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AUGUST 2025

Your DIY Garden Oasis

A water feature adds
tranquil ambience to
your yard

Also inside:

Scavenger Hunt

Crossword/Sudoku

Featured Business:

PuroClean of
Waxahachie

In the Kitchen With
Tracer Skelton

Merging Music

Alejandro Medina is
creating a new style
by mixing the old



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WaxahachieNOW Editor
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EDITOR'S NOTE

Summer snows ...

It's that time of year in Waxahachie when you pull out of your driveway and trail a blizzard of crepe myrtle blooms for 14 blocks every time you leave home. You don't dare turn on the windshield wipers, because those blooms are all caught up in the blades. They'll just smear petal juice all across the windshield and get so stuck in the wiper blades that the car wash has no hope of knocking them loose.

Those blooms get all down inside the gap between your hood and the windshield and cling to that grate in there. A few of them come flying out as you back into the street, a few more as you accelerate down the block. Every stop and start, every curve in the road or change of wind direction brings another flurry of tree fluff. It gets so bad you

start wondering if you're driving an SUV or a snowblower!

We have an official Crepe Myrtle Festival at the Fourth of July, but the fun lasts for a couple of months. It's like Mardi Gras with blooms instead of beads. It's one big party that just keeps going. At least we don't celebrate the cottonwood here.

Bloom on!

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ON THE COVER



Alejandro Medina, III makes music that bridges heritages.

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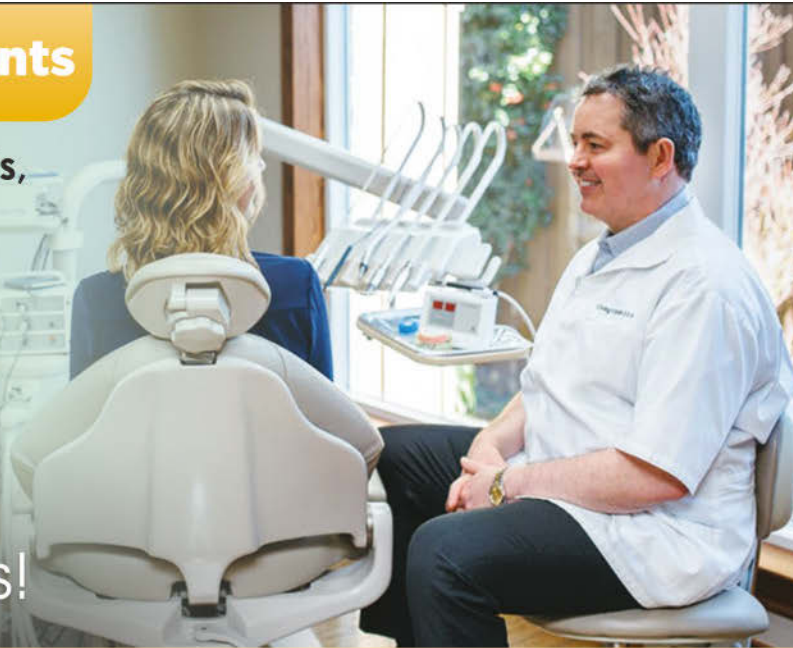
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Music is in Alejandro Medina, III's blood. He grew up in Waxahachie and lived surrounded by Mexican regional music and American country music. Both types of music beat in his blood and are rooted in his heart. "Cowboy culture and Mexican culture have so much in common," he said. "A lot of people who look like me grow up listening to banda and Brooks and Dunn. If I want to make music mixing country with regional, I've got to really get into the community not just 'ride the Hispanic vote.' My goal is to truly blend these kinds of music, not just write Spanish words to a country song."

MERGING MUSIC



— By Adam Walker

Alejandro, who goes by all the nicknames — Dro, Handro, Ale — was born and went to school here. "I graduated from Waxahachie High School in 2008, but I graduated from Navarro College one month *before* high school. My mom taught at Dunaway. She was born in California and moved to Mexico. My dad was born in Mexico and moved here when he was 17. He picked oranges and cotton before he came to Waxahachie, and he worked at Owens Corning for 40-plus years. Growing up, I never wanted to choose between being American or Mexican. And I never felt like I was 50/50. I was 100 percent both. You know what I mean? 100 percent both. There was a lot of pressure to choose. But I'm allowed to do this, and people are allowed to enjoy the music I create. I take pride in both identities."

Regional Mexican music includes styles such as *corridos*, *Norteños*, *banda* and *Tejano*. Blending these with country music seems natural to Alejandro. "Maybe it's nostalgia," he reflected. "My parents were raised in Mexico. I was raised here, where I experienced and love both cultures. This music expresses that blending. This is who I am, and I think this is true for a lot of other people. Everyone has that certain song that they put on again and again, because it fills a void. I'm shooting for that. I want to connect with people."



"My parents were raised in Mexico. I was raised here, where I experienced and love both cultures. This music expresses that blending."

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After he graduated, Alejandro moved to Boston to go to the Berklee College of Music. “I transferred to Belmont University in Nashville in 2009,” he said. From there, he dove head first into the music scene. “When I was first in Nashville, crashing on a buddy’s couch, I was going to work eight hours a day at a job I hated. We realized that we could put our effort into getting better at jobs we hated, or put that same energy into our music careers, and if we broke even, we were succeeding. He got a job for a cruise line playing for parties. Now he’s a producer and wildly successful.” Alejandro worked with a whole series of big names and up-and-coming Nashville artists, playing backup. Then he started writing for them.

“Last year, I had two singles with Leah Turner, “Otra Vez” and “Love Like Legends.” That debuted on Times Square! So, I decided to do a full



album. I had done urban Latin before I knew how to incorporate country with my root music. This fusion lets me go deeper. The album is called *Desde Nashville*, and it's been a good process. It's 15 songs, and I'm planning a tour. I'm releasing it in September for Mexican Independence Day. The album is bilingual — some of the songs are in English, some are in Spanish and some are mixed. "One of the songs, "El Potrillo," is dedicated to José Garcia who was a local legend in Nashville. He's an American dream story — an immigrant who started at the bottom and achieved his dream, despite hard times on the way up. You can do it, too. I got to sing that song at an event reuniting families. It was exciting and beautiful," he said.

Alejandro is excited about the direction he's going. "I hope people connect with my music. They reach out and say they genuinely feel a connection, that they feel like part of the journey. They share the songs as if they're *their* songs, their stories. If there's no value to people, there's no reason for them to purchase the music. In my next project, I plan to lean even heavier into the regional sound, but I also want to do an all-English project that would be more modern country with a regional feel. Food has to taste good. Your car has to work. The water company has to get the water to your house. If music doesn't do something to you, what's the point? I want to present this to the public and make memories with people." **NOW**

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Your DIY Garden Oasis

— By Bill Smith



Adding an outdoor water feature to your yard makes a beautiful landscape addition. There is just something tranquil about water that flows, and an added benefit may include the attraction of songbirds and butterflies. Some might add that relaxing near the fountain makes the area seem cooler during the heat of a summer evening.

Of course, the easiest and quickest water feature one can add is a simple cast bird bath that has standing water, which you refill with your garden hose as needed. These come in a variety of shapes, sizes and compositions including concrete, ceramic, plastic and metal. They are available at landscape supply stores, discount stores and online. The only installation required is a solid level base. However, the negative aspect of these water attractions is the stagnant water and the constant need to refill the basin, especially during the heat of the summer.

The most complex water feature for the do-it-yourselfer is one that you design yourself and create with pavers, stones, bricks and possibly mortar or concrete. There are some great videos of these projects on YouTube, and you can certainly find some great ideas there if you want the most unique feature to highlight your garden space.

The next consideration might be to purchase and install a premade water feature kit. These are also readily available at garden supply and home improvement stores and can be just about as simple or elaborate as your heart desires. The smallest varieties can be installed like the standing water bird bath. Just place it on a level base, fill the reservoir with water and plug it in to a nearby outlet. Note that a GFCI outlet is recommended. These water features generally come with a submersible water pump installed that constantly recirculates the water. Some also come with lights installed to further contribute to the ambience during evening hours.

Some larger fountain kits, such as a three-tier fountain, have large pools at the bottom that hold enough water to continually supply the pump for long periods of time. Other types do not have large, exposed pools, but require an additional installation step of a water reservoir below the ground where the pump resides. While the additional step is required, since the main water source is below the



ground, there may be less evaporation, and your guests may stare and wonder where all the water comes from!

As with all water feature installations, the foundation is very important for a level fountain and proper operation of the pump and water flow. The hidden reservoir will require the additional step of digging a hole.

To get started, lay the reservoir on the ground where the fountain will eventually be placed, and use spray paint to mark the area needed to accommodate it on the ground. Dig the hole about an inch deeper than the depth of the reservoir, so it will be completely hidden after it is installed. Use a two- or four-foot level (depending on the size of the reservoir) to make sure the ground is level at the bottom of the hole and pack the soil tightly. Set the reservoir in the hole and confirm that it is level. Fill in the hole around the reservoir with sand to keep it in place and prevent shifting later.

Run the water supply tube that will come from the reservoir into the fountain. There will be a pre-drilled hole for the tube. Check again that the fountain is level. Use plastic shims to level the fountain if needed. Run the supply tube to the submersible pump that will go into the water reservoir and make the connection to the pump. Submerge the



pump into enough water to check that it is working properly and that there aren't any leaks. Use a hose clamp if necessary. If the water is flowing properly and there are no leaks, put the pump into the reservoir and fill it with water from your garden hose.

Finally, cover the water reservoir with decorative stone to hide it under the fountain. The reservoir is designed to make refilling with your garden hose easy. Note that winterizing is an important step with any outdoor water feature. Your kit should include these instructions, also.

The only thing left to do is invite the family and friends over for an evening in the enhanced tranquility of your garden. Well done! **NOW**

Source:
1. <https://www.aquascapeinc.com/water-gardening/how-to-install-an-outdoor-fountain>.



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Zoomed In: K.Aveti

By Adam Walker

K.Aveti hosted Summer Soul Affair at Railyard Park. "This was our second year, and we're going to do it bigger and better next year. The city helped so much. Saturday morning we got up, and saw the weather forecast. I was like, 'God, please!' We had to decide by noon if we were going to cancel. It turned out to be a beautiful day! It was a little overcast with a lovely breeze — not humid at all. I'm so thankful for those things that are out of our control.

"I sing R&B and soul, both originals and covers. We had about 2,000 show up. There was lovely food, a lovely mood and lovely music." In November, she'll be traveling from Waxahachie to tour the UK.



Brandon Redwine and Clayton Mills play cornhole as part of Clayton's Independence Day shindig.



EMT Cristian Rodriguez from Station 3 tries to protect his hair from the rain as he welcomes people to the Waxahachie FD's booth at the Crape Myrtle Festival.



Dunhill Homes at Tuscan Estates in Waxahachie celebrates their ribbon cutting.



Crowds come for the food and fireworks at the Crape Myrtle Festival.



Kyra Harding gets soggy helping the doggies for the Ellis County Pet Coalition's float in the parade.



Friends Reed Higgins and Susan K. Stone greet visitors on the Gingerbread Tour of Homes.



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— By Adam Walker

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help our fellow neighbors in their time of need.”

Water loss is a major category of the restoration work PuroClean performs. “A category 1 water loss is when a sink breaks or your ice maker or a water supply pipe bursts. It has no contaminants. A category 2 loss is gray water. It has some contaminants. That might result from a dishwasher or washing machine malfunctioning. This water contains dirt, detergent and other contaminants. A category 3 water loss has significant contaminants. It can have pesticides, fecal matter and other harmful substances. This is the dirtiest kind of loss like a sewer backup or from rising rain water. You never know what a water job is going to be — anything from the kid flooded the bathtub to the hot water heater bursting to a storm. We specialize in drying in place as much as is safely possible. We even have special drying mats to preserve hardwood floors and the ability to inject warm dry air to save cabinets.”

Water damage can result in mold growth. “Insurance doesn’t always cover mold. So mold removal is often at the property owner’s expense. An ounce of prevention is

worth a pound of cure. It's important to dry the affected area out as soon as possible to stop mold from growing in the first place. In Texas, the law requires a third-party assessment of any mold over 25 square feet to determine what needs to be done. And then they come back after the restoration to test if it was properly remediated."

With both floods and fires, PuroClean cleans and stores your possessions while the house or other property is being restored. "Fires require extensive cleaning, and include significant safety concerns due to partially combusted carcinogens such as plastics, adhesives and oils. Even a small fire, with no structural damage, can still require significant smoke and odor remediation. Wood fibers absorb noxious odors, so sometimes, we have to warm them back up to get the fibers to release the odors.

"We specialize in drying in place as much as is safely possible. We even have special drying mats to preserve hardwood floors and the ability to inject warm dry air to save cabinets."

Biohazard jobs are another category PuroClean deals with. This category includes things like hoarder houses, crime scenes and unattended deaths. "The important thing to remember with these jobs is compassionate care and watching out for the health and safety of anyone who will be occupying the building afterward. Blood-borne pathogens are a major concern. Many pathogens die very quickly outside the body, but others don't. You have to take extensive precautions to ensure no accidental contamination occurs. A thorough and meticulous cleaning is paramount for everyone's safety."

PuroClean, The Paramedics of Property Damage, is available 24/7 for all your restoration needs. If you need a service like this, they await your call. **NOW**

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Liberty Bells were found on pages 21, 27, 30, 31 & 34.

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Carbonara

CookingNOW

IN THE KITCHEN WITH TRACER SKELTON

— By Adam Walker



Tracer Skelton is a chiropractor at The Joint in Waxahachie. He's been cooking since he was 17. "One of my early cooking memories is helping my dad build a smoker. It influenced me greatly because we built every piece of equipment from scratch, in the metal shop back home. It reminded me of working on cars and getting that time with him. It was fun, and then we got to try all the fun techniques for smoking meats. Dad did competition barbecue, which gave me the love for smoking meats. Unfortunately, I've lived in an apartment for a long time, so I resorted to figuring out other dishes that are apartment friendly." He cooks a lot of Italian recipes that he finds on TikTok, Instagram and Pinterest. **NOW**

Carbonara

1 egg, plus 3 yolks
Parmigiano Reggiano, to taste
Black pepper, to taste
Spaghetti, to taste
Pasta water
Guanciale (or bacon)

1. In a bowl, mix the eggs, Parmigiano and black pepper; set aside.
2. Boil the pasta until done, reserving some of the pasta water.
3. Fry the guanciale; save the grease.
4. Return some of the grease to the skillet; add the pasta along with a little of the water.

Add the egg mixture, little by little. Don't let it set, or the egg will cook. Mix aggressively until it comes together. Add the guanciale and lots more cheese.

Focaccia

4 cups (512 g.) all-purpose flour or bread flour
2 tsp. (10 g.) kosher salt
2 tsp. (8 g.) instant yeast
2 cups (455 g.) lukewarm water, (1/2 cup boiling water with 1 1/2 cups cold water)
4 Tbsp. olive oil (divided use)
Butter for greasing (optional)

Flaky sea salt

1-2 tsp. whole rosemary leaves (optional)

1. In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, salt and instant yeast. Add the water. Using a rubber spatula, mix until the liquid is absorbed and the ingredients form a sticky dough ball. Rub the surface of the dough with olive oil. Cover the bowl with a damp tea towel or plastic wrap; place in the refrigerator immediately for at least 12 hours or for as long as three days.
2. Line two 8- or 9-inch pie plates with parchment paper or grease with butter. Pour a Tbsp. of oil into the center of each pan. Using two forks, deflate the dough by releasing it from the sides of the bowl and pulling it toward the center. Rotate the bowl in quarter turns as you deflate, turning the mass into a rough ball. Use the forks to split the dough into two equal pieces. Place one piece into each of the prepared pans. Roll the dough balls in the oil to coat it all over, forming a rough ball. Let them rest, uncovered, for 3-4 hours depending on the temperature of your kitchen.
3. Set a rack in the middle of the oven and preheat it to 425 F. Sprinkle rosemary over the dough. Pour a Tbsp. of oil over each round of dough. Rub your hands lightly in the oil to coat, then, using all of your fingers, press straight down to create deep dimples. Gently stretch the dough as you dimple to allow it to fill the pan. Sprinkle with salt.
4. Bake 25-30 minutes, until the underside is golden and crisp. Transfer the focaccia to a cooling rack for 10 minutes before cutting and serving.



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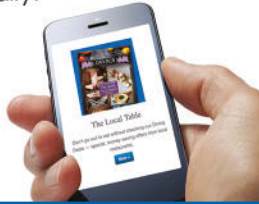
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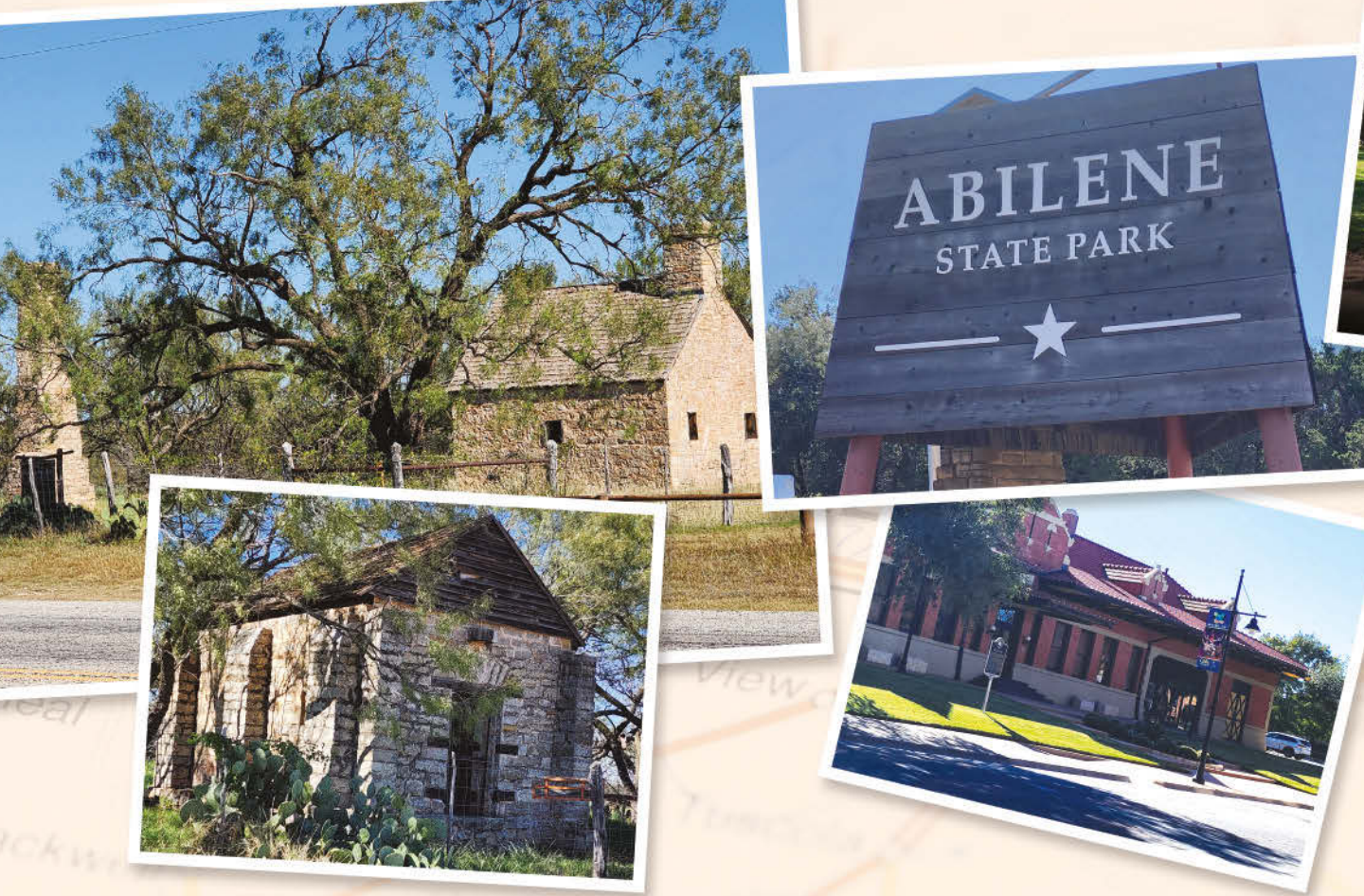
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PAST MEETS THE PRESENT

— 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. buffalogaptx.com.
3. texasstateparks.org.
4. Fort Phantom Hill: Post on the Clear Fork of the Brazos brochure.

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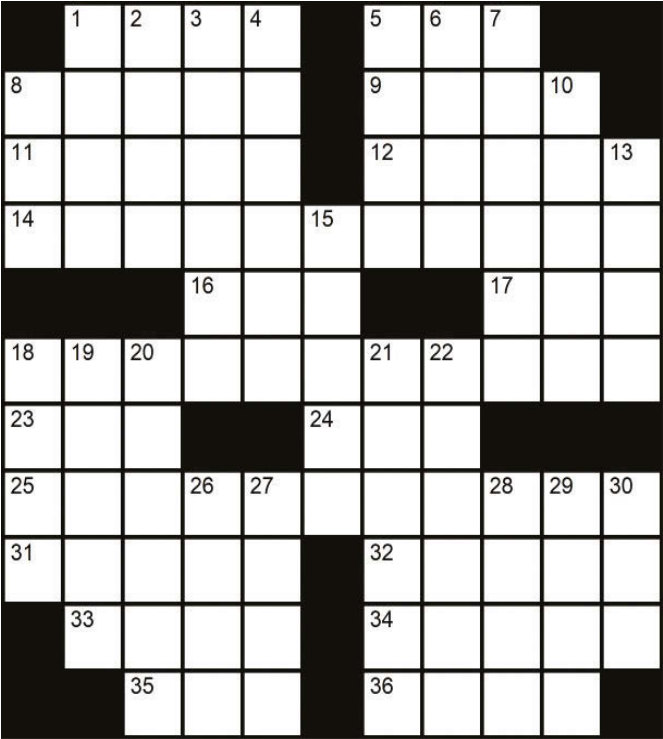
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Across

- 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

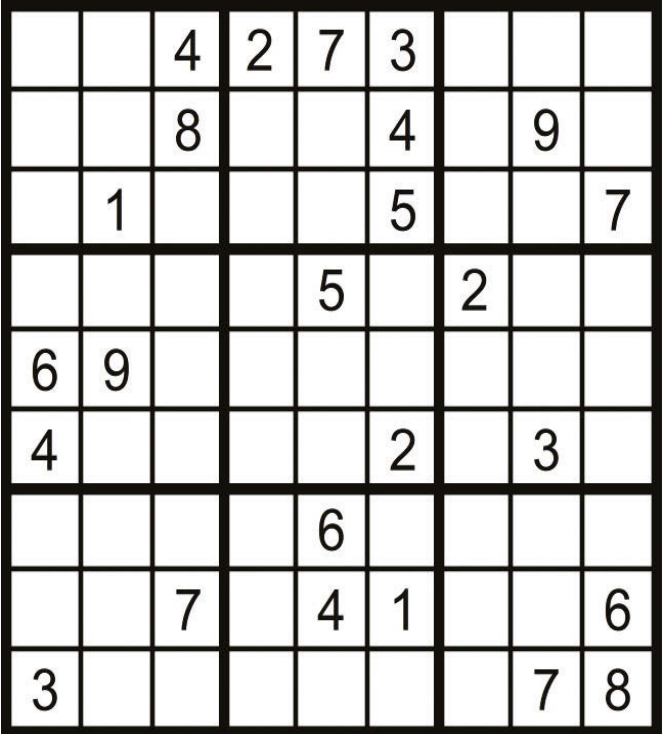
Down

- 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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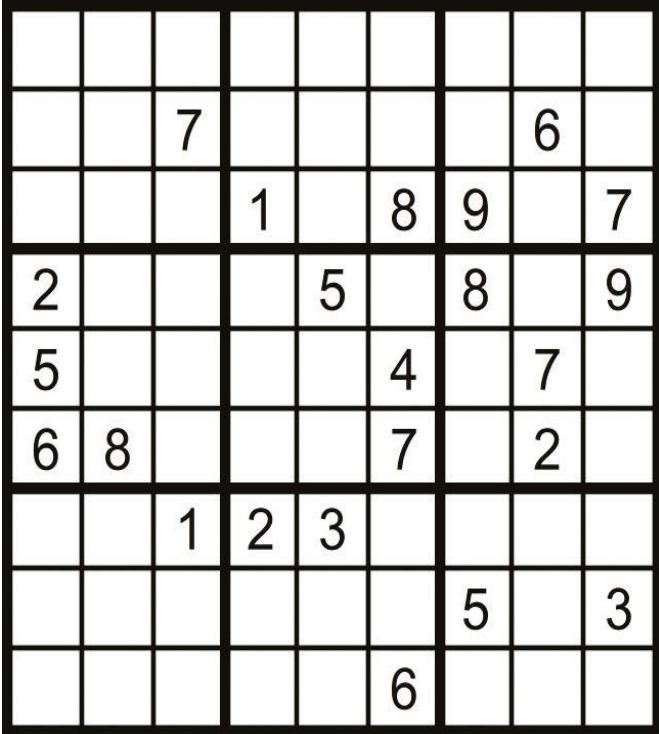
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8/2

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Summer Reading Celebration:

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Teen Lock-in:

4:00-8:00 p.m., Teen Lair, Sims Library, 515 W. Main St.

8/6

Coffee & Connect:

Hosted by the Waxahachie Young Professionals for individuals under 40. Featured speaker: Ricardo Miller. 8:30-9:30 a.m., 412 S. Rogers St.

8/9

Waxahachie Fun Run Car Show:

Benefits Texas Baptist Home for Children. 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Getzendaner Park, 400 S. Grand Ave.

Ellis Co. Art Talk:

An art meeting to share art and ideas supported by the Ellis County Art Association. Bring your sketchbooks! 3:00-4:30 p.m., Event Space, Sims Library, 515 W. Main St.

8/15

Legal Aid Legal Clinic:

LANWT has many offices throughout North and Northwest Texas that host legal clinics and assistance projects for low-income Texans. Civil legal assistance, no criminal cases, please. 10:00 a.m.-noon, Meeting Room, Sims Library, 515 W. Main St.

8/22

Waxahachie's 175-year Birthday Bash:

Our city is turning 175 years old this year! Join in the fun at the community birthday celebration, including a drone show, community art display, DJ, food trucks, kids' activities, giveaways and more. 7:30 p.m., Railyard Park, 455 S. College St.

8/23

Texas Truck

Invasion 2025:

Various ticket prices. Gates

open: 8:00 a.m.; spectator gates open: 10:00 a.m.; racing starts: 11:00 a.m., Texas Motorplex, 7500 W. Hwy. 287. Presale Tickets at tickets.thefloat.com.

Ice Ice Coffee:

Join us for the ultimate iced coffee crawl! Chill like a latte villain with 10-plus stops serving up iced coffee samples and refreshing sips. Tickets: \$10. 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Downtown Waxahachie.

8/30-8/31

Ennis Blues on Main:

Come join us for an evening filled with smooth tunes and soulful blues. This two-day event will be hosted by Unity in the Community of Ennis and the Ennis Main Street. Come enjoy live music, games, raffles and a host of other entertainers. Be prepared for mouthwatering food and merchandise vendors and a family-friendly kid's zone. Saturday events include a car show and health fair. Both days will feature DJ and live artists. Free admission. Downtown Ennis. For full schedule, see www.visitennistexas.com/bluesonmain.

Third Sundays

Beards, Books and Banter:

Men's book club. Free. 3:00 p.m., Paper Leaves Bookstore, 510 Water St.

Last Sundays

Literary Ladies:

Discuss books and make friends. Free. 3:00 p.m., Paper Leaves Bookstore, 510 Water St.

First Mondays

Senior Dance:

Everyone 50-plus is welcome for line dancing and square dancing. 5:45-9:00 p.m., Optimist Club, 219 N. Patrick St.

Fridays

Adventures in Yarnia:

Crochet and knitting club. 4:30-6:00 p.m., Sims Library, 515 W. Main St.

Bingo:

Fill your card. 5:00-10:00 p.m., VFW Post 3894, 1405 N. I-35E.

Saturdays

Saturday Morning Fitness:

Different workouts every week for all ages. Free. 8:00 a.m., Railyard Park, 455 College St.

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

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- Cheryl L. Wright, Google Review

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