

# MidlothianNOW

M A G A Z I N E

AUGUST 2025

## ANNIVERSARY ISSUE





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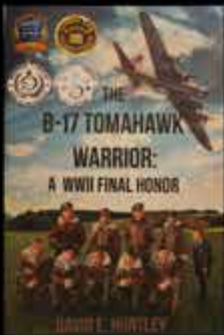


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Angel

Angel Morris  
MidlothianNOW Editor  
angel.morris@nowmagazines.com  
(972) 533-7216

# EDITOR'S NOTE

*Cheers to 20 years!*

The first edition of *MidlothianNOW* Magazine was published August 1, 2005 — 20 years ago this month. Anniversaries allow us to celebrate special events by remembering their dates each year, as we reflect on the past, appreciate the present and look forward to what's to come. In this issue, we take a walk down memory lane, outlining some of the city's growth and change over two decades. From new schools and shopping outlets to city parks and community events, Midlothian has added to its offerings in big ways.

Each month, this publication features those who make the city special. Artists, athletes, cooks, educators, volunteers and so many more, bring our pages to life by letting us share their stories. The very first feature in *MidlothianNOW* was of Midlothian Conference Center

Director Mary Rustin, touting the almost-three-year-old facility's benefits. Other features included Dan and Cathy Altman, who opened their home for a look inside, and Suzanne Compton, who described how she began playing music despite little training.

Since then, hundreds of locals have graced these pages, and, with your support, hundreds more are still to come. Thank you, readers, for enjoying your neighbors' stories.

*Happy anniversary!*

August 2025  
Volume 21, Issue 8

## ON THE COVER



*NOW Magazines takes a look back at two decades of faces that have graced the covers of MidlothianNOW.*

**Cover design by**  
Anthony Sarmienta.

*Publisher, Connie Poirier  
General Manager, Rick Hensley*

### EDITORIAL

*Managing Editor, Becky Walker  
Midlothian Editor, Angel Morris  
Office Assistant, Kristin Bato  
Editors/Proofreaders, Rachel Rich  
Virginia Riddle*

### GRAPHICS AND DESIGN

*Creative Director, Chris McCalla  
Artists, Kristin Bato . Martha Macias  
London O'Connell . Anthony Sarmienta*

### PHOTOGRAPHY

*Photography Director, Chris McCalla  
Photographer, Anthony Sarmienta*

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# PUBLISHER'S NOTE

## Wow! 20 years!

It seems like only yesterday that NOW Magazines was just an idea. Would it work? At that time, only the big cities had full-color magazines. In late 2003, I was considering whether a community magazine that was direct mailed into every home and business in the community would be sustainable. We launched our first magazine in Corsicana in March 2004, our second, *WaxahachieNOW Magazine*, in November of that year, followed by *EnnisNOW Magazine* the very next month. Then in August 2005, we launched again, and *MidlothianNOW Magazine* was born. Now, here we are 20 years later!

The concept of providing good stories about good people and delivering free of charge to the readers in the community has proved to be a good one. This, along with providing our advertisers with the ability to reach all of these readers in a direct mail format for an affordable price, has all culminated in the success of what is NOW Magazines, LLC.

Thank you to all! We appreciate our readers and the input you provide, and we couldn't exist without our wonderful and loyal advertisers who make this all possible.

And a big shout out to the NOW Magazines staff, including Community Editor Angel Morris and Sales Representatives Cherise Burnett (who just retired last month) and Nathaniel Standifer (who is just joining our team). They, along with General Manager Rick Hensley, Managing Editor Becky Walker, Creative Director Chris McCalla and the rest of the NOW family, work so hard each month to bring you *MidlothianNOW Magazine*.

Here's to the past 20 years! We all look forward to serving Midlothian for many years to come!

*Connie Poirier*



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There have been some quotable quotes within 20 years of stories in *MidlothianNOW*: from the daughter of the city's oldest resident reflecting on *what life was like* after Sunday church back in the day, to local nonprofit leaders addressing how residents can help meet the community's needs. Whether it was a Girl Scout or championship wrestler, foster parent or transplanted pastor, the voices of the town shared what was happening here — the things your neighbors were doing day to day in big and small ways. Here's a look back at some of their words from two decades of *NOW* pages ...

*"We're probably the largest club in the U.S. We have kids who are now in the Air Force, flight instructors and some who are flying the tow-planes now."* — Jim Rider, Texas Soaring Association, August 2005.



# TWO DECADES 'TIL *now*

— By Angel Morris

*As MidlothianNOW Magazine commemorates its 20th anniversary in the community, the publication reflects on the city's evolution. In 2005, the population stood at 14,567. Today, it is estimated to be 41,352. The growth precipitated significant transformation, characterized by extensive development, all while endeavoring to preserve the small-town culture for which the city is known.*

*"I know where they are because I have been there, and I know how much it hurts to ask for assistance. The biggest thing with the ministry is giving a helping hand up and not a handout."* — Amy Hayes, host for Midlothian's Angel Food Ministries with husband, Danny, November 2008.

*"We have some very good stories that we know God is pleased with because of our mission. When you see them [the children] two to four years down the road and they make that curve, you know God is in it."* — Bernice Jackson, Refuge House foster parent with husband, Robert, December 2009.

*"I want the employees to take more ownership of the program. It is a lifestyle change. This year, we will only take a limited number of people who are committed to the program*

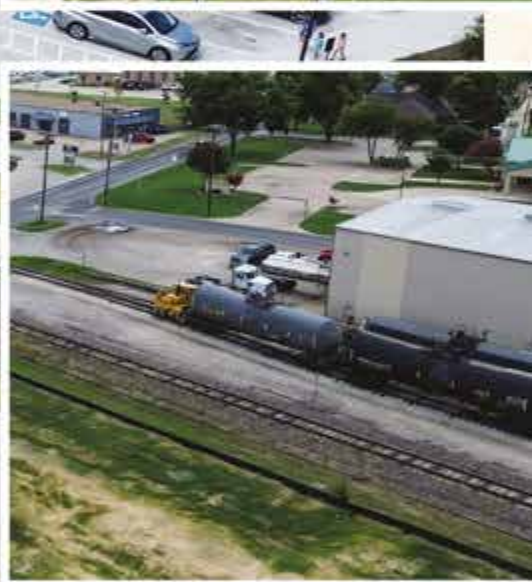


*because we will expect them to finish it!"* — Department of Human Resources Director Harold Cates on the city's *Biggest Loser* program, January 2010.



*"Our object is to help our community be better by teaching people how to live victoriously. We help when people get into trouble."* — Helen Gist, Mission Midlothian Founder, September 2006.

*"Every Sunday night after church service, all the kids from church would come over for Mom's homemade ice cream. We had a cow that made rich milk, and we got the eggs from our chickens."* — Nellafay Isom, daughter of Faye Reed, Midlothian's oldest resident in October 2007



*"She had a profound influence on me. Her focus was always, you do the right thing because it's the right thing to do."* — Beth Van Amburgh, LaRue Elementary Principal regarding the school's namesake, February 2011.

*"They are learning to be businesswomen and how to have better sales techniques, skills and confidence. For some of them, just to ask, 'Do you want to buy my cookies?' is huge."* — Girl Scout Troop Leader Antionette White, March 2012.



*"I think it's important for all the early families to be remembered, to know the hardships they endured to make us a town, to know the roles of churches and schools in building our society. We need to know the history of buildings, too, both homes and businesses."* — Sara Garcia, Midlothian Chamber of Commerce President, regarding a celebration of Midlothian's 125th birthday, April 2013.





## HOW IT STARTED

While the city's incorporation is officially documented as April 1888, it is said to have been acknowledged as early as 1881 when an Ellis County newspaper first referenced the town as Midlothian. In 1883, the laying of railroad tracks between Dallas and Cleburne through Midlothian opened the area to greater transportation and trade.

That same year, the Polytechnic Institute was founded. From grade school to higher education, the private, coeducational boarding school sat in Kimmel Park. It changed leadership and names before being deconstructed in 1908. In 1916 the land was given to the city for use as a park.

Prior to its official incorporation, the city's first school house is said to have been built in 1850 near 14th Street south of the cemetery. The dirt-floor log cabin was also the community hall and church. Headstones in the city cemetery date back to the 1870s.

Local population was calculated at 600 by the early 1890s, with Ellis County known as one of the top cotton-growing areas of the nation. Midlothian housed two cotton gins, plus about two dozen businesses, including a hotel, general store and saddle shop.

At the turn of the 20th century, the development of railways and automobiles brought industrial growth to this farming town, along with several manufacturing companies. In 1902, the First United Methodist Church was built, with First Presbyterian Church following in 1913.

Just as railroads impacted the city's growth, two regional highways would eventually connect Midlothian to other cities and states. In 1926, U.S. Hwy. 67 was commissioned, followed by U.S. Hwy. 287 in 1935. In the 1930s, however, the cotton industry dried up and Ellis County, like the rest of the country, was hit by the Great Depression. Unemployment in the county doubled to 16 percent just before World War II.

## AFTER WORLD WAR II

Midlothian's convenient access to Dallas-Fort Worth would prove an asset, as would its nearness to the highest elevation in Ellis County: the Austin Escarpment, a thick chalk ridge and potential limestone reserve. This would draw three cement plants to the city, starting in 1959, and result in its longtime nickname, "The Cement Capital of Texas."

Texas Industries, Inc. (TXI) would grow to be the largest cement business in the state. Purchased by Martin Marietta in 2015, TXI would ultimately operate five kilns. TXI also partnered with Canada's Co-Steel International Ltd. in 1975 to operate the Gerdau Midlothian Steel Mill. Gerdau acquired the mill from Chaparral Steel in 2007 and celebrates 50 years in the city this year. Ash Grove Texas, LP and Holcim (Texas), LP are the other two major cement operations in the city.

TXI opened the 1,700-acre business park, RailPort, which houses distribution centers of Target and Quik 'N





"I take what I see — that idea or feeling — and transfer it on to canvas. My stuff is either super bright or super dark. I can do very realistic or traditional style. But I like to add something that's attention getting." — artist Alex Teale, May 2014.

"Being invited to perform at The Midwest Clinic should be a source of pride for the entire community of Midlothian." — Larry Doran, director of bands, Midlothian High School, June 2015.



"The original vision for the coffee bar was that it would not only be a crossroad to the community, but would help to develop and nurture a community of visual and performing art." — David Harper, volunteer curator at the Lighthouse Gallery, July 2016.

"Football prepares you for life. It helps you become a better man, a good father to your kids and to become disciplined. You have to be responsible." — Midlothian Heritage High School football player Jack Freeman, August 2017.

"When we were thinking about places, Midlothian's Hoblitzelle Camp came to mind. It was a perfect place." — Ken Fleming, co-founder of the North Texas Irish Music Festival, September 2018.

"I didn't know what to expect, but I think I represented myself and my supporters very well. I'm proud of my performance." — Jackson Carter, Class 5A state champion wrestler, October 2019.



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Tasty Foods, Inc. Rounding out the RailPort occupancy are Luminant Power Plant, Midlothian LNG, LLC, Western Power Sports, Buckley Oil and a Google Data Center.

In the early 1980s, MidTexas International Center, Inc. developed its 600-acre auto processing and distribution center. The Auto Park serves Mazda North America, Kia Motors America and Toyota Motor Sales from its location north of downtown.

## HOW IT'S GOING

Over the past two decades, Midlothian has experienced remarkable growth in both population and economic development. The completion of the 287 Bypass project in 2011, featuring two lanes that connect to U.S. Hwy. 287/Main Street, marked a significant milestone in the city's infrastructure.

The early 2000s heralded the arrival of Brookshire's grocery and Walmart Supercenter, followed by Kroger Marketplace in 2017, in response to the demands of a rapidly expanding community.

To bring recreational opportunities to its ever-growing populace, Midlothian offers 14 parks encompassing 248 acres, with an additional 200 acres earmarked for future development, which may include enhancements to the sports complex and the construction of an aquatic center.

In 2008, Mockingbird Nature Park was inaugurated on 62 acres of land donated by Holcim. Midlothian Skate Park opened in 2014, with Community Park Phase I debuting in 2017, the Midlothian Dog Park in 2019 and Community Park Phase II in 2022. Last year, Lake Grove Park was unveiled to the public.

The city's substantial growth is also mirrored in the Midlothian Independent School District. From modest beginnings in a one-room cabin, the district now spans approximately 111 square miles, featuring two high schools, two middle schools and seven elementary schools. Bringing higher education to the city, the Navarro College-Midlothian campus was established in 2006.

In 2018, the Midlothian Historic Gymnasium Project was launched to restore the community's inaugural gymnasium, transforming it into a versatile meeting space and gym. The \$325,000 renovation was successfully completed in 2022, and it now serves as home of the city's first professional sports team, the Midlothian Marshalls, an American Basketball Association franchise.

In 2020, despite challenges posed by the pandemic, the city welcomed Methodist Midlothian Medical Center, its first hospital, as well as completed renovations for Fire Station No. 1. The year 2021 saw the introduction of a National Fitness Court, while the acclaimed TV series, *The Chosen*, started filming at Camp Hoblitzelle in 2022. In 2024, Back Porch Theatre, Inc. proudly presented its inaugural full season of community theater productions.

With progress comes growing pains, but Midlothian's leaders have endeavored to preserve the city's small-town ambience. Events such as the Veterans Tribute Dinner, Midlothian Police Department's National Night Out, MidloFest, the MLK Day Celebration and Heritage Day foster a sense of community togetherness,

complemented by movie nights, holiday gatherings and an annual street dance.

Midlothian's significant growth and development continues to be attributed to the cement industry, as well as Google's \$600 million data center breaking ground in 2019. That same year, the groundbreaking for the city's new town square took place on North 8th Street. A community grand opening was held last December, introducing residents to the two-story, 54,000-square-foot facility housing City Hall and the Midlothian Public Library. From humble beginnings, the city is poised for continued growth with hopes of maintaining the hometown essence that old-timers remember and to which newcomers are attracted. **NOW**

*Special thanks to the city of Midlothian for assistance with this story's timeline.*





"I never fit in the box of what others would consider traditionally pretty. I don't have long blond hair or wear flowy floral dresses. So, getting to represent a femininity that looks like mine has been a cool experience." — Jess Hays, plus-size model, November 2020.

"Out of the thousands of students they researched, they picked me — they must have seen something in me that I didn't see in myself at the time." — Talon Berg, U.S. Marine Corps Semper Fidelis Battles Won Academy All American program inaugural class, December 2021.

"Besides challenging myself to do my best in competitions, I most enjoy spending time and getting to know my teammates better. Making lifelong friends with people who have gymnastics in common is rare to find." — Dylan McGuire, Open Elite Male National Champion - USA Gymnastics National Power Tumbling Competition, January 2022.



"I believe that there is no dustbin for human beings, and the biggest room in life is room for improvement. The idea is to

raise ordinary Christ-centered disciples who are doing life the Jesus way." — Africa native and Pastor Charles Jonasi, February 2023.

"It's all about having fun, answering questions for those interested in learning about classic cars, and, hopefully, encouraging others in joining us as we continue to give back to the community." — Tim Rowlette, Midlothian Classic Wheels club president, March 2024.

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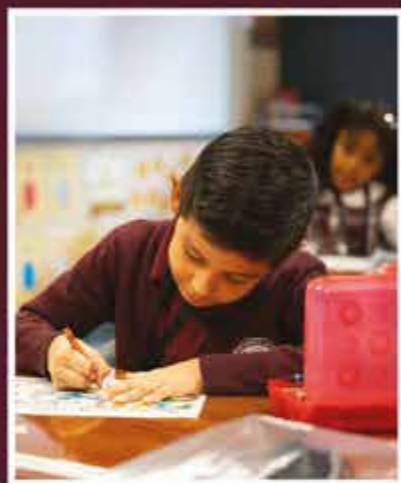
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— By Angel Morris



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Jerry's J&W Carpet and Flooring has been a staple of the Midlothian community since 1971 and a valued advertiser in *MidlothianNOW Magazine* for 20 years. "We have remained with the magazine as it broadens our reach into the community, allowing us to be the company we are today," Owner Cliff Massey credited.

For almost 50 years, Jerry Massey led the company before turning over the reins to his son, Cliff, in 2019. "When you come by the store, you never know which family member you will find here," Cliff shared.

Cliff's son, Jimmy, oversees day-to-day operations. Two other children, Karley and Brody, join the team during the summer months. "We have every intention of keeping the store within the family for the foreseeable future," Cliff explained.

Jerry's J&W Carpet and Flooring offers installation for any type of flooring, backsplashes, showers and patios. The company's installers possess numerous years of experience with wood, carpet, vinyl plank, laminate and tile. They even



provide installation services if the material is purchased from another supplier.

For customers who would prefer an all-inclusive solution, however, Jerry's J&W Carpet and Flooring has a showroom offering the chance to mix, match, touch and feel as one explores the endless opportunities to customize a project. Consultants are available on-site to help customers discover the perfect combination.

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Anyone who has visited Billy Bob's Texas, the home of Lady Bird Johnson or the Texas Motor Speedway has seen some of Jerry's J&W Carpet and Flooring's workmanship. The business installs for both commercial and residential jobs, and some of its larger projects have been hospitals, schools, hotels, churches, distribution centers, jails and new residential communities for construction companies.

The company completes jobs throughout the Metroplex and even other states. “No job is too small, too large or too far away. We consider it a privilege when any person reaches out to us, and we aim to do whatever it takes to make the customer happy,” Cliff promised.

“And remember, ‘Drive a little, save a lot,’” Cliff said. “Words cannot express our gratitude for all the companies and individuals who have brought business our way through the decades. Ellis County has abundantly blessed us.” **NOW**

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## Zoomed In: Joi C. Duncan

By Angel Morris

Joi C. Duncan is choreographing Back Porch Theatre's production of *Annie*, alongside BPT founder Genevieve Croft. "The 1982 *Annie* movie greatly influenced my childhood and future as a dancer. So many dance legends in one movie ... I was hooked!"

The Fine Arts Coordinator for Woodridge Fine Arts Talented and Gifted Academy is a self-proclaimed adventurer. She enjoys traveling with her husband, any water activity, arts and crafts, being a dog mom and, of course, dance. "Dance is an art form I'm most passionate about. To quote Phylicia Rashad, 'Before a child speaks, they sing, before a child writes, they paint. As soon as they stand, they dance. Art is the basis of human expression,'" Joi shared. "*Annie* runs through August 2 at Renovation Church at The Peak. You don't want to miss it!"



Robert Chad Dennis wins a cooler and a guided fishing trip from Harvest Hill Church.



Pat and Debbie Theisen enjoy Music in the Park.



Kissy Day from Know Midlo distributes discount cards to be used around town to the Midlothian Police Department.



Teenagers & Tiaras, Midlothian High School's first Destination Imagination team, wins first place in Improv at Global competition.





Karen Cox receives the Grassroots Lion Award, an honor reserved for a member with fewer than five years of service who has made a significant impact.



Midlothian Library Director Alexis Tackett tests the self-checkout kiosk now available to residents.



The Gabrysch family meets Tigger at Disneyland Paris.

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## MIDLOTHIAN PANTHERS



8/29	AT CEDAR HILL
9/04	ENNIS (SENIOR NIGHT)
9/12	AT KIMBALL
9/18	AT HARKER HEIGHTS
9/26	JOSHUA (HOMECOMING)
10/03	AT CLEBURNE
10/10	BURLESON CENTENNIAL (PINK OUT)
10/24	AT TYLER
10/31	RED OAK (BLUE OUT)
11/07	AT HIGHLAND PARK

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# NIGHT LIGHTS FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

## HERITAGE JAGUARS



**8/29**

**STEPHENVILLE**

**9/05**

**ARGYLE**

(FIRST RESPONDERS/MYFL/GOLD OUT)

**9/12**

**AT TEXARKANA**

**9/19**

**GREENVILLE** (HOMECOMING)

**9/26**

**AT ENNIS**

**10/09**

**TERRELL**

(MEN OF INFLUENCE/WHITE OUT/CHEER MANIA)

**10/17**

**AT CRANDALL**

**10/24**

**MESQUITE POTEET**

**10/31**

**AT CORSICANA**

**11/07**

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Meat Loaf



# CookingNOW

## NOW MAGAZINES' BEST OF ...

### THE FIRST YEAR

— By Angel Morris

Since its first edition in August 2005, *MidlothianNOW* has shared beloved recipes of local bakers and cooks. From sweet to savory, dishes of those who enjoy being in the kitchen have graced these pages. Whether they were passed between generations or made viral through social media, the recipes showcased in “CookingNOW” are shared with love. Here are some favorites from the magazine’s first year ... **NOW**

#### Meat Loaf

*Provided by Sharon McKinney for the August 2005 issue.*

- 1 egg, beaten**
- 1/4 cup dry breadcrumbs**
- 1/4 cup milk**
- 1/2 medium onion, finely chopped**
- 1/4 cup sweet green pepper, finely chopped**
- 2 Tbsp. snipped parsley**
- 1/2 tsp. dried sage, thyme, basil or oregano**
- Salt, to taste**
- Pepper, to taste**
- 3/4 cup barbecue sauce, chili sauce or ketchup (divided use)**
- 1 lb. ground beef or ground lamb**

- 1.** In a mixing bowl, combine the first 9 ingredients, plus 1/2 cup sauce or ketchup. Add the meat; mix well.
- 2.** Put the mixture into an 8x4-inch baking

dish, forming it into a loaf. Bake at 350 F until all the pink has disappeared, about 50-60 minutes.

- 3.** Brush the remaining sauce atop the loaf during the last 15-20 minutes of baking to form a glaze.

#### Mushroom Potato Burgers

*Provided by Debbie Runnels for the October 2005 issue.*

- 3 cups sliced mushrooms**
- 3/4 cup onion, finely minced**
- 3/4 cup frozen hash brown potatoes**
- 1/4 tsp. salt**
- 2 tsp. egg substitute (or 1 egg)**
- 1 Tbsp. water (if using egg substitute)**
- 2 Tbsp. ketchup**
- 1 Tbsp. low-protein baking mix (or flour)**

- 1.** Mix the first 4 ingredients in a food processor into a smooth consistency.

- 2.** Mix the egg substitute and water until frothy. Add to the contents in the food processor (or add egg). Add the ketchup and baking mix. Blend until thoroughly mixed and no chunks remain.
- 3.** Form patties on a greased cookie sheet. Cook at 350 F for 20-25 minutes. Remove from the oven; flip over. Cook another 15 minutes. Remove from the oven; cool on a cookie rack.
- 4.** Interleaf with waxed paper and freeze. When ready to grill, remove from freezer, slightly defrost and grill until hot.

#### Baltimore Crab Cakes

*Provided by Megan Nelson for the January 2006 issue.*

- 1 lb. fresh jumbo lump crabmeat**
- 1 lb. fresh backfin crabmeat**
- 8 oz. mayonnaise**
- 2 large eggs**
- 3 oz. Dijon mustard**
- 2 oz. breadcrumbs**
- 1 oz. lemon juice**
- 2 tsp. Old Bay Seasoning**
- 1 Tbsp. fresh chopped parsley**

- 1.** Thoroughly pick the crabmeat, but do not mash the meat. In a separate bowl, mix the mayonnaise, eggs, mustard and breadcrumbs. Sprinkle lemon juice on top and toss.
- 2.** Combine the meat and mayo-mix together and fold gently. Sprinkle the mix with the seasoning and parsley. Form into 3.5-oz. balls and slightly flatten.
- 3.** Bake on a lightly oiled pan at 375 F for 12-13 minutes (until light brown in color).

#### Tea Cakes

*Provided by Jana Medford for the April 2006 issue.*

*Makes about 9 dozen.*

- 4 cups flour**
- 4 tsp. baking powder**
- Pinch of salt**
- 1 cup shortening**
- 2 cups sugar**
- 2 eggs**
- 1/2 cup milk**
- 2 tsp. vanilla**

- 1.** Preheat the oven to 400 F. Sift the dry ingredients together.
- 2.** Cream the shortening and sugar. Beat the eggs just enough to break the yolks; add to the sugar mixture. Add flour and milk alternately, then add the vanilla.
- 3.** Knead slightly on a floured board; roll and cut with cookie cutters. Reduce the oven heat to 350 F. Bake on an ungreased cookie sheet for 15 minutes or until golden brown.



**Summertime Peach Ice Cream**  
*Provided by Julie Holtom for the July 2006 issue.*

- 4 cups fresh peaches, peeled and diced (about 8 small ripe peaches)
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 12-oz. can evaporated milk
- 1 3.75-oz. pkg. vanilla instant pudding mix
- 1 14-oz. can sweetened condensed milk
- 4 cups half-and-half

1. Combine the peaches and sugar; let stand for 1 hour. Process in a food processor until smooth.
2. Stir together the evaporated milk and pudding mix in a large bowl. Stir in the peach puree, condensed milk and half-and-half.
3. Pour the mixture into an ice cream maker and process. Spoon into an airtight container; freeze until firm.

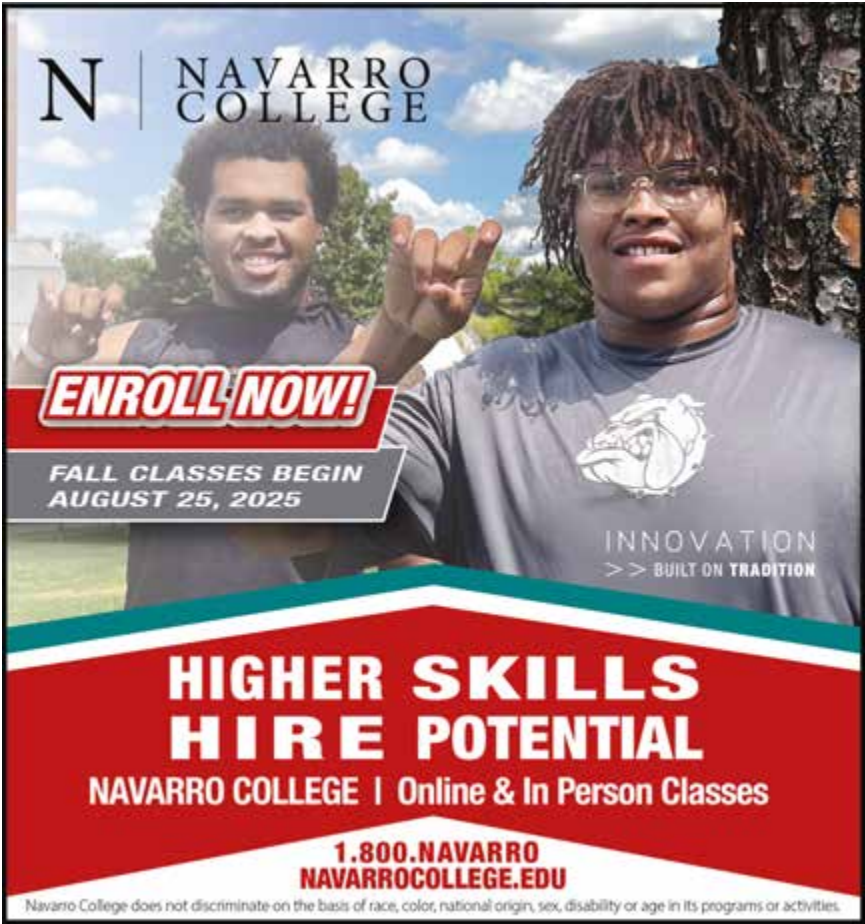
**Lemon Cookie Bars**

*Provided by Debi Petrishen for the August 2006 issue.*

- 1 box yellow pudding cake mix
- 2 eggs (divided use)
- 1/2 cup oil
- 8 oz. cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 tsp. lemon juice

1. Mix the cake mix, 1 egg and oil until crumbly. Reserve 1 cup. Press the remaining mixture into a lightly greased 8x12-inch baking dish. Bake at 350 F for 15 minutes.
2. Beat the cream cheese, sugar, juice and remaining egg until light and smooth. Spread over the baked layer; sprinkle with the reserved crumbs.
3. Bake 15 minutes more. Cool and cut into bars.

  
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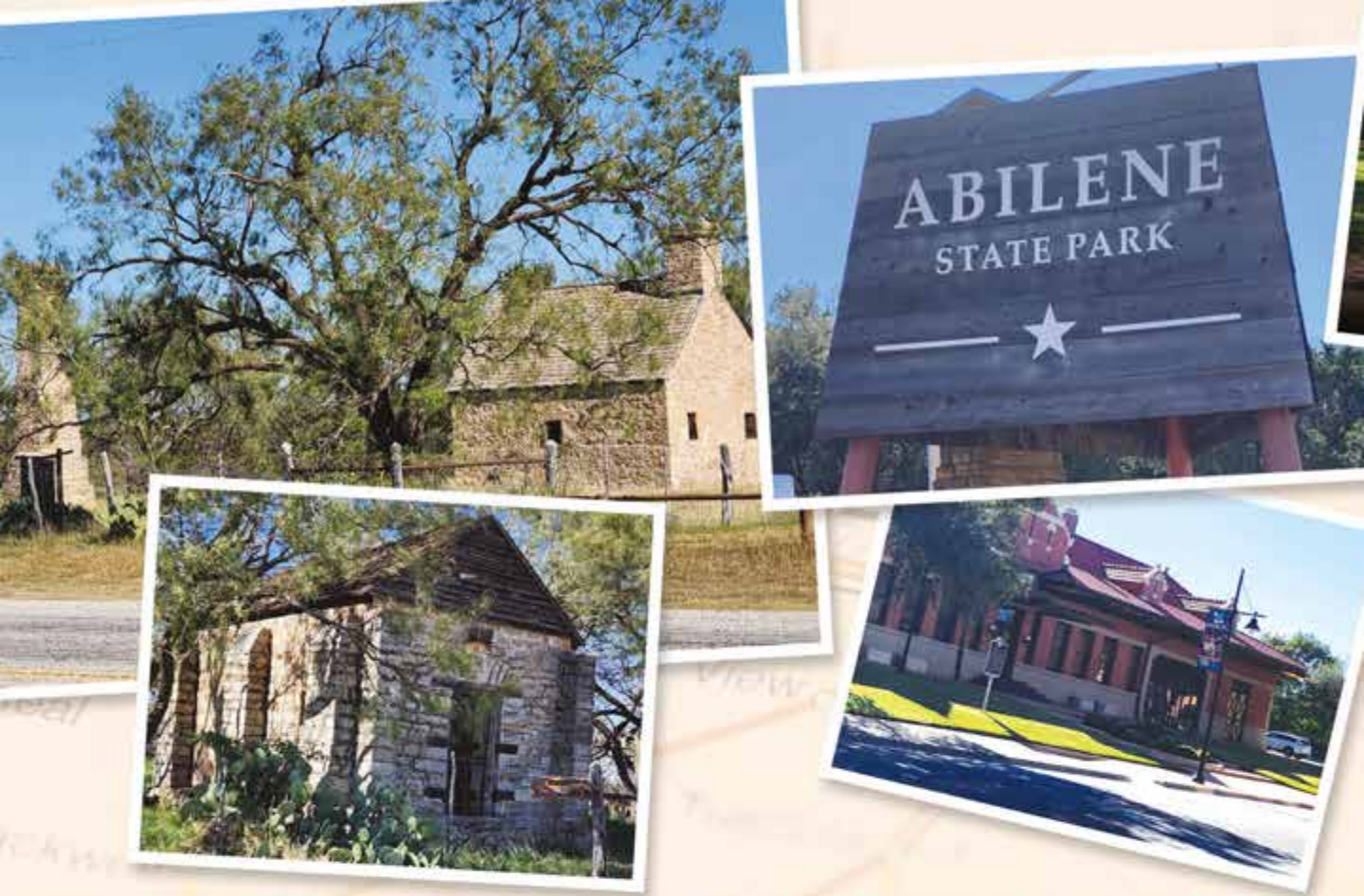
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# PAST MEETS THE PRESENT

— By Virginia Riddle

*Every whisper of the West Texas winds tells tales of long ago, from the days of the Native Americans to the coming of soldiers at nearby Fort Phantom Hill in 1851 or the coming of the Anglo settlers after the railroad was built in 1881, the year Abilene was founded. And old legends, a state park and the eerie remains of Fort Phantom Hill lead to new memories made by today's visitors.*

A walking tour through Abilene's Historic Downtown Cultural District begins at Frontier Texas!, a museum featuring the area's Wild West past. The tour continues to the T&P Depot and through streets lined with buildings representing early architecture up until about the 1950s. In all, 24 buildings are described and pictured as they were originally seen. Many of them have been restored to their

original purposes or house museums, arts and crafts stores, restaurants and shops. Architect David S. Castle designed many of the 1920s buildings including the Wooten and Windsor hotels and the Paramount Theatre. He also remodeled The Hotel Grace and designed buildings for all three of Abilene's universities.

A hub of university life brings interesting speakers and the arts to Abilene through programs of study at Abilene Christian University, Hardin-Simmons University and McMurry University. Dyess Air Force Base brings a military presence to the area. Parks, shopping, restaurants, motels, RV parks, short-term rentals and the nearby Abilene State Park provide amenity choices for all ages, tastes and budgets.

A 20-minute drive south of Abilene leads to the town of Buffalo Gap, gateway to Abilene State Park and a stop on the 2025 Smithsonian Institution's Crossroads: Change in Rural America traveling exhibit. The Buffalo Gap Historic Village takes visitors back into the 1800s-early 1900s. Quaint shops, restaurants, hiking trails and bed-and-breakfasts provide quiet respite. The famed Perini Ranch Steakhouse is a must-stop on the way to Abilene State Park.

Built by the Civilian Conservation Corps, Abilene State





A giant armadillo greets visitors outside the Perini Ranch Steakhouse.

Park is heavily wooded with elm, pecan, red oak and cottonwood trees and boasts miles of hiking, horse and biking trails; boating, kayaking and canoeing on Lake Abilene; and a historic water tower, playground and observation deck overlooking the swimming pool. Fish for catfish, largemouth bass and crappie in Buffalo Wallow Pond. On the lake, picnic under the trees. Discover the birds and other wildlife from the bird viewing blind. Pick up a game of volleyball, soccer or baseball on the courts and fields. The Cowboy Circle is perfect for nights around the campfire. Accommodations include RV sites, screened shelters, tent sites and yurts.

North of Abilene on the Clear Fork of the Brazos River, a U.S. military post was established in 1851 at Fort Phantom Hill. Life was hard due to weather and a lack of supplies on the frontier for the 285 soldiers assigned the duty of keeping travelers and settlers safe from Native American attacks. Usually all was peaceful, and Comanche, Kiowa, Lipan Apache, Wichita and Kickapoo tribal members were frequent visitors to Fort Phantom Hill. However, the kidnapping of Jane Wilson, scalping of two wagon drivers and the killing of an Indian agent changed the friendly mood. By 1854, the fort was abandoned by the Army. The buildings suffered through two fires but were still used by the Butterfield Stage, the Goodnight-Loving Cattle Trail cowboys, buffalo hunters and traders for decades. Today, visitors can walk among the stone remains and almost hear "Taps" being played in the distance accompanied by the whispering winds. **NOW**

Photos by Virginia Riddle, LLC.

Sources:

- 1. abilenevisitors.com.
2. buffaloaptx.com.
3. texasstateparks.org.
4. Fort Phantom Hill: Post on the Clear Fork of the Brazos brochure.

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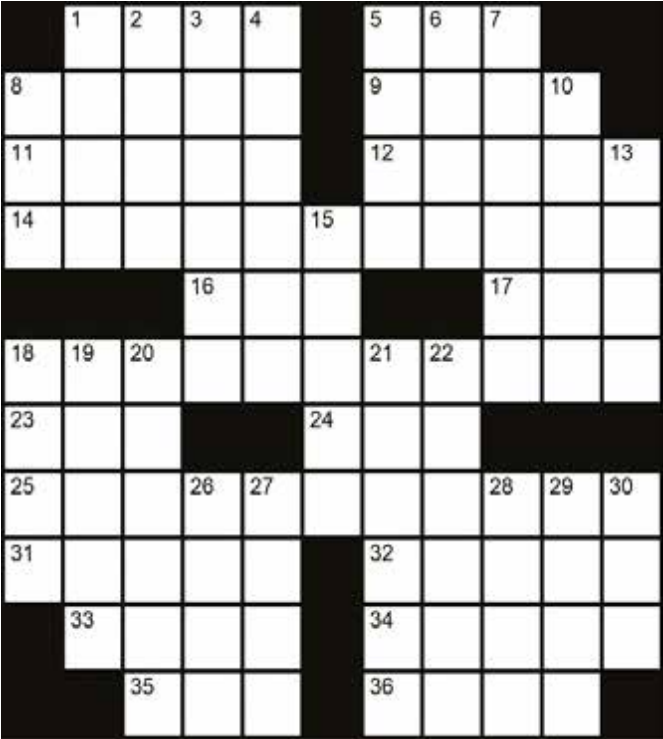
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# Crossword Puzzle



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### Across

- 1 Hit sharply
- 5 Globe
- 8 Hot sauce
- 9 Yeats or Keats
- 11 Sweet, to Pavarotti
- 12 Early anesthetic
- 14 Decorator's suggestion
- 16 Old soldier
- 17 Mineral spring
- 18 It shows the going rate
- 23 Bewitch
- 24 Succeeded
- 25 So, no third-rate mix-up
- 31 Low point
- 32 Italian design house
- 33 With a rift, it won't sound so good
- 34 Her face launched a thousand ships
- 35 Adage
- 36 Observed
- 7 Command
- 8 Government health agency
- 10 Where the first pedestrian was killed by an autonomous car
- 13 Raise
- 15 Author Harriet Beecher ---
- 18 Bridge partner's target, maybe?
- 19 Disciplinary panel beaten up
- 20 General escape
- 21 Changes shape
- 22 Diner's pick
- 26 "The Love Goddess" --- Hayworth
- 27 Pulled a gun
- 28 Robust
- 29 Yemeni port
- 30 Convert into leather

### Down

- 1 "Beat it!"
- 2 Executor's concern
- 3 Summerhouse
- 4 Layered, like a wedding cake
- 5 Oil producers' cartel
- 6 --- I R A

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Medium

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# WELCOME Back to School AUGUST

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.

8/3

## Back-to-School Kickoff:

Artisan and retail vendor booths, live entertainment, teacher appreciation prize drawings and giveaways. Hosted by Manna House, this fundraiser assists with school supply distribution.

2:00-7:00 p.m.,

Union 28, 651 Highlander Ave. Learn more at [mannahouseoutreach.org/events/](http://mannahouseoutreach.org/events/).

8/6

## Mayor's

### Back-to-School Bash:

Free school supplies and services, including: immunizations, haircuts, eye exams, information about school and community services, etc. 3:00-7:00 p.m., Frank Seale Middle School, 700 George Hopper Rd. To register, contact Manna House at (972) 775-1800.

8/6, 8/13, 8/20

## Adult Intermediate/ Advanced

### Wednesday Drills:

Hosted by the Midlothian Tennis Association for players who have completed at least two full sessions of beginner lessons. Drills help players develop their strokes and skills while providing an opportunity to meet fellow players. Payment of \$15 is made directly to the coach each week. 7:00-8:30 p.m., Midlothian Sports Complex, 700 George Hopper Rd. Join the Remind

notification to sign up each week: @intdrills to 81010.

8/7

## How Economic Development Benefits You:

Presentation and Q&A session. No reservations needed. Free. 6:00 p.m., Midlothian City Hall Community Room, 215 N. 8th St.

8/8

## Path to Publication:

Award-winning author Madeline Claire shares, answers questions and signs her debut novel. Ages 18-plus. 5:00-7:00 p.m., Midlothian Public Library, 215 N. 8th St. Registration required. [midlothian.libcal.com](http://midlothian.libcal.com).

## Weekdays

### Library Events:

Daily events for a range of ages, from Book Babies and Disney Trivia, to Dungeons and Dragons, Adult Yoga and more. Midlothian Public Library, 215 N. 8th St. Visit [midlothian.libcal.com](http://midlothian.libcal.com) for schedules.

## First Mondays

### Ellis County Art Association:

Open to all. Refreshments: 6:00 p.m.; announcements and business: 6:30 p.m.; art demonstration: 6:45 p.m., First Baptist Church, 450 Hwy. 287 Bypass, Waxahachie.

## Wednesdays

### DivorceCare:

Group sharing for those who have gone through or are going through divorce. DivorceCare for Kids ages 5-12 meets at the same time. Care for younger children available. 6:30-8:00 p.m., First Methodist Church Family Life Center, 800 S. 9th St. Call (972) 775-3993 for details.

## Third Wednesdays

### Waxahachie Women's Connection Luncheon:

Cost: \$15 and includes lunch, a special feature and a Stonecroft speaker. Reservations due each **Thursday** before the meeting. 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Waxahachie Country Club, 1920 W. Hwy. 287 Business. Contact Dee Ann Ellis at (972) 921-6221 or [deeannellis@sbcglobal.net](mailto:deeannellis@sbcglobal.net).

## Thursdays

### Midway Composite Squadron of Civil Air Patrol/ U.S. Air Force Auxiliary:

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](http://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](mailto: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.

## Second Saturdays

### Resilient Together:

Connect with others who understand the challenges of living with MS. 10:00 a.m.-noon, Harvest Hill Church (first floor, red room), 1250 Walter Stephenson Rd. RSVP to mallory.msfriends@yahoo.com.

## Second and Fourth Saturdays

### Kids Crafty Day:

Free activity for children in kindergarten-fifth grade. 1:00-2:00 p.m., Midlothian Public Library, 215 N. 8th St. Details at [Midlothian.Libcal.com](http://Midlothian.Libcal.com).

*Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your current event details to [angel.morris@nowmagazines.com](mailto:angel.morris@nowmagazines.com).*



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