

Midlothian NOW

M A G A Z I N E

JULY 2025

In His Lane

Axe throwing is for Adam Vann



Spirit on the Hill

A glimpse into the transformation of Arlington's Top O' Hill Terrace Tearoom

In the Kitchen With Sandra Estrada

Also inside:

Scavenger Hunt

Crossword/Sudoku

Featured Business:

Tio Tony's Fine Mexican Food

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Get road ready ...

For some, July is the month of road trips, which can mean a lot of time to kill between stops. Keeping passengers entertained can limit the number of times the driver hears, "Are we there yet?" Young or old, travel time is perfect for putting down electronic devices and appreciating one's surroundings. Here are a couple ways to pass time on the road ...

Choose pit stops in advance. Put someone in charge of learning about each location, and have them share those details on the drive. The site's history and claim to fame are good starting points. Research should include travel time updates, so the group knows when you're getting close. Consider giving everyone a goal, like capturing certain photos

or keepsakes from the site, to share once you're on the road again.

Put each rider in charge of a car game. Whether identifying wildlife, flowers and trees, calling out the alphabet with first letters of license plates or making up stories about what others see in the clouds, road trips are a time to enjoy nature and unleash your creativity.

Enjoy the ride!

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ON THE COVER



Midlothian teen, Adam Vann, is making a name for himself on the axe throwing circuit.

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IN HIS LANE

— By Angel Morris

While historic references to axe throwing harken back to Native Americans and tomahawks, and later to lumberjack and woodsmen contests, the sport as a hobby has grown in popularity in recent years. In 2017, the World Axe Throwing League was formed to govern “urban axe throwing, aiming to promote the sport professionally by uniting axe throwing clubs.”

When Midlothian teen, Adam Vann’s, family opened an axe throwing business almost three years ago, he couldn’t help but try his hand at the sport. “People are always surprised to learn that I compete in axe throwing. I always hear, ‘I have seen this on ESPN,’ and how they didn’t realize we have a venue locally. They assume I have to go to Dallas,” Adam explained.

Adam threw his first axe at age 12. “I always get asked how old I was when I started. This sport doesn’t have an age requirement, anyone can throw,” he shared. “I started throwing competitively when I was 14.”





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For those unfamiliar, axe and knife throwing involves standing behind a set line, aiming to score points by hitting specific areas of a target with one's axe/knife (comparable to archery and darts). Targets are usually 10 to 15 feet away, depending on the discipline, marked with score zones and a bullseye in the center. Smaller hatchets, big axes and even knives are typically used.

While involved in the sport for a short time, Adam has quickly shown prowess in the hatchet discipline. In 2023, he earned the highest bullseye percentage and third place overall at the Junior World Championship. He has also excelled at big axe, where he ranked 13th worldwide in the first season of 2025.

Currently utilizing Infinity and Wellman hatchets, Adam has learned the key to throwing success. "I prepare for a competition by warming up with some throws, and I clear my head of any distractions," he noted. "You need precision and accuracy with the correct release angle and speed. I was extremely proud of my first perfect game at Big Axe!"

Adam competes in the World Axe Throwing League, which operates in 20 countries and organizes international tournaments, including the U.S. Open, Pro-Am Championship, Commissioner's Cup and the World Axe & Knife Throwing Championships.

In April of this year, Adam competed in hatchet in the World Axe & Knife Throwing Championships in Appleton, Wisconsin, traveling with eight other

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throwers all representing Midlothian. Adam ranked in the top 24 of his bracket, among more than 250 total hatchet participants. His goal for next year is to earn an invitation to compete in disciplines besides hatchet, including big axe and hatchet duals.

Adam also looks forward to competing in a National Tournament at his home venue, Battle Axes, in October this year. This tournament, the "Texas Heat Wave," will host throwers traveling to Midlothian from all over the world. He would love to show off his skills to other well-known pros while inspiring adults and youth to try their hand at the sport.

Pushing himself to achieve is not new to Adam, who is finishing his final requirements to earn Eagle Scout rank and is also a certified scuba diver. "I also enjoy video games, chess, fishing and working out," he listed. "And I dive with my family on just about every vacation we take."

In school, his favorite subjects are history and math. He plays trumpet in the Honor Band and participates in marching band in the fall. He's contemplating college plans and what to study post-graduation but is content to focus on improving his axe game for now.

Entering his junior year at Midlothian High School, Adam credits his family, dad (Zach), mom (Alexsha) and brother (Jaxton), for their support. "My dad inspires me to do the very best I can in everything that I do," he said, "so I can be the very best person I can be." **NOW**

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TALES OF TEXAS · SPIRIT ON THE HILL

— By Emma McKay

With a century separating us from the days of Prohibition, the age of speakeasies seems like a distant, almost fictional moment in history. However, history may be closer than you think. Located in Arlington, Top O' Hill Terrace, served as a gambling den to some of American history's favorite celebrities for nearly 30 years.

In 1921, Beulah Adams Marshall, a former culinary writer for the *Dallas Journal*, saw the need for an eatery along the newly constructed cross-continental Bankhead Highway. She and her husband, Thomas, purchased a hill on the edge of Arlington and constructed a sandstone house to host Beulah's vision. The tearoom became a hit amongst residents of the DFW area. People traveled from all over to try her famous chicken fried steaks or attend events hosted at the tearoom.

Upon visiting Beulah's Top O' Hill Terrace tearoom, Fred and Mary Browning found potential in its location to create a highly profitable gambling hotspot right off the popular thoroughfare. In 1930, the Brownings bought the property from the Marshalls and converted it into a destination for illicit activities such as drinking, gambling, prostitution and horse betting. Fred Browning already owned clubs in Richmond, Texas, and near Tulsa, Oklahoma, so establishing a location in Arlington wouldn't be a troublesome pursuit. After all, he'd built up a reputation in the gambling world and had connections he could use to fill Top O' Hill with dealers, dancers and moonshine. This also meant he knew what precautions he'd need to take in ensuring his business would survive police raids.

Fred began to make renovations to the land to keep his staff, patrons and business safe from "Johnny Law." A sandstone wall was erected around the property with guards posted at its iron gate entrance. At the guard towers, warning buzzers were installed, which, when pressed, alerted those in the main house that the cops were on their way, giving them time to hide the evidence or escape.

As the gambling den's popularity grew, Fred expanded his operation. He dug a two-story basement underneath the house, designating it as the base of illegal operations. He also created a labyrinth of escape tunnels, should the need for a quick exit arise. Some of these tunnels spilled out into the nearby woods or circled back to the tearoom's garden, allowing guests to pretend they were merely enjoying the flowers and teacakes. Although many of these tunnels have been found over the years, historians believe there may have been many more which were lost to time.

In the height of its success, gamblers traveled far and wide to spend the evening at Top O' Hill, including celebrities such as John Wayne, Frank Sinatra, Ginger Rogers and the infamous Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow. To ensure these visitors weren't cops in disguise, the Brownings created a series of checkpoints patrons had to pass through before reaching the main attraction.

Thanks to Fred's precautions, in the nearly 30 years of its operation, his gambling club survived several police raids. However, that all changed on August 10, 1947. Led by M.T. "Lone Wolf" Gonzauillas, a small team of Texas Rangers crawled through the woods, effectively giving Fred's guards the slip. The men snuck through a back door, catching patrons by surprise. The rangers arrested eight employees and 50 patrons and confiscated \$25,000 worth of equipment, which, according to Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis' inflation calculator would equate to over \$352,000 in 2024. This raid marked the end of an era for the tearoom.



Photo by David Pillow | Dreamstime.com.

Top O' Hill gambling parlor never regained the same number of patrons as it did in its heyday. Founder of Bible Baptist Seminary, Frank J. Norris had been one of Top O' Hill's biggest opposers during its operation, and had vowed to one day own the land and shut down the gambling parlor. In 1956, four years after Pastor Norris passed, Bible Baptist Seminary, now known as Arlington Baptist University, purchased the property. In 2003, the Texas Historical Commission named the tearoom as a historical landmark. These days, visitors can donate \$10 to schedule a tour of the tearoom to learn about its history and see surviving memorabilia collected by Vickie Bryant, wife of former university president, David Bryant. **NOW**

Photos, unless otherwise noted, by George Moreno from the Top O'Hill Terrace Collection, courtesy of Arlington Baptist University.

- Sources:
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Scout Dvorak kicks off summer with some waterslide fun.

Zoomed In: Becky Shuffield

By Angel Morris

In the 2025 class at Midlothian University — through which locals learn about city government and services — Becky Shuffield recently took a Public Works tour. “Getting up on the small excavator was fun! Plus, I knew my two grandsons, Bennett and Elliott, would think it was cool that Nana was able to do that,” Becky shared.

A retired teacher/library-media specialist with MISD, Becky recommends the MU experience. “I learned that the city has great folks working for it, and that they desire the best for the citizens,” she said.

Becky is chairperson of the first-ever Midlothian Public Library Board. “I love serving on the board and visiting the library as often as possible, the camaraderie with other members of the board, the library director and the other librarians and personnel,” she noted. “I’m also very involved with my church. I enjoy reading, water aerobics and walking, too.”



Gwen Robinson and Hannah Hobbs are the first Midlothian ISD tennis duo to win a match at the UIL State Championship tournament.



Blue Mint Thai & Asian Cuisine “cuts the ribbon” with the Chamber at its new Midlothian location!



Olivia Smith enjoys a chicken leg while pretending to cook in her play kitchen.



Leigh Morris, Rachel Afghanipour and Lennon Afghanipour prepare for their roles in Back Porch Theatre's upcoming production of Annie, July 31-August 2.



Walnut Grove Middle School student, Jesse Trevino, displays his recent District Championship wrestling medal.

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Tio Tony's Fine Mexican Food

— By Angel Morris

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In business since 2010, Tio Tony's Fine Mexican Food offers authentic Tex-Mex food at affordable prices. The local business prides itself on high standards and consistent service. "We're a family-owned business, and we're proud to be part of the Midlothian community, living and working here. We



appreciate the love and support this community has shown us, and we pride ourselves on giving back to our customers," said Corina Barajas, who helps run the eatery with her mother, "Ms. Carmen" and her sisters, Nidia and Dalia.

Tio Tony's staff invites its customers to start their day with a variety of Mexican favorites or traditional American breakfast options. Breakfast combos range from eggs, pancakes and sausage to huevos rancheros and chilaquiles de la casa. Eight combination meals range in price from \$8.99 to \$13.99.

Breakfast tacos start at just \$3.19, and pancake short stacks start at only \$4.99. Pork chops, fajitas and steaks are some of Tio Tony's heartier breakfast menu options. The Mucho Grande Breakfast features a 5-oz. asada steak, two eggs, refried beans, verde chilaquiles, sliced queso fresco and avocado slices for \$15.99.

For lunch and dinner, guests can anticipate Tio Tony's "famous quesadillas" of beef or chicken fajita meat, along with yummy queso or nacho appetizers. Enchilada, street taco, chile rellenos and fajita meals range in price from \$8.99-

\$15.99. Heartier appetites might choose the \$17.99 steak tampiqueño or \$19.99 comalada. Lunch specials are a deal, priced from \$6.99-\$9.99, weekdays from 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Customers can check out daily specials on the Tio Tony's Facebook page, as well.

All traditional Mexican fare can be found at the restaurant in a range of prices, too. "We think you'll find any Mexican food you have in mind at our restaurant, so please consider us, whether dining in or getting takeout," Corina requested.

"We're a family-owned business, and we're proud to be part of the Midlothian community, living and working here. We appreciate the love and support this community has shown us, and we pride ourselves on giving back to our customers."

The restaurant provides several American-fare items for lunch and dinner, too, in an effort to please everyone in a family. "We have a variety of sandwiches, burgers, salads and steaks to choose from," Corina listed.

Tio Tony's is even prepared for young customers, with chicken nuggets, mini corn dogs, grilled cheese sandwiches and cheese quesadillas. "We know you are looking for an affordable place the whole family can enjoy, and we think we provide just that," Corina said. "We pride ourselves on serving families in a timely manner and making sure they feel at home."

With the motto, "Everyone is our friend and family!" Tio Tony's provides a party room for private gatherings, as well. "From our staff and all of our families, we would like to thank, from the bottom of our hearts, each and every one of our customers and friends," Corina said. "We look forward to many more years of service and camaraderie." **NOW**

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Mexican Shrimp Ceviche
(Ceviche de Camarón)

3. Lightly fry the tortillas in a bit of oil for 5-10 seconds per side, just enough to make them pliable. Drain on paper towels.
4. For *enchiladas*: Preheat the oven to 375 F. Fill each tortilla with chicken. Roll tightly; place seam-side down in a greased baking dish.
5. Pour the sauce over the *enchiladas*. Sprinkle with cheese. Bake 15 minutes, or until the cheese is melted and bubbly. Drizzle with extra crema and garnish with cilantro. Serve hot with Mexican rice, refried beans or a fresh salad.

Mexican Shrimp Ceviche (Ceviche de Camarón)

Fresh, zesty and packed with bold flavors.

- 1 lb. raw shrimp, peeled, deveined and chopped into small pieces
- 1 cup fresh lime juice (8-10 limes)
- 1 medium tomato, diced
- 1/2 small red onion, finely chopped
- 1 jalapeño or serrano pepper, finely chopped (adjust for spice)
- 1/4 cup cilantro, finely chopped
- 1 small cucumber, diced (optional)
- Salt, to taste
- Pepper, to taste
- 1 avocado, diced (for serving)
- 1 tsp. hot sauce (like Valentina or Tapatio) (optional)

1. Place the shrimp in a glass or non-reactive bowl. Pour the lime juice over it, ensuring the shrimp is fully submerged. Cover; refrigerate 30 minutes to 1 hour, or until the shrimp turns pink and opaque.
2. Combine the tomatoes, onions, jalapeños, cilantro and cucumber. Drain some of the excess lime juice. (Leave a little for flavor). Add vegetables to the shrimp. Stir in the salt and pepper.
3. Cover; refrigerate 15-20 minutes to allow all the flavors to meld.
4. Garnish with diced avocado and hot sauce; serve chilled with tostadas, tortilla chips or saltine crackers.

CookingNOW IN THE KITCHEN WITH SANDRA ESTRADA



— By Angel Morris

Sandra Estrada and her husband, Efrain, fell in love with Midlothian in 2020. “We were thrilled to move into our first home here with our sons, Efrain Jr. and Moses,” she shared.

Sandra grew up watching her mother prepare fresh meals daily. “I didn’t start cooking on my own until I married but quickly developed a passion for it,” she recalled.

For nearly a decade, Sandra was a stay-at-home wife and mother. “This year, I decided to take a more active role in supporting our family business. My husband is a financial advisor, and we help families secure their future.”

Time in the kitchen is still precious to Sandra. “The aromas of fresh ingredients always take me back to cherished childhood memories with my parents and siblings.” **NOW**

Green Mexican Enchiladas Suizas

Sauce:

- 10 tomatillos, husked and rinsed
- 1 small onion, quartered
- 2 garlic cloves
- 1-2 jalapeños or serrano peppers (adjust for spice)
- 1/2 cup cilantro, chopped
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. black pepper
- 1 Tbsp. oil, plus extra for softening tortillas
- 1 cup Mexican crema (or sour cream)

Enchiladas:

- 12 corn tortillas
- 2 cups chicken, cooked and shredded (Rotisserie works well.)
- 1 1/2 cups shredded cheese (queso Oaxaca, Chihuahua or Monterey Jack)
- 1/2 cup Mexican crema (for topping)
- Cilantro (for topping)

1. For sauce: In a saucepan, boil the first 4 ingredients in water about 5-7 minutes, until soft. Drain; blend with the cilantro, chicken broth, salt, and pepper until smooth.
2. Heat the oil in a pan; pour in the blended sauce. Cook for 5 minutes over medium heat. Stir in the Mexican crema; mix well. Simmer 2 more minutes; set aside.





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- Virginia Woolf



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SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

— By Bill Smith

Driving northeast from North Texas over, under, around and through the mountains of Arkansas to Branson, Missouri, makes a scenic and interesting trip. The destination is worth the journey, and with so many activities and things to experience, you just cannot do them all during one visit. Chances are, at least one return trip will be on your agenda.

Accommodations in Branson are varied and can be as simple as a campsite at Table Rock State Park, an inexpensive motel room or a bed-and-breakfast for two. Cabins, condos and resorts that host your whole family are also available. Arlo Guthrie sang, “You can get anything you want at Alice’s Restaurant,” and while there may not be an Alice’s in Branson, there is just about any other food offering you may desire.

One place you can count on for a delicious, home-style meal is Paula Deen’s Family Kitchen. Located near downtown on Branson Landing, the food is served in a tastefully appointed atmosphere, and you cannot leave there hungry. Every meal is all-you-can-eat and includes a choice of dessert.

Branson is all about music, and many of the restaurants

feature live entertainment, sometimes as a stage performance, or perhaps as a singing server. Mel’s Hard Luck Diner has a 1950s theme in its decor, and the servers may be singing oldies, Christian or country music. Food at Mel’s is a variety of soups, salads and sandwiches, including burgers, fries and awesome desserts, such as Rock Around the Chocolate, which is a huge ice cream delight. You’ll need to leave extra room for it!

Just one more restaurant to mention is in nearby Springfield in the huge original Bass Pro Shop. This “side-trip” from Branson is worth the drive to see the flagship store. Don’t miss the aquariums and the outstanding wildlife mounts, but the restaurant that you will enjoy in the store is Hemingway’s Blue Water Café. Their website boasts, “Dedicated to legendary author and sportsman Ernest Hemingway, its lodge-style decor features authentic memorabilia from Papa’s global adventures. A lovely old mahogany bar parallels a huge saltwater aquarium running nearly the length of the main dining room. On the dinner menu: fresh seafood creations by the late renowned Chef Marcel Bonetti, plus an eclectic mix of signature dishes, sandwiches and salads made with locally grown ingredients to suit every palate.” The restaurant lives up to the hype.

So, you have a place to stay and a place to dine. Now, what is there to do in Branson? Live performances of varied genres are at the many theaters. Clay Cooper has a great



FOR VE

show at the theater that bears his name. Don't miss an opportunity to attend the production at the Sight & Sounds Theatre. You will be amazed at the sets and costumes in this beautiful venue. You may experience a Roman soldier riding a white stallion as he rides off to battle down the aisle. If you want to see Elvis, you may not find him there, but at least one of his cousins has a show in Branson, and there will probably be more than one Elvis impersonator there during your stay.

For the kids, there are zip lines, bumper boats, Ferris wheels and miniature golf galore. Ride the Branson Scenic Railway, a duck boat or a trolley. Shop at Dick's 5 & 10. Go see The Butterfly Palace or the Titanic Museum. Book your next trips to Branson — one is just not enough! **NOW**

Source:
[I. basspro.com/shop/en/resorts-restaurants](http://I.basspro.com/shop/en/resorts-restaurants).

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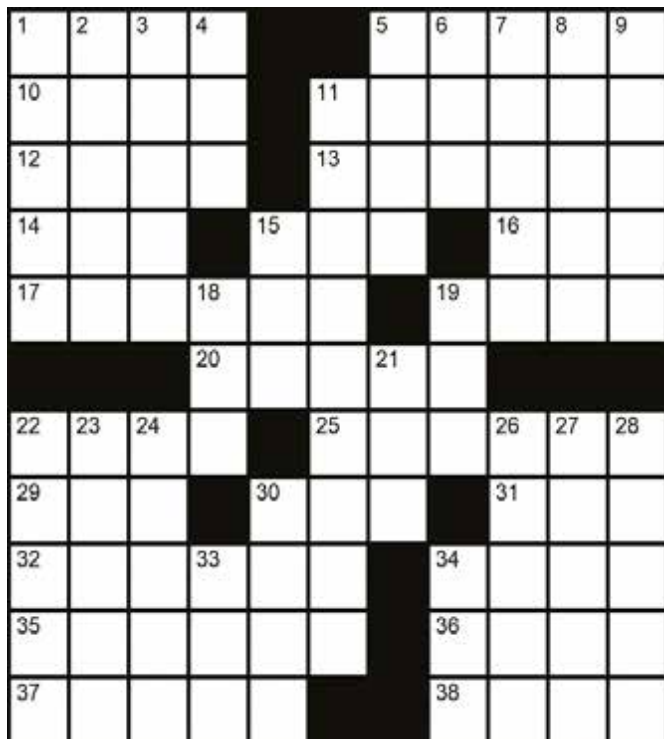


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Crossword Puzzle



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Across

- 1 Golf green marker
- 5 Drawbacks
- 10 Tiny bit
- 11 The Boilermakers' home
- 12 "... company, ..."
- 13 Again in Avignon
- 14 Off-color
- 15 The unicorns missed it, presumably
- 16 Unopened flower
- 17 Legwear introduced in 1940
- 19 Falconer's strap
- 20 Aromatic seed found in Siena after earthquake
- 22 Bill
- 25 Nature's title, often
- 29 Worthless piece of cloth
- 30 Margaret Thatcher, Tony Blair, Boris Johnson et al.
- 31 Unity
- 32 Take too far
- 34 Remedy
- 35 Nairobi native
- 36 Dating from
- 37 Little rocket maker
- 38 Fresnel or fisheye, perhaps

Down

- 1 Act like a native
- 2 Humble
- 3 Coral island
- 4 Sparse fluid
- 5 Defeated
- 6 Atomic energy overseer
- 7 Ancestral Pueblo building material
- 8 Teachers, in India
- 9 Plants of the future
- 11 Confused Mom ripens fruit
- 15 --- Arbor, MI
- 18 Whiskey cask material
- 19 Blacker than black
- 21 "... yer old man!"
- 22 Out of dough
- 23 Roof overhang
- 24 Representative
- 26 Legislative group
- 27 Notorious fraudulent company
- 28 Coral formations
- 30 Smartphone ancestors
- 33 Cereal grass
- 34 The Orioles' Mr. Ripken

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Sudoku Puzzle

Easy

7		3	4					
						8	2	
6		9		8			3	
		1		3		6		9
			8					7
4					9		8	
		2				5		
	5							
		7		9				3

Medium

	7							
1				8	5	4		9
	8			7			1	
				1	8			
		4						2
			6				3	
		7						
		3	4	2		8		
							5	6

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JULY

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7/3

Independence Day Fireworks:

MISD Multi-Purpose Stadium parking lot opens for viewing at 6:00 p.m., but stadium is not open for seating. Fireworks start at about 9:15 p.m., 1800 S. 14th St. Rain out date: **July 5**. Learn more at midlothian.tx.us/708/Independence-Day-Fireworks.

7/7-7/11

Kids Summer Theatre Camp:

Back Porch Theatre Inc. presents theater training for children in grades kindergarten-fifth and sixth-incoming ninth divided by age groups. 9:00 a.m.-noon. Midlothian Civic Center, 224 S. 11th St. Register at <https://forms.gle/bXA3jVlPKezLIo1o7>.

7/12

Movies In The Park:

Bring the family and friends to the showing of *Inside Out 2*. Bring chairs or blankets for lawn seating. Movies start at dusk, around 8:00 p.m., Midlothian Community Park, 3601 S. 14th St. Rainout date **July 19**.

7/12 and 7/26

Kid's Crafty Summer:

Join us for a fun, craft-filled Saturday! Specially designed to engage and inspire children from kindergarten through

5th grade. 1:00-2:00 p.m., Children's Room, Midlothian Public Library, 215 N. 8th St. (972) 775-7080.

7/17

Creature Teacher Performance:

Learn about animals through this fun-filled program designed to inspire learning and nurture an appreciation for conservation and wildlife. 3:00 p.m., Midlothian Public Library, 215 N. 8th St. To learn about all library programs, visit <https://midlothian.aspendiscovery.org/programs/all>.

7/18

Parktopia:

Celebrating National Parks and Recreation Month, this event features lawn games, face painting, kite flying and more, plus refreshments and souvenirs while supplies last. 6:00-9:00 p.m., Community Park, 3601 S. 14th St.

7/25

Family Movie Night:

Wear your most colorful pajamas, bring your pillow and blanket, and enjoy some cinematic family fun! 4:00-7:00 p.m., Midlothian Public Library, 215 N. 8th St.

7/26

Summer Beats:

Free concert featuring Emerald

City Band. Bring chairs and blankets for lawn seating. Food for purchase available. Outside food, beverages and coolers are allowed. 7:30-9:30 p.m., Community Park, 3601 S. 14th St.

Fourth Mondays Through November

Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis County:

Social time, business meeting, show and tell program. Sign-in/social time: 6:00 p.m.; meeting: 6:30 p.m., Waxahachie Bible Church, 621 N. Grand Ave., Waxahachie. Learn more at elliscountyquilters.com. Email klbright53@gmail.com for more details.

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National Active and Retired Federal Employees:

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Cadets ages 12-18 and Senior Members 18-plus. 6:45-9:00 p.m., Mid-Way Regional Airport, 131 Airport Dr. Visit www.gocivilairpatrol.com.

Celebrate Recovery Meeting:

A Christ-centered recovery program designed to help those struggling with hurts, habits and hang-ups. 7:00 p.m., The Lighthouse Church, 1400 N. 9th St. For more details, email CR@dfwlighthouse.org.

Saturdays

Midlothian

Farmers Market:

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

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



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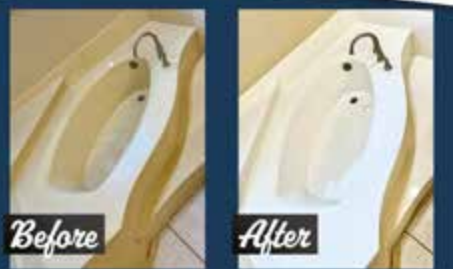
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