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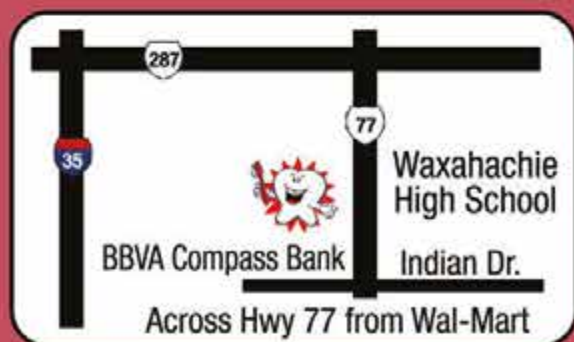
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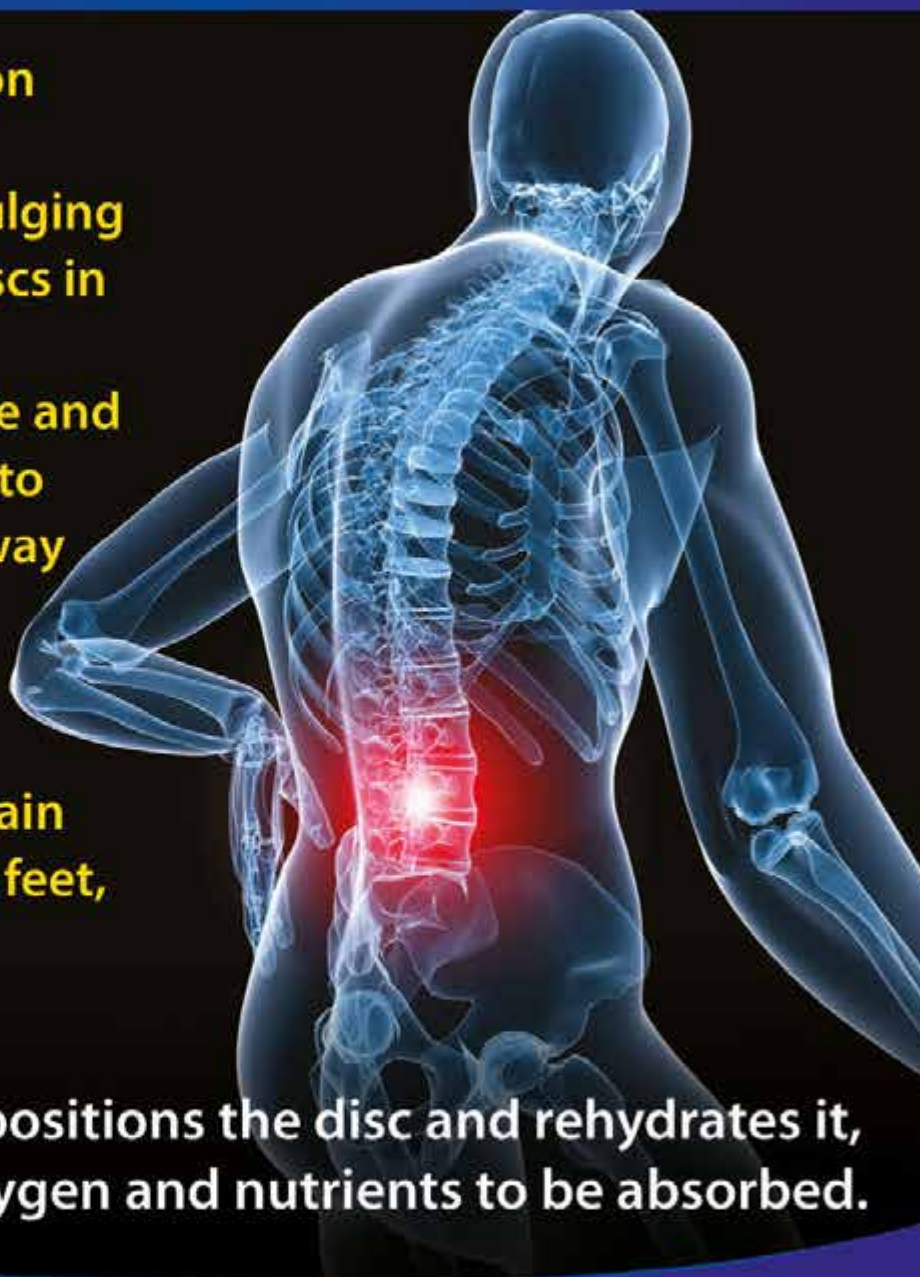


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ON THE COVER



Christine Smith encourages STEM exploration.

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# EDITOR'S NOTE

*September is confusing ...*

You never know what it's going to be like. Some years, September is the tail end of summer. It can roast you alive almost as well as August can. Other years, it's already autumn, with cooler temps and maybe some drought-busting thunderstorms. Still other years, September can't make up its mind, interleaving days of summer heat with hints of fall, at random. As I said, confusing.

Life is like September. Sometimes, life is just plain hard, for long stretches. There are periods you look back on and say, "I'm glad I don't have to go through *that* again." Other times, you feel like bursting into a song from *Oklahoma!* "I've got a beautiful feelin'! / Everything's goin' my way!" It never seems like there are enough of those stretches, or that they last long enough.

More often, though, life hands you a mixed bag. Joy and sorrow. Tragedy and triumph. Hope and despair. The perfect and the poignant mingle and mix. Sometimes, you don't know whether to laugh or cry, because both are right. As my great-great-grandmother used to say, "There's a many a time I laughed to keep from crying."

You lose your keys, and a butterfly lands on your finger. Your water heater bursts, and a check arrives in the mail. It's nothing unusual to experience the death of a dear friend and the birth of a new child in the same day. Life is full of the good and the bad in varying proportions, but at the end, I believe the good outweighs the bad, and there's a lot of beauty in a September.

*Embrace the Septembers!*



*Adam*

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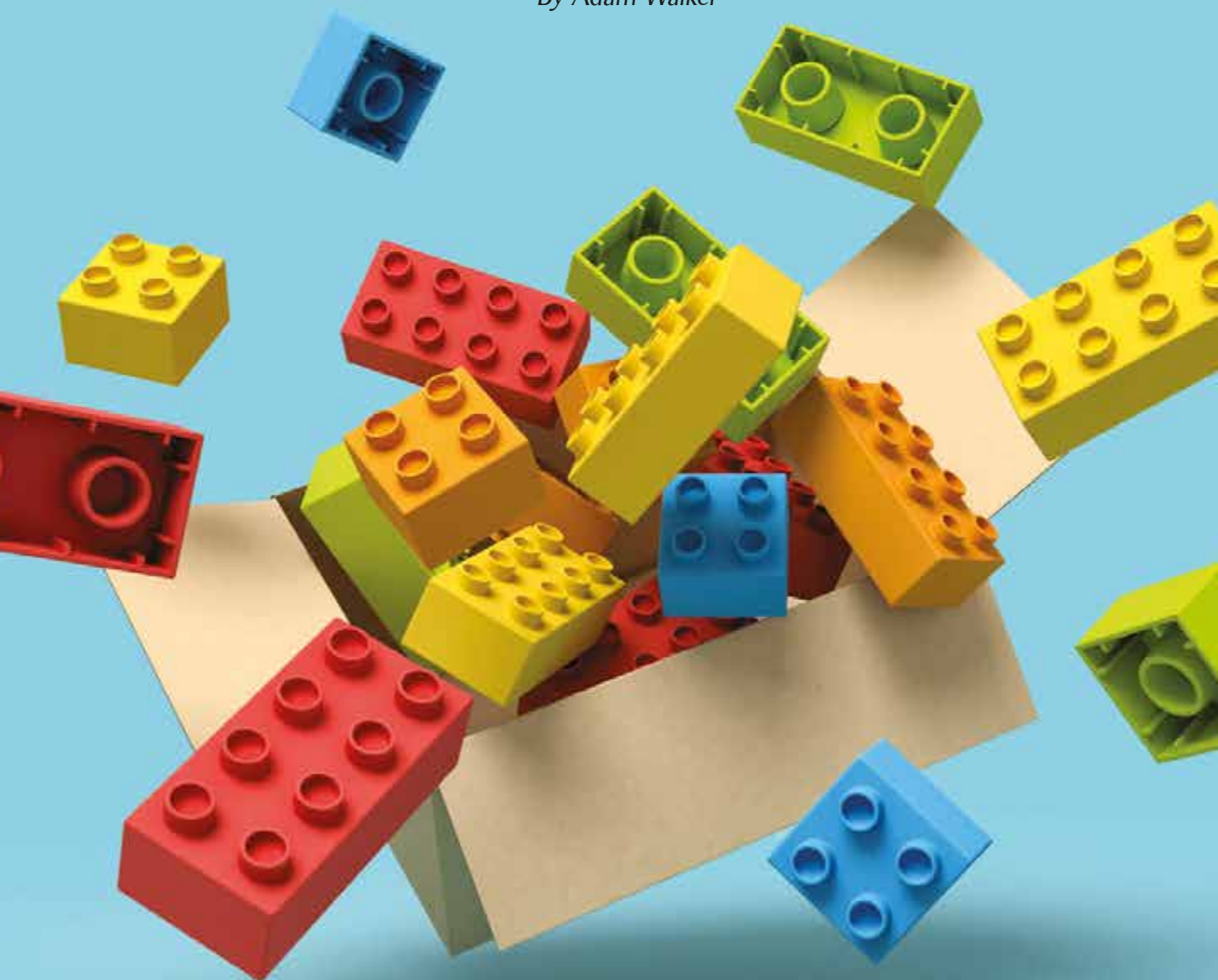
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# BUILDING FUTURES

— By Adam Walker







Christine Smith wants to see kids succeed academically, especially at STEM, so she got into robotics. She spent 32 years as a civilian administrative assistant working for the U.S. Coast Guard. When her church in Missouri picked her to do something about the scholastic motivation of kids in her community, Christine found herself investigating the world of LEGO robotics. “When I ordered my first LEGO set and saw all these LEGOs, I thought, *There’s no way I can do this!*”

That may have been Christine’s first thought, but her friend, Dr. Valery Bennet, national director of robotics for the Church of God in Christ, convinced her otherwise. Soon she found herself leading successful teams of budding engineers and dreamers at several local schools. So, when she moved to Waxahachie, she continued that work as CEO of Save Our Seed Ministries, bringing her passion for seeing kids succeed at designing and building LEGO robots here. “I started a team at Marvin Elementary in 2021, and then we started at the Sims Library last year,” Christine revealed.

Jennifer Jacobs, mother of Kellen, one of the budding LEGO masterminds, enjoys having this outlet for her son. “We found out about it through the library when it started. It’s free, and he loves building things.”

“It’s part of my passion,” Kellen, who is also a theater kid, revealed. “I want to be an architect, and I like making new friends.”

“When I approached the library about starting a team here, we held an open house, and so many homeschool parents showed up. Most of this group are homeschoolers, but not all of them. These guys are all fourth- or fifth-graders, but they can compete up to eighth grade. They call themselves the Dream Team. The organization gives you instructions for how to build with the LEGOs. I started with my grandkids, and they loved it. So I learned how to program the robots with Scratch. The first thing they have to do is build the ‘mission’ that their robots will have to perform. The LEGOs come in prepackaged bags that they have to assemble. This year, they get extra points for making their missions look artistic.”





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Young boys have a particular aesthetic when it comes to art. So it should come as no surprise that a few rocket ships and a decorated toilet emerged from the piles of LEGO bricks, before constructs closer to the goal missions took form.

"The missions are 15 LEGO contraptions, with names like 3-D Cinema, Theater Scene Change and Augmented Reality Statue, which are scattered around a map laid out on a large table. Each of the missions must be manipulated in very specific ways by the autonomous robots the team builds. "Their robots have to be programmed to perform specific tasks to gain points. They only have two-and-a-half minutes to perform all 15 missions. When you first hear that, you think it must be impossible, but some of the teams finish with time left over at the end. They start building their robots in July, when the kits arrive. They may have to redesign them several times to have a robot capable of doing all the missions. They have color sensors to help them navigate the map and stay inside the lines. They have gyro sensors to stay upright. There are motors to move the robots and power the attachments to complete the missions. The students have to program the robots to do all of this. If something doesn't work, they have to revamp. They try to build the robots so that one attachment can complete several missions before coming home to switch out attachments."

The Dream Team starts practicing their missions in August, so they have plenty of time for the trial-and-error phase before they go to the







qualifying event in December, which is followed by the first competition in January. "Last year was these kids' first time competing. None of them knew each other before they started this," explained Coach JC, one of the two parent-mentors who help with the class. "Now it's like they knew each other all their lives." JC Johnson, a web developer, is father to one of the robotics engineers.

Caleb Halligan, the other parent-mentor, is father to two more. He's an aircraft mechanic at Southwest Airlines. "Southwest Airlines Tech Ops, the section I work for, agreed to sponsor the Dream Team, so they're helping this dream come true for these guys," Caleb said.

Christine has been doing this for years now, "This year, I'm focusing on letting my assistants get more hands-on experience with leading the class. They already know the engineering. I love working with kids and teaching them how to program, but I'm really glad these guys are getting involved and keeping it going."

The job of Christine and the mentors is to prepare these robot enthusiasts as well as they can, because once they arrive at the competition, the kids are on their own. The coaches and mentors can encourage and cheer them on, but they can't offer any advice or even touch the table. "Last year they advanced to North Texas Regional Finals, in the FIRST LEGO League Challenge, during their rookie year as a team," Christine beamed. "They truly surprised me! All but one of them came back, so we're hoping to go even further. Our goal is to educate, enjoy and have fun." **NOW**

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# BRIGHTEN YOUR EVENINGS

— By Bill Smith

*On the patio, around the pool, enjoying a barbecue or just watching the kids play, Texas days are extended further into the evening with the addition of any of the many outdoor lighting options. There are a lot of choices to consider, from 120-volt, hardwired flood lights, to low voltage wired systems and finally, solar powered lights.*

For years, we have used wired flood lights, mounted to the corner eaves of our homes to provide light just for walking through our yards, and also for security. A well-illuminated yard may deter would-be burglars, as well as discourage destructive nocturnal pests. These lights are generally 120-volt systems and may include both sensors to only come on after natural light fades and motion sensors. On some models, the motion sensor will turn the light on from complete darkness, but often today, the lights will have a low-power mode, and the lights will come on to their

fullness when a motion sensor is activated. These lights may also be set with timers. While 120-volt systems have been the norm for many years, the advent of LED lights and small solar panels may be a more cost-effective option. Small solar panels may be attached to the light with a small wire, enabling the light to be under the eave and the solar panel on the roof.

Path lighting is an option for a safe way to navigate around the yard with a minimal amount of soft to moderately bright safety and landscape light. The low-voltage systems require a wired installation with a transformer to change your 120-volt house current to a 12- to 15-volt system. About the only drawback to this system is the wiring. Wiring needs to be buried between the lights — and, of course, consideration has to be given to avoid damaging the wires when working flower beds or doing other yard work. The solar option comes into play again with path lights. The investment into quality solar-powered path lights has become very economically attractive, and the lights are available for purchase either individually or in sets. Typical installation may only require driving a metal or plastic stake into the ground and attaching the light to the stake. The solar panels are built



into the top of the individual lights and power rechargeable batteries. While there are some path lights that include motion sensors, most only include the optical sensor that turns them on at dusk and off at dawn.

A popular option for patio lighting is string lights. These are typically low-voltage lights that emit a warm color that will add to the ambience of outdoor meals around the grill or firepit. The lights may be strung just about anywhere and may hang permanently from the eaves of the home around the patio, or loosely over the tables and chairs from the corner posts of an outdoor pavilion or gazebo. Again, if you are not interested in a permanently wired system, the portable, solar-powered option appeals to many and allows the string lights to be placed in different areas as your outdoor events may require. These lights are often seen illuminating personal campsites for both RV and tent campers.

Deck lights are small, often recessed lights that are installed around the perimeter of the deck surface, as well as between the individual steps of stairs and along the side railing. Deck lights provide safety against trip and fall hazards, as well as providing accent light for garden plants that surround the deck. A low-voltage system is usually a good option, and the lights are typically wired together rather than operating from a single powered source, whether it be solar or a transformer from the 120-volt system.

While all of the lights discussed up to this point have been of the flood-light variety, spotlights may also play an important role in outdoor lighting for accenting pool and garden areas. These lights are also known as “up-lighting” and shine narrower beams to highlight plants, statuary, garden ornaments and water features. These lights may typically be chosen and installed when a major landscape project is being constructed, such as a pool or new patio. However, LED lights that stand alone and may be solar powered are becoming more popular and are economical, widely available and easy for the do-it-yourself homeowner. **NOW**

Sources:

1. [www.bobvila.com](http://www.bobvila.com).
2. [www.familyhandyman.com](http://www.familyhandyman.com).



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# Cultural Con

*The contrast between the Amish countryside surrounding the small borough of Mifflintown, Pennsylvania, and an hour drive southeast to Hershey is striking, but you would not want to miss either stop on a visit to this state that was one of the original 13 colonies. Pennsylvania has a lot to offer, and while many might seek the colonial sites, a tour would not be complete without finding out why it is also known as The Chocolate State.*

About 24 percent of the United States Amish population resides in Pennsylvania. Mifflintown, a small community with fewer than 1,000 residents, borders the meandering Juniata River. While the area was originally settled in the 1770s, the village was not incorporated as a borough until 1933.

One of the more striking features of Mifflintown and other small communities in the area is the proximity of the homes and many retail shops to the narrow streets and roads. It seems as if one could step directly from their front stoop into the street. It is generally accepted that since the homes were built at a time when walking or horse-drawn carriage were the primary modes of transportation, there wasn't as much danger stepping out onto the road as there is today. Deliveries

of coal might have been easier to make, and since these have long been agrarian economies, having a front yard was not as important as the farm property behind the homestead.

Horse-drawn carriages abound in the Amish country because the families eschew many modern conveniences that most take for granted, such as engines powered by gasoline or electricity. Expect to slow your own vehicle down to a crawl as you get behind an Amish buggy. Your delay will not be prolonged because the locals will soon politely pull along the side of the road and let you pass.

Handmade Amish furniture, quilts, toys, soaps, baked goods, leatherwork and other items are available throughout the area at local stores and markets. A 20-mile drive from Mifflintown to Belleville on most Wednesdays will place you at a large market with just about anything Amish your heart desires. Peight's Country Store is open six days a week and is filled with wonderful treasures and delicious food.

When you are ready to move back into the current century, don't miss the chance to visit Hershey. Part of the drive from Mifflintown to Hershey is adjacent to the Susquehanna River. If you look closely, you will see a small copy of the Statue of Liberty on a pedestal in the middle of the river. The people of Dauphin Township placed the current sturdier version of the statue there in 1997, after the one built as a prank several years earlier was destroyed by the wind.

Hershey is all things chocolate and is called *Hershey The Sweetest Place on Earth*® for good reason. The streetlamps are shaped like **HERSHEY'S KISSES**, and the history includes Milton S. Hershey building his famous chocolate company







— By Bill Smith

# trast

there in 1905. Attractions include Hersheypark, Hersheypark Arena and The Hotel Hershey ... you get the idea. If it says *Hershey*, it's probably a place you want to visit.

At Hershey's Chocolate World, you will find much of the history and creativity that brings delicious chocolate products to your store, as well as fun shows and a tour that takes you from cocoa bean to wrapped candy bar. Be sure to slow down for the sample candy bar at the end of the ride.

Another "don't miss" is the opportunity to create your own candy bar. You choose the chocolate, fillings and toppings. The personalized bar moves through the automated assembly line and is presented to you to take home in a custom tin box. Your sweet tooth will thank you! **NOW**

Sources:

1. [www.history.com](http://www.history.com).
2. [www.atlasobscura.com/places/mini-statue-of-liberty-harrisburg](http://www.atlasobscura.com/places/mini-statue-of-liberty-harrisburg).
3. [www.hersheypa.com](http://www.hersheypa.com).
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Landyn Saladino found Waldo and dressed up to claim a prize at Railyard Park.

**Zoomed In:** By Adam Walker  
**Piper and Zane Upchurch**

Piper Upchurch and her brother, Zane, stopped by the WISD Back to School Bash, with their mother. “I’m going to be in fifth grade at Simpson,” Piper reported. “I’m looking forward to making new friends. I really like science class, but I don’t like math.”

Zane is going into seventh grade at Finley. “I want to have fun playing sports. I like all sports. I’m definitely playing football. Probably baseball — maybe others. I like math best, but I don’t like reading class.”

Despite his statement, brother and sister had both just finished raiding the WISD Bookmobile for free books. Zane was clutching a 3-in-1 volume of Percy Jackson novels he seemed anxious to dig into. In fact, he had more books than his younger sister.



Paul Elmore relaxes with Pearl at the Farmers Market.

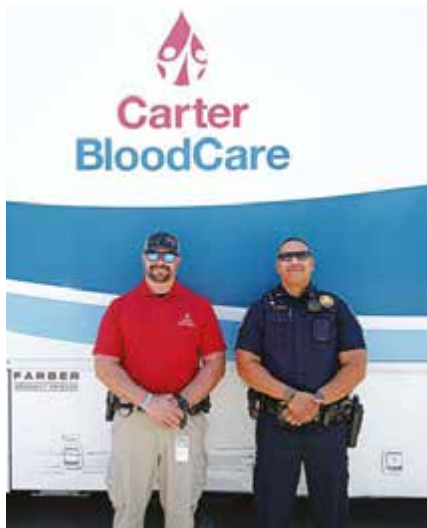


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Ramona Norman and Sarah Lucero meet for coffee after work.



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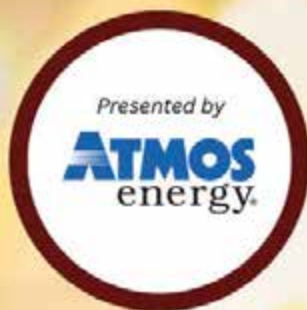
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— By Adam Walker

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Dr. Andrew Word of Word Dermatology knows how to take care of the skin you're in. "We see patients of all ages, from babies to people over 100 years old," he said. "All ages have their particular skin issues. With babies, it's mostly rashes. For teens, it's acne. Older people see more skin cancer. We're here for all the wonderful folks of Ellis County."

Dr. Word and his team diagnose and treat conditions affecting your skin, hair and nails — everything from cosmetic issues and minor inconveniences to major, life-threatening conditions, like cancer. "When you come in, we assess your skin concern through clinical observation. If you need a biopsy, we do that in-office and send the tissue out to a pathologist. We do some cosmetic dermatology, like chemical peels to give your skin that little glow and BOTOX to deal with fine lines and wrinkles — smile lines I call them. But most of our practice is medical and surgical dermatology. We can handle all your skin care needs."

Dermatology is a bigger field than you might realize. "We treat problems with your nails, like nail fungus.




Dermatologists also treat conditions like alopecia, which is any condition causing hair loss. For a while, we were seeing a lot of patients with COVID-related hair loss, but that's back down to normal levels now. Your general health can have a big effect on your skin health."

Different conditions require different approaches. "We use what I call the ladder of therapy in treating conditions like acne," Dr. Word said. "Acne can vary from mild to severe, and there are a number of treatment options from topical medications to oral antibiotics, depending on your degree of acne and how stubborn it is. We treat eczema, psoriasis and other rashes starting with topical treatments, then pills and biologics. Many patients are familiar with the names of some of these biologics from commercials, names like SKYRIZI and STELARA. A dermatologist has a wealth of specialized knowledge about these drugs."

Dr. Word is accustomed to helping patients with a wide variety of skin conditions. "Vitiligo is a condition where the immune system attacks the pigment cells in the skin. We treat it by trying to calm the immune response to try to get the pigment to come back. We see a lot of patients with warts. They're very common with kids. Wisdom spots are common as you age, as are skin tags and moles. I see a lot of moles and red spots every day. But not all moles are created equal. There are different ways to treat different kinds of moles."

Skin cancer also comes in different varieties. "There are three main types of skin cancer — basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma and melanoma. We treat them differently depending on what type of cancer you have and how severe it is. Most treatments are in-office surgical procedures."

Dr. Word completed his medical degree, internship and residency at UT Southwestern in Dallas. He's been practicing in Ellis County since 2016. "I'm very proud of our two locations. My two PAs, Amanda Krawietz and Michelle Shelton, rotate between locations. It's a challenge to stay on top of all the best treatments, but that's what our patients expect. Let us know any time you need us!" **NOW**




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# CookingNOW In the Kitchen With BETH AUSBROOKS

— By Adam Walker

Cooking means togetherness to Beth Ausbrooks. “I have memories of my grandmothers, mother and aunts cooking for our families, especially at holidays. I have some recipes that are so old the paper they were written on has disintegrated. My family migrated to East Texas from Georgia and South Carolina in the late 1800s, so we have those Southern roots. My sisters and I had our own *My First Cookbook* that we sent off for by saving cut-out logos from Imperial Pure Cane Sugar. My cousins and I often visited my paternal grandmother. She let us have free rein in her kitchen. We made a *Jell-O Cake* every day, walking to the store each day to buy eggs, a cake mix and a different flavor of *Jell-O*!” **NOW**

## Old-fashioned Pineapple Chess Pie

1/2 cup butter  
1 1/2 cups white granulated sugar  
2 Tbsp. yellow cornmeal  
4 eggs  
1 tsp. vanilla extract  
1 8-oz. can crushed pineapple in syrup (undrained)

3/4 cup Baker's coconut  
1 Tbsp. all-purpose flour  
1 piecrust, unbaked

1. Preheat the oven to 400 F
2. Melt the butter; set aside to cool. Beat together the sugar, cornmeal, eggs and vanilla. Stir in the melted butter, pineapple, coconut and flour.
3. Pour the mixture into the piecrust; bake

for 40 minutes or until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean. Let cool; enjoy!

## Grandma Durham's Jell-O Cake

*Cake:*

1 yellow cake mix (not butter recipe)  
3 Tbsp. flour  
1 small box Jell-O (orange, strawberry or your preference)  
1 cup water  
1 cup vegetable oil  
6 large eggs

*Glaze:*

1 1/2 cups powdered sugar  
1-2 Tbsp. orange juice (variation 1)  
1-2 Tbsp. milk (variation 2)

1. *For cake:* In a large bowl, using an electric mixer, mix all ingredients for 2 minutes.
2. Pour into a greased Bundt cake pan; bake at 350 F for 30 minutes.



3. After cooling completely, turn out onto a cake plate.
4. *For glaze:* Mix the powdered sugar with orange juice (for orange cake) or milk (for strawberry cake) until the desired consistency is reached. Pour over cooled Bundt cake.

### Texarkana Jalapeño Corn Bread

- 1 cup yellow cornmeal
- 3/4 cup flour
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1 Tbsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. salt
- 3/4 tsp. baking soda
- 2 large eggs
- 1 1/2 cups buttermilk
- 2 Tbsp. butter or margarine, melted
- 2 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 1 small can cream-style corn
- 1-2 fresh or canned jalapeño peppers, finely chopped

1. Preheat the oven to 350 F
2. Generously grease a 10-inch, cast-iron skillet. In a large bowl, combine the cornmeal, flour, sugar, baking powder, salt and baking soda.
3. In a separate bowl, beat the eggs, buttermilk, butter and oil. Stir the corn and peppers into the egg mixture; add to the cornmeal mixture, stirring until blended. Do not overmix.
4. Pour into the skillet; bake 35-40 minutes, until the top is golden brown.

### Orry's Chili

- 2 lbs. ground beef
  - 1 medium onion, chopped
  - 2 cloves garlic, chopped
  - 2 10-oz. cans Ro-Tel Chili Fixins' or Ro-Tel Original Diced Tomatoes & Green Chilies
  - 1 28-oz. can crushed tomatoes
  - 1 8-oz. can tomato sauce
  - 2 Tbsp. chili powder
  - 1 1/2 tsp. cumin
  - 1/2 tsp. salt
  - 1/2 tsp. pepper
  - 1 tsp. oregano
  - 1-2 dashes Louisiana hot sauce
  - 2 16-oz. cans pinto or kidney beans, drained
1. In a Dutch oven, brown the beef, onions and garlic for 8-10 minutes; drain. Stir in the remaining ingredients, except the beans. Heat to boiling. Cover; reduce heat to a simmer for 1 hour, stirring occasionally.
  2. Stir in the beans; heat to boiling. Simmer, uncovered, for 20-30 minutes, stirring occasionally, until desired thickness is reached.

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Old-fashioned Pineapple Chess Pie

## Southern Shrimp and Grits

- 2 cups water
- 2 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 cup white grits
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 2 Tbsp. salted butter
- 1 cup sharp cheddar cheese, shredded
- 4 slices bacon, cubed
- 2 Tbsp. garlic, minced
- 1 tsp. Cajun or blackened seasoning
- Salt, to taste
- Pepper, to taste
- 1 bunch green onions, chopped (divided use)
- 1 lb. shrimp, peeled and deveined

2 Tbsp. lemon juice  
Hot sauce, to taste

1. Bring the water and chicken broth to a boil. Add the uncooked grits and kosher salt. Stir immediately to ensure the grits do not clump and are evenly dispersed in the water. Simmer on low, stirring occasionally, for about 30-35 minutes.
2. Once the grits are cooked, remove from the heat. Add the butter and cheese. Salt to taste.
3. About 15 minutes before the grits are done, cook the bacon in a skillet over medium heat until crispy, about 6-8 minutes. Remove from the pan, leaving about 2 Tbsp. of the bacon grease.
4. Sauté the garlic, seasonings, half of the green onions and shrimp, until the shrimp is pink and fully cooked, about 5-6 minutes depending on the size of the shrimp.
5. Drizzle with lemon juice and hot sauce. Serve the shrimp on top of the grits; sprinkle with bacon crumbles and the remaining green onions.

## Mexican Casserole

- 1 1/2 lbs. ground beef
- Salt, to taste
- Pepper, to taste
- Chili powder, to taste

- 1 dozen soft corn tortillas
- 1 can Ranch-Style beans
- 1 lb. Velveeta cheese (cut into 1/4-inch slices)
- 1 can cream-style corn
- 1 10-oz. can Ro-Tel
- 1 10.5-oz. can cream of chicken soup

1. Brown the beef seasoned with salt, pepper and chili powder.
2. In a 9x13-inch casserole dish, layer 6 tortillas, beef, beans, cheese, corn, then the remaining 6 tortillas.
3. In a separate bowl, mix together the Ro-Tel and soup; pour over the ingredients in the pan.
4. Cover with foil; bake for 45 minutes at 350 F. Remove the foil; let stand at least 10 minutes before serving.

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*Less than an hour's drive north of Amarillo is the first of only two national monuments located in Texas. The Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument is well off the beaten path. Driving the well-maintained, two-lane road off Texas Highway 136 from Amarillo gives the feeling of being in the middle of a western movie. As you remember those "thrilling days of yesteryear," you half expect to see Clint Eastwood as Rowdy Yates appear driving a herd of cattle over the rocky terrain, or the Lone Ranger and Tonto ride by. The hills and mountains are knobby, stony outcroppings. The valleys and canyons are roughly hewn by the passing Canadian River.*

This place has seen thousands of years of human history. Indigenous tribes lived here for many years, harvesting small crops from the dry, sandy soil, and the buffalo that roamed freely were a primary source of food, shelter and clothing. Though the land may not appear suitable for supporting much grazing today, there are still large herds of cattle on nearby properties.

However, the archeology of the flint quarries is significant. The area is home to more than 700 stone quarries that are said to have been mined for more than 13,000 years. The colorful stone is known as Alibates flint. The flint is actually agatized dolomite. The Indians used the material to make arrow heads, knives, hide scrapers and other tools. Tools

made from Alibates flint were probably used from as long as 13,000 years ago until about 1870.

The uniqueness of the Alibates flint has to do with the colorful nature of the stone. The stone contains quartz crystals, smaller than can be seen with a microscope, but creating the flint's steel-like hardness. The variety of colors in the flint is from the other minerals found in the dolomite. The colors range from pale gray and white to pink, maroon, bright red, orange-gold and purple-blue. The colors are striped and marbled throughout the raw stone and made for beautiful tools.

Prehistoric peoples harvested the highly prized stone that was a foot or more below the surface by digging it out by hand, with sticks or with bone tools. The quarries would eventually be as much as 25 feet across, and 4 to 8 feet deep. Today, time and weather have filled most of them in, to the point that they appear as ovals with depressions in the middle. Adjacent to the depressions are the chunks and pieces of waste material that were removed to access the valuable flint.

The tools made from the flint harvested here were not only practical, but also beautiful, and they became a source of trade for the natives. Examples of the Alibates tools have been found across the Great Plains and the Southwest, as would be expected, and the flint was also traded across much of what is now the United States for Puebloan pottery, Pacific Coast seashells, Minnesota pipestone and turquoise jewelry.

History reveals that for much of the area's past, nomadic peoples would gather in the area to use the flint. Archeologists claim that even people of the Ice Age hunted with spears made from the Alibates flint, maybe even taking down the Imperial Mammoth. The Plains Indians, ancestors of the Caddo, Pawnee and Wichita, established villages made of complex rock-slab houses between A.D. 1150 and A.D. 1450.

The dwellings were mostly single-unit family homes, though other rooms were connected for other uses such as food storage. The rooms were either rectangular or



# CIENT TOOLS

— By Bill Smith

semicircular, with low openings requiring one to enter on their hands and knees. Roofs were originally thought to be flat, but recent discoveries reveal that they were pitched at 7- to 9-degree angles, thatched and mortared with clay. By the end of the 15th century, severe drought and raids from other aggressive tribes drove them from the area.

Today, ranger-guided tours of the quarries are available, as is a nice museum and gift shop. The museum features hands-on exhibits of various artifacts, as well as a brief movie about the natives who mined the Alibates flint. **NOW**

## Sources:

1. "Alibates Flint Quarries." <https://www.nps.gov>.
2. "Alibates Flint Quarries and Ruins." [www.texasbeyondhistory.net/alibates/](http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/alibates/).
3. "NPS Geodiversity Atlas — Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument, Texas." <https://www.nps.gov>.



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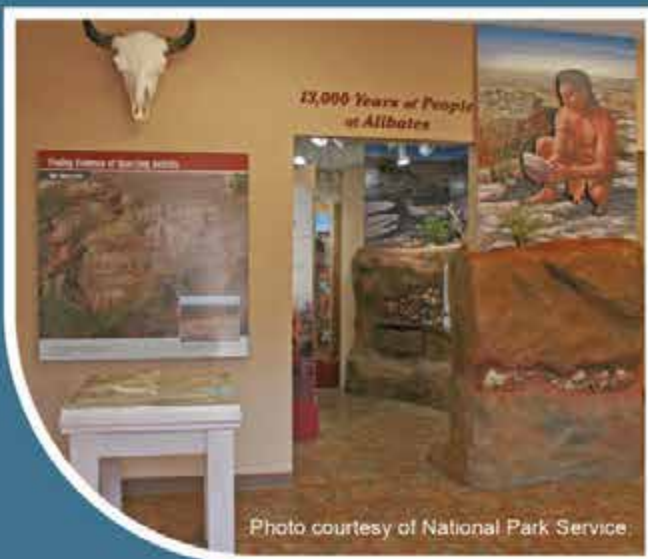


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# GAME ON!

— By Angel Morris



*Possibly one of the best things to come out of the last challenging few years has been a resurgence in the popularity of board games and, in turn, family game nights. You may have jumped on that bandwagon and are now looking for a few new ideas to add to your family favorites. Or, perhaps, you need a little direction to get your first game gathering rolling. Either way, here are some ideas to making yours a better game night.*

First, you'll want to inventory which games you have on hand. Do they still meet your family's interests? Have the kids aged out of some of them? Are there boxes you haven't opened in years? Let the family help decide which to keep and which to donate — to friends or neighbors who may enjoy them now.

Once you've made a little space on the storage shelf, invite each family member to investigate a game they might like to add to your rotation. The genres of games are expansive, and everyone's tastes are different.

Do you like "campaign" games, in which following

different scenarios results in unique outcomes? Pandemic Legacy may be for you. Are you a fan of "dexterity" games involving physical skill? Twister or Jenga are tried and true. "Roll-and-move" or "Roll-and-write" games involve using dice to move through a game, like the classics, Monopoly and Yahtzee.

From "abstracts" and "area control" to "drafting" and "dungeon crawler," new board games are released by the thousands each year and are too numerous to name here. A good game night allows for something for every personality and, from there, family favorites will emerge.

Consider each family member's strengths and interests. Do they like to draw? Are you a family of wordsmiths? Does trivia excite you? Would costumes or the opportunity to use one's imagination bring out the best in your players?

You may already have some games in mind, but it is wise to read reviews online before making a purchase. The website, [www.boardgamegeek.com](http://www.boardgamegeek.com), lets you browse by category, artists and publishers (just like you may have a favorite book author, you may discover a favorite game developer).

The site provides a tab exclusive to games for families, with reviews from actual users about most every possible game topic ranging from animals, authors and cities to fictional events and favorite movies. When everyone has investigated and determined a few potential favorites, a trip to the store is, well, in store.



While just about any game can be purchased online, the store visit can kick off the game-night experience. Whether you check out the massive inventory at a big-box store or support small businesses, some of which include a gaming room, handling the games, reading their descriptions and purchasing them together is part of the fun. Thrift and used bookstores offer games at discount prices. Just be sure to check for all the pieces and instructions before purchasing.

Besides selecting your games, choosing snacks is also a way to build your family's excitement toward game night. Encourage everyone to help establish the menu, from an easy dinner and dessert, or just simple finger foods. You can go the extra mile, and coordinate what you will eat with the themes of your games.

For instance, if young family members are choosing the night's activity and Candyland is on deck, the obvious snacks would be everyone's favorite candies (bonus points if they relate to the confections featured on the board). If the popular Ticket to Ride is the night's choice, center foods around the cities involved in the cross-country train adventure. Taco vs. Burrito on the lineup? The menu choices there are obvious! Or, there is nothing wrong with making tradition of serving simple favorites, like popcorn and pop, so everyone knows exactly what to anticipate game night after game night.

Perhaps you're looking to start a weekly or monthly tradition, or maybe your family game nights are once in a blue moon. Regardless, the goal is bonding and making memories. And while there are many digital games and apps you can all share, there is something about sitting around a board game that encourages laughter and joy.

So, review your interests, investigate your choices, take a trip to the game store and set your menu. Then, all that's left is to sit down together and let the games begin. Just remember, it's not whether you win or lose, it's simply that you make time to play. **NOW**

Sources:

1. <https://www.dicebreaker.com/categories/board-game/how-to/board-game-types-explained>.
2. <https://boardgamegeek.com/browse/boardgamefamily/page/1>.



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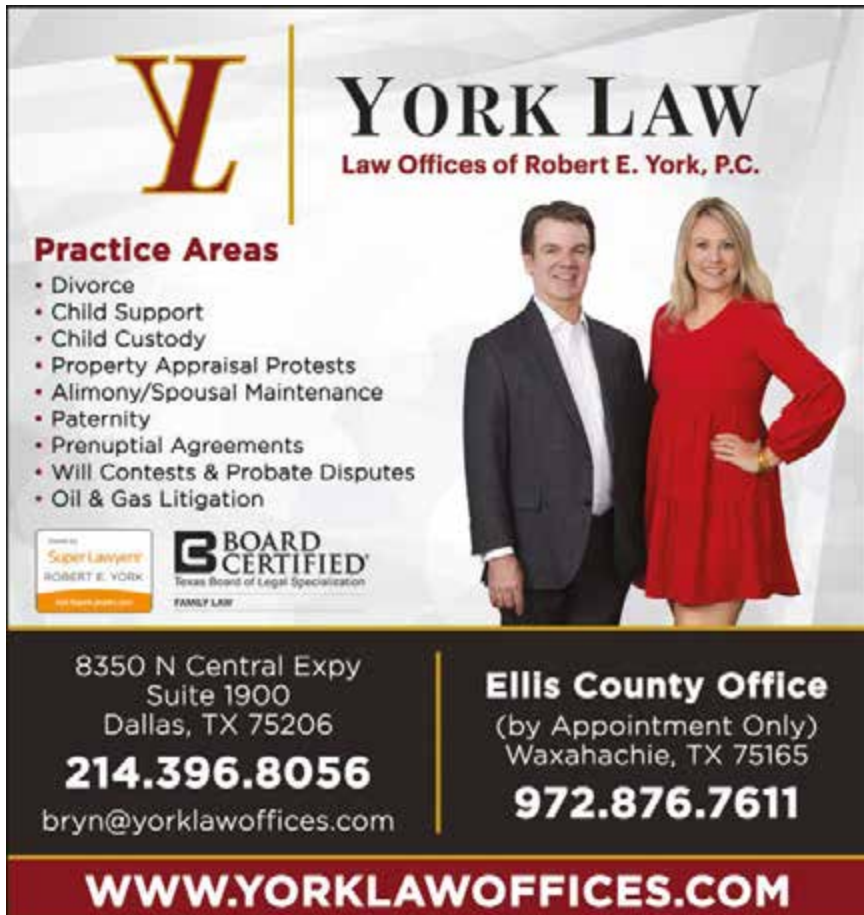


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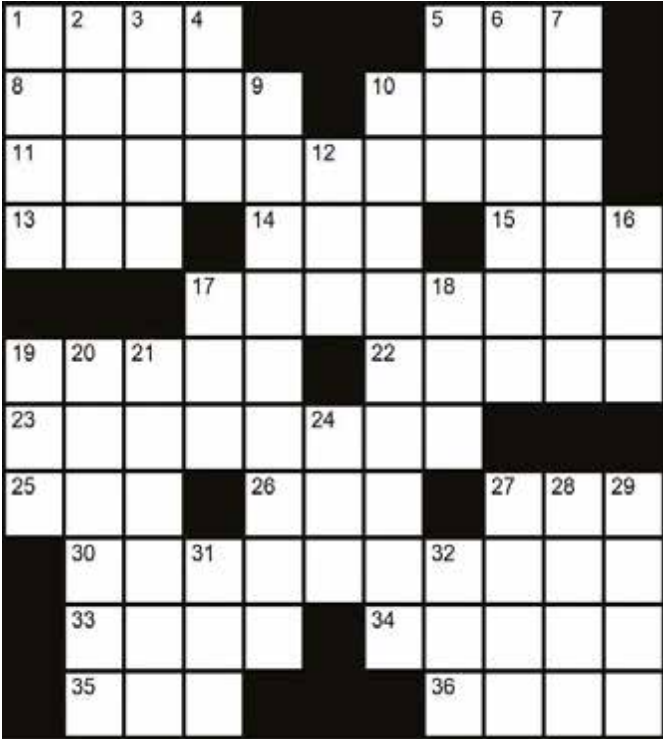
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### Across

- 1 "--- the torpedoes!" (Rear Admiral David Farragut)

5 Shock physically

8 Fend off

10 Artistic inspirer

11 Procession illumination

13 She-sheep

14 Slender bar

15 Pinch

17 Positive testimonial

19 Humphrey's successor

22 Comes down to Earth

23 Disintegrated

25 Make lace

26 Direct a gun
- 27 Bathwater tester?

30 Cede grip on assorted characters, moving ahead

33 Chawbacon

34 Acknowledge

35 Winter depression

36 Biz bosses
- 5 "A --- of Wine, a Loaf of Bread - and Thou ... " (Omar Khayyam)

6 Lucy ---, Scott's Bride of Lammermoor

7 Impede

9 Something suggestive of an earlier time

10 Go-betweens

12 Old trick-taking game

16 Oral specialist

17 Absolute beauty

18 Bunch of cash

19 Statute

20 Mathematical diagrams

21 Coypu fur
- 24 Float at anchor

27 Periodic movement of the sea

28 Upon

29 Causes of personality clashes

31 Condition of TV's "Monk"

32 Sawbones

### Down

- 1 Booking
- 2 Acknowledge frankly
- 3 "Honor is a --- scutcheon" (Falstaff, Shakespeare, "Henry IV Part I")
- 4 Atomic safety org.

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# IT'S GAME TIME!

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.

# SEPTEMBER

9/4

## Fish Fry:

VFW Post 3894 welcomes everyone for catfish, hush puppies and all the fixins. \$10 per plate. 2:00 p.m., 1405 N. I-35E.

9/5 and 9/18

## Hiring Event:

Bring your résumé! Multiple employers will be present. 10:00 a.m.-noon, Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas, 1712 W. Hwy. 287 Business. Pre-register at [workintexas.com](http://workintexas.com). For more information, call (972) 937-8114.

9/6

## Classic Car Show:

The men's ministry hosts

a fundraiser for Love Your Neighbor of Ellis County. 8:00 a.m.-noon, Waxahachie Bible Church, 621 N. Grand Ave.

9/7

## Cotton Industry Historical Marker:

The Ellis County Historical Commission will be unveiling a state historical marker documenting 170 years of cotton in Ellis County. 5:30-6:30 p.m., Ellis County Museum, 201 S. College St.

9/16

## 8th Annual C10s in the Park:

Family, friends and trucks. "The Largest C10 Gathering in the

South." Come view 1,200 of the coolest classic trucks on the planet. 7:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Getzendaner Park, 400 S. Grand Ave.

9/23

## Hispanic Heritage 2023:

Enjoy live music, food and more. Free. 2:00-11:00 p.m., Railyard Park, 455 S. College St.

9/24

## Farm Heritage Day:

Bring the family for the farm animals, hay rides, vendors, outdoor games and living history demos. Free. 2:00-5:00 p.m., Ellis County Rural Heritage Farm, 130 Cunningham Meadows Rd.

9/30

## Cowboy Poetry and Music:

Cowpokes and tenderfoots of all sorts will enjoy poetry, song, harmonica lessons, birds of prey and trashcan painting. 7:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Chautauqua Auditorium, Getzendaner Park, 500 S. Grand Ave.

## St. Jude Hospital Benefit Car Show:

Come support St. Jude and vote on your favorite. Free. 8:30 a.m., Getzendaner Park, 500 S. Grand Ave.

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



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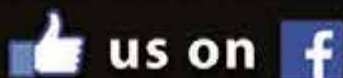
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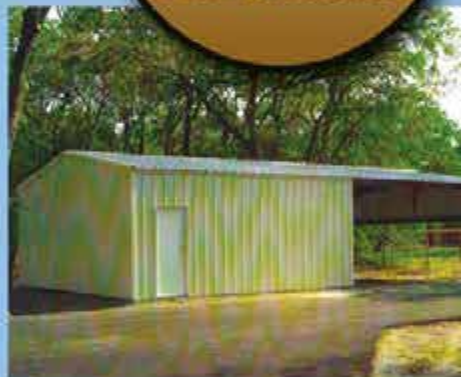
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