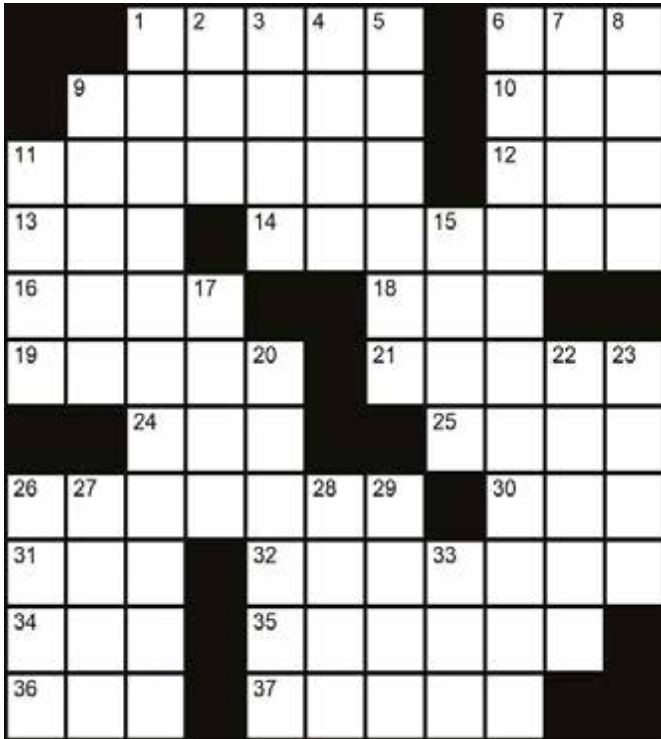
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Crossword Puzzle



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Find puzzle answers within this magazine. Online versions and solutions are also available at www.nowmagazines.com.

Across

- 1 World's gambling center
- 6 Check
- 9 The Donald's youngest
- 10 Lawyers' league
- 11 Homilies
- 12 Range of knowledge
- 13 "... a stupid question ..."
- 14 Manipulates seals we dissected
- 16 Brainy sort
- 18 Monogram for Jesus
- 19 Loft
- 21 "Unleaded" coffee
- 24 Ammo for a non-lethal weapon
- 25 Battle of --- Alto, 1846
- 26 Polls
- 30 "Blame It on ---" (1984 Michael Caine movie)
- 31 "Market basket" cost measure
- 32 Sushi wrap
- 34 AMEX alternative
- 35 "Darkness ---" (Koestler novel)
- 36 Bath water tester
- 37 No longer stuck with

Down

- 1 Going rate
- 2 Upper limb
- 3 Boast
- 4 Jim-dandy
- 5 Tacit
- 6 Handles ecofreaks at butchers
- 7 First murder victim
- 8 Prohibits
- 9 Assailed on all sides
- 11 Narrative of heroic exploits
- 15 Loyal Fort Benton dog
- 17 "The Great Gate of ---" (Modest Mussorgsky)
- 20 Comic Sid ---
- 22 Not from here
- 23 "... glorious ---" ("Oliver!")
- 26 Caber tosser
- 27 "He's --- no good"
- 28 Abominable snowman
- 29 Quartz grains
- 33 Solicit

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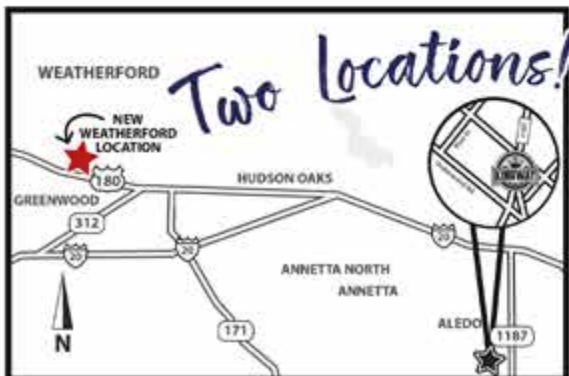


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