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JULY 2022

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David Hall anticipates city
improvements

Eat Like a Texan

The Lone Star State put its
mark on the foodie map

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ON THE COVER



City Manager David Hall helps usher in a new era for Glenn Heights.

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Shane Kirkpatrick.

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An advertisement for HOPE Health Clinic. The top left features the HOPE CLINIC logo with a sun icon and the tagline "LOVE - SERVE - HEAL". Next to it, the text "is NOW" is displayed. Below this, the "HOPE HEALTH" logo is shown with a heart icon. The text "New Name ~ Same Core Values" and "LOVE - SERVE - HEAL" is centered. To the right, a hand holds a red heart, and a stethoscope is visible. A paragraph of text describes the clinic as a faith-based, not-for-profit Federally Qualified Health Center. Contact information (972-923-2440, info@hopehealthtx.org) and addresses (Waxahachie: 411 East Jefferson • Ennis: 805 West Lampasas Street) are at the bottom. A QR code is in the bottom right corner.

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An advertisement for FREEDOM HEATING & AIR. The top left shows logos for Mitsubishi Electric and Trane. The center features a mountain graphic with the company name "FREEDOM HEATING & AIR" and contact info "214-306-8499 | FREEDOMCOOLING.COM". Below this is the tagline "Your Local Commercial & Residential Heating & Air Conditioning Company". The main headline "IS YOUR A/C KEEPING UP WITH THE HOT TEXAS WEATHER?" is in large white letters. To the right, text says "WHETHER IT'S A COLD ROOM, HOT SPOTS OR A BROKEN A/C IN YOUR HOME OR BUSINESS, WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED!". The bottom right has a QR code and the text "Schedule your appointment today!". The background shows a person's hands working on an air conditioning unit.

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EDITOR'S NOTE



Angel

Angel Morris
North Ellis Co. NOW Editor
angel.morris@nowmagazines.com
(972) 533-7216

Whatcha doin'?

There's a country song that poses the question, "What would you do, if you weren't doin' this?" The singer explains that while the settings may change — from arenas full of people to small clubs on the outskirts of towns — he would still be pursuing singing and songwriting regardless of how much success it may bring. Every time I hear it, I think to myself, *What would you do, if you weren't doin' this?*

I spend most days writing in some way. If I'm not writing, I'm reading, which is basically just research for doing more writing of my own. When not doing those things, I love to decorate, and even that is just another way of sharing a story... about where you live and what you love. I guess that makes me a storyteller at heart. But what would I do, if I wasn't doin' this?

At my age, it's easy to wonder if you're doing what you were meant to do. To feel like maybe you haven't lived up to your potential or best used the gifts God has given you. Most days I'm pretty OK with myself, but some days I look in the mirror and shake my head: *Is this all that you're doing?* But when I think about what else I might pursue, nothing really fits. Choosing the words that become the sentences that create the paragraphs that relay people's stories is a puzzle I love to work.

Have you solved your puzzle? Found your fit? Are you selling out arenas or filling folks' mailboxes with stories about people like us? May you be doing (on at least some level) exactly what you'd be doing ...

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A Heart for Glenn Heights

— By Angel Morris

A lot of wishes are coming true in Glenn Heights, like a new City Center Complex, which will not only house all city administrative facilities and public safety operations, but also an all-abilities park. With its design unveiled in February 2020, the project has continued despite the pandemic and is set to open this month.

“We had to pivot some, with product availability and rising labor costs, but thanks to the architect and designer, we have navigated the pandemic and are on budget and on pace to complete the project as planned,” City Manager David Hall said.

Glenn Heights, in partnership with Grossman Design Build, has combined city services into this central location off South Hampton Road for easy access by the public. Along with a public courtyard and amphitheater, the community center will house a subterranean gymnasium, elevated circulating track, workout areas, event and meeting spaces, computer stations and children’s reading area.

“I am most proud that this will create a central hub that the city has not had. It will be a core for special events for thousands of people that will increase the city’s identity and, hopefully, create a sense of civic pride and community engagement,” David, who has been Glenn Heights’ city manager for four years and served as deputy city manager two years before that, said.

City Hall, the public safety building and community/rec center will encompass more than 70,000 square feet of the

10-acre site, not to mention the 5-acre Make-A-Wish All-Abilities Park. “I was brainstorming with the designers and said, ‘Wouldn’t it be great if we could use the back acreage of the center for an inclusive park, in partnership with a group like the Make-A-Wish Foundation?’” David recalled. “The Grossmans said they work with Make-A-Wish all the time and put me in touch with them.”

After a series of virtual meetings between the city and the foundation, the result is the first-ever Make-A-Wish partnership toward a fully accessible park for all abilities and ages. “This is a unique partnership with one of the most trusted names in nonprofits. They will use the site as a regional hub for some of their activities, and we get to leverage our relationship with them to offer this to our residents and neighboring communities,” David noted.

The park is divided into age-appropriate areas based on physical skills and abilities. The sensory area is in the middle toward the entry to serve all age groups. Pavilion and picnic areas are available, as well. The park will be governed by a newly created Glenn Heights All Abilities Park Foundation, tasked with policymaking, financial stewardship and oversight of the park facility in partnership with the city.

The Make-A-Wish Foundation grants wishes for children with critical illnesses, some of whom have physical disabilities that keep them from playing at a typical city park. Founded in 1982, the North Texas chapter serves 161 counties, including Ellis County, granting wishes of children battling critical illness.

The Make-A-Wish partnership and the City Center Complex project are some of the largest for David, who came to Glenn Heights from Fort Worth, where he was assistant director of planning and development. Here he met former City Manager Aretha Ferrell-Benavides, who impressed him with her vision

for the city. "I fell in love with the opportunity to help recruit people with the goal of moving the city from just existing to thriving," David recalled. "The city council dynamic has allowed us to bring in employees from large cities all over who share the vision of rebuilding Glenn Heights from the ground up."

With an estimated population of 18,000-19,000 in its 8 square miles, Glenn Heights was in need of change to meet growing demands. "Every area struggles with growth and development, but Glenn Heights is a place that needed to reinvent itself," David explained. "We are fortunate to have the expertise in place now to manage that need."

David is no stranger to reinvention, having grown up in Chicago where his family struggled at times to make ends meet. "People might be surprised to know how poor I was growing up. There was a time when we lived in our car," David recalled. "It makes you more determined and informs your desire to help. You appreciate the struggle and the ability to rise above it. I hope it has made me more compassionate and empathetic."

As an adult, David said he was led to Texas by a series of "serendipitous" occurrences. "I worked in local government in Chicago and just got really tired of the snow," he admitted. "One day, I nearly had a wreck because of the ice, and that was it. Before I knew it, I was in Texas, and I've been here 17 years."

Now David is excited to help "usher in a golden age" for Glenn Heights. "Staff was working in buildings built by the volunteer fire department in the '80s. But the city focused on moving forward, being progressive and attracting the best employees. This development speaks to that," he noted. "We recognize there is room for improvement, but we need our community to rally. We want them to see these positive occurrences and start sharing in our vision for the future."

A trip to the all-abilities park is the perfect place to start. "What a great opportunity for people who might otherwise never meet to get to know each other," David said. "A central place that welcomes everyone ... that, to me, is the most exciting thing." **NOW**

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TALES OF TEXAS

Eat Like a TEXAN

— By Bill Smith



Every year since 2005 the State Fair of Texas has had a contest known as the Big Tex Choice Awards. The concessionaires try new recipes to win the contest, and some of the recent entries have included fried beer, fried peaches and cream, deep fried seafood gumbo balls and lucky duck dumplin'. However, there are some great creations that are available in Texas that have been around for years.

Who doesn't enjoy a bowl of chili on a cold day in Texas? Chili con carne is the official dish of the state of Texas. Chili stands started showing up in San Antonio during the 1880s, and there are chili contests every year in various parts of the state at which the participants share years of experience and "secret" ingredients, trying to win the blue ribbon. Surely the most famous cook-off is The Original Terlingua International Championship Chili Cookoff, made famous by Frank X. Tolbert. There is still a Tolbert's Chili Parlor in Grapevine that is owned by Frank's daughter.

To cool the taste buds as the chili is consumed, it would be hard to find a better offering than a cold, frozen margarita. The margarita may have been around for a long time, but turning it into a slushy drink started in 1971. Mariano Martinez is well known as the inventor of the frozen concoction. The first frozen margarita was delivered from a repurposed soft-serve ice cream machine and was made with tequila and pale green sherbet. The recipe has since been refined to the frozen drink served in a salt-lined glass with a slice of lime that is commonly drawn from margarita machines in restaurants across the country. Martinez's original machine now rests in the Smithsonian National Museum of American History.

Another drink that originated in Texas is Dr Pepper. Visit the Dr Pepper Museum in Waco to get the whole story, but the short version is Dr Pepper is the oldest major manufactured soft drink in the United States, manufactured and sold beginning in 1885 in Morrison's Old Corner Drug Store. A pharmacist named Charles Alderton mixed medicines, but in his spare time, he liked to experiment with flavors at the soda fountain. Eventually, he came up with the combination of fruit syrups that he liked, and Dr Pepper was born. Though there are a number of theories, the origin of the name of the beverage is still a mystery.

Baby boomers in Texas will recall the first time they ever

ate a Frito Pie. It may have been from the local Dairy Queen, or maybe from the concession stand at a high school football game. Chances are it was served in an original Frito bag, split open to allow a scoop of chili to be added. Perhaps you garnished yours with cheese, sour cream or chopped onions. While some folks from New Mexico may try to claim fame by saying the dish originated there, the preponderance of evidence seems to be in favor of Texas origins. Texans argue that San Antonio resident Daisy Doolin, the mother of Charles Elmer Doolin (who invented Fritos), dreamed up the dish, including the tradition of adding cheese and onions. It has been around since the 1930s.

Truth is stranger than fiction, but even sweet tea has Texas roots. The first sweet tea recipe came from the book, *Housekeeping in Old Virginia*, published in 1879 with a Texas contributor. The recipe reads: *After scalding the teapot, put into it one quart of boiling water and two teaspoons of tea. If wanted for supper, do this at breakfast. At dinner time, strain, without stirring, ... through a tea-strainer into a pitcher. Let stand 'til tea time and pour into decanters, leaving the sediment into the bottom of the pitcher. Fill goblets with ice, put two teaspoons granulated sugar in each, and pour the tea over the ice and sugar. A squeeze of lemon will make this delicious and healthful, as it will correct the astringent tendency.*

Texans are creative, and the first recipes for pecan pie appeared in Texas cookbooks in the 1870s and 1880s. Then along came Blue Bell Ice Cream at the little creamery in Brenham in 1907. What could be better to finish off a great plate of Tex-Mex-style enchiladas? **NOW**

Sources:

1. Spoonuniversity.com.
2. Smithsonianmag.com.
3. Drpeppermuseum.com.
4. Eater.com.
5. Recipebinder.co.uk.

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Zoomed In: Sandy Salas

By Angel Morris

Sandy Salas loves helping at her family's mini farm located between Red Oak and Waxahachie. "We don't have anything fancy, but we have lots of animals, and even some we've rescued," she said. "Our newest member is a sheep who is 3 weeks old in this picture."

Sandy, who will be a freshman in high school this fall, anticipates new babies arriving at the farm and goes out of her way to take care of them. "I love showing them off to my friends and even taking pictures with them!"



April Prentice, also known as DJ Wild Thang, deejays for the Red Oak Summer Kickoff Concert.



Launa Forman receives third place from Sodexo General Manager Joseph Hoffmaster in the food service company's Future Chef Cooking Challenge at Life School's Red Oak Elementary.



Mayor Pro Tem Sonja A. Brown addresses the crowd at a Glenn Heights Senior Citizens Center event.



The crew at Snowflake Donuts Red Oak donates treats to the local Senior Citizen Center.



Ellis County Children's Theater summer camp participants Caius Thorpe and Maya Robillio smile with ECT assistant Averie Abadie.



Nyah Anderson shares a raffle item from Fruitful Designs & Boutique at a community event.



The Benson brothers, Seger, age 7, and Crue, age 4, kick off summer at the Red Oak Splash Pad.

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Tens of millions Americans have nerve damage — a condition known as "neuropathy."

The most common symptoms of nerve damage are pain, burning, tingling, and loss of feeling in your feet, legs, and fingers — with the pain ranging from mild to almost unbearable.

If you are diabetic, and especially if you are also age 60 or older, odds are that your nerve damage has been caused directly by your diabetes — although many younger diabetics also have nerve damage from this potentially deadly disease.

But many OTHER people with these symptoms — pain, burning, and tingling — are NOT diabetic, yet also suffer from nerve damage.

According to the Mayo Clinic, the many diseases and conditions that can destroy the nerves in your extremities and limbs include:

- | | | |
|------------------------|--|------------------|
| ✓ Alcoholism | ✓ Repetitive motions such as typing | ✓ Chemotherapy |
| ✓ Autoimmune diseases | ✓ Bone marrow disorders | ✓ Tumors |
| ✓ Vitamin deficiencies | ✓ Certain prescription medications | ✓ Infections |
| ✓ Liver disease | ✓ Falls, sports injuries, and other trauma | ✓ Kidney disease |
| ✓ Underactive thyroid | ✓ Wearing a cast or using crutches | |

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CookingNOW

In the Kitchen With GENEISE WALTMON

— By Angel Morris



Red Oak High School graduate, Geneise Waltmon, always enjoyed cooking but several years ago discovered the joy of cooking for others. “It started at my church, First United Methodist, when I began cooking Wednesday-night fellowship meals to raise money for playground upgrades,” Geneise recalled.

A couple years later, Geneise was looking for a job with hours similar to her daughter’s school schedule. “I discovered the world of being a lunch lady with ROISD and, once school resumed after the COVID-19 shut down, I moved to my daughter’s school in Ovilla.”

Geneise loves interacting with students and staff. “I especially love being able to share new creations from the kitchen with my church and school family. I also love spending time with my husband, Ed, and our daughter, Hayven.” **NOW**

Piña Colada Lush Cake

20 golden Oreo cookies
3 Tbsp. unsalted butter, melted
8 oz. Philadelphia Cream Cheese, room temperature
8 oz. whipped topping (divided use)
1/4 cup powdered sugar
8 oz. crushed pineapple, drained
1 cup skim milk
3.4 oz. instant coconut pudding mix
1/2 cup toasted coconut
Cherries, for garnish

- 1.** Crush the Oreos; mix them with the butter. Press the mixture into the bottom of an 8x8-inch glass baking dish.
- 2.** In a large bowl, mix together the cream cheese, 4 oz. of the whipped topping, the powdered sugar and the pineapple until fully combined.
- 3.** Evenly distribute the mixture over the Oreo crust. Mix together the milk and the coconut instant pudding. Let it sit for a few minutes before evenly spreading it over the cream cheese layer.
- 4.** Spread with the remaining whipped

topping; top with the toasted coconut. Refrigerate for a few hours before serving. Add cherries before serving as a garnish.

Cheesy Squash Casserole

1 Tbsp. vegetable oil
6 medium yellow squash, thinly sliced
1 large Vidalia onion, thinly sliced
1 Tbsp. butter
1/2 cup Parmesan cheese, grated
1 cup sharp cheddar cheese, shredded
1/2 cup sour cream
Salt, to taste
Pepper, to taste
1 sleeve buttery crackers, crushed medium to fine

- 1.** Preheat the oven to 350 F. Grease a 2-qt. casserole dish. Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Sauté the squash, onions and butter until soft.
- 2.** Transfer to a bowl; stir in the Parmesan, cheddar and sour cream. Add salt and pepper. Place in the prepared casserole dish; sprinkle the cracker crumbs evenly over the top. Bake for 20 minutes, or until the top is golden and bubbly.

Peanut Butter No-bake Cookies

- 1/2 cup butter
- 1 1/2 cups white sugar
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup milk
- 4 Tbsp. cocoa
- 1 pinch kosher salt
- 1/2 cup creamy peanut butter (or chunky but it seems to make a more crumbly, dry cookie)
- 2 tsp. vanilla
- 3 cups dry quick-cooking oats

1. Add the first 6 ingredients into a 4-qt. saucepan. Bring to a rolling boil and hold for 1 minute; remove from heat.
2. Add the peanut butter to the hot mixture; stir until melted. Add the vanilla.
3. Mix in the dry oats until they are completely coated. Drop cookies by tablespoonfuls onto waxed paper. Let cool until set.
4. *Variation:* Use 1/2 tsp. almond extract and 1 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract.

Broccoli Cheddar Soup

- 1/4 cup butter, melted
- 1/2 medium onion, chopped
- 1/4 cup flour
- 2 cups half-and-half
- 2 cups chicken stock or broth
- 1/2 lb. broccoli (about 3 cups), chopped into bite-size pieces
- 1 cup carrots, julienned
- Salt, to taste
- Pepper, to taste
- 8 oz. sharp cheddar cheese, grated
- 1/4 tsp. nutmeg (optional)

1. Sauté the onions in the butter until soft. Sprinkle the flour over the mixture. Cook, stirring, over medium heat for 1-2 minutes.
2. Whisk in the half-and-half and chicken stock or broth. Add the broccoli and carrots. Cook over low heat for 20-25 minutes, or until the broccoli and carrots are tender. Add the salt and pepper.
3. You can leave the soup chunky, or blend about 1 cup of the soup and stir it back in for a smoother soup. Return to low heat; add the cheese. If your heat is too high, your soup can get grainy. Stir in the nutmeg, if desired. Serve with crusty bread.

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Happy Independence Day

JULY

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.

Throughout July

Bricks 4 Kidz Camp:

Kids learn about the worlds of engineering, animated moviemaking and architecture through building with LEGO blocks. 9:00 a.m.-noon in Ennis, Midlothian and Waxahachie. Call (469) 383-2538 for more details.

7/2

Red Oak, White & Blue:

An evening of food, fun and fireworks. Live DJ, bounce houses, face painting, food trucks and a 15-minute fireworks display. Please note parking for the event grounds can only be accessed from the right-hand lane of the southbound

I-35 service road at the Red Oak Road exit. Remain in the right-hand lane until reaching Oaks Church. Access to the event is not available from the SH 77 exits. Free. 7:00-10:00 p.m., Oaks Church, 777 S. I-35E Service Rd. More details are available at <https://www.redoaktx.org/378/Red-Oak-White-and-Blue>.

7/16

Toss for a Cause

Cornhole Fundraiser:

Presented by Reach Council and Cornhole for Community. Bring your own teammate. Cash prizes awarded. Noon-5:00 p.m., Big League Dreams, 500 Heritage Pkwy. S., Mansfield. Register at

<https://bit.ly/tossforacause>.

7/18-7/22

Vacation Bible School:

"Let's Make Some Waves for Christ" is the theme of Renewing Faith Bible Church's first VBS program, with classes for children, teens and adults. 6:00-8:00 p.m., 205 S. Main St., #17-01. For more details, email renewingfaithbiblechurch@gmail.com or call (817) 925-3086.

7/27

Chamber of Commerce

Monthly Luncheon:

Featured speaker: Ellis County District Attorney Ann Montgomery. Members: \$15 with

RSVP; \$18 without RSVP; Non-members: \$20. Noon-1:00 p.m., Red Oak Municipal Building, 200 Lakeview Pkwy. To register, call (972) 617-0906 or email admin@redoakchamber.org.

7/30

Essential Foundation

Back 2 School Bash:

EFI is sponsoring 150 children in need with backpacks and school supplies. 105 E. Red Oak Rd. Learn about sponsorship opportunities by calling (469) 552-6246, or emailing admin@efiinc.org.

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



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