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SEPTEMBER 2025

Back to the Future

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celebrate 150 years

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En Español





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EDITOR'S NOTE

Too busy?

Did life get in the way and keep you from having some time away to relax this year? We tend to acknowledge Labor Day as the end of summer, though the autumnal equinox will not officially be here until September 22. I'd say there is still time to have a Texas vacation!

Texas has a lot to offer for spur-of-the-minute vacations, especially when it is not peak season. You might even score some bargains as you avoid the crowds.

Fort Worth is a popular destination. Tourists come from all over with an eye on seeing where the West begins. The stockyards may surprise you if you've never been there, especially if a cattle drive takes place down the middle of the street you are about to cross. Then you might visit the John Wayne Museum and see Trigger, the horse Roy Rogers rode in all of those movies.

A slightly longer drive to Austin and the Hill Country is sure to expose you to some Texas country music. Visit the Capitol, perhaps the LBJ Library and then find a barbecue restaurant or maybe something Tex-Mex for a Texas-style meal.

If you really want to get away, head for the Texas coast. Galveston and South Padre are still open, and a relaxing couple of hours on the beach might be just what you need to kick off fall.

Have some fun!



Bill

Bill Smith
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ON THE COVER



Pastors Julian Borda, Larry Jinks and Zoltan Kelemen prepare their congregations to celebrate a milestone anniversary.

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2025 Constitutional Amendment and Joint Election

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Early Voting: **October 20-25 & 27-31, 2025**

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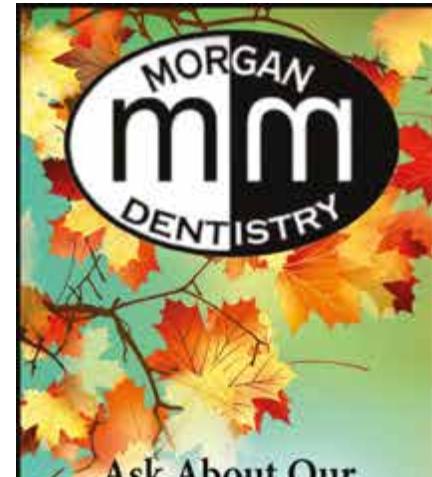
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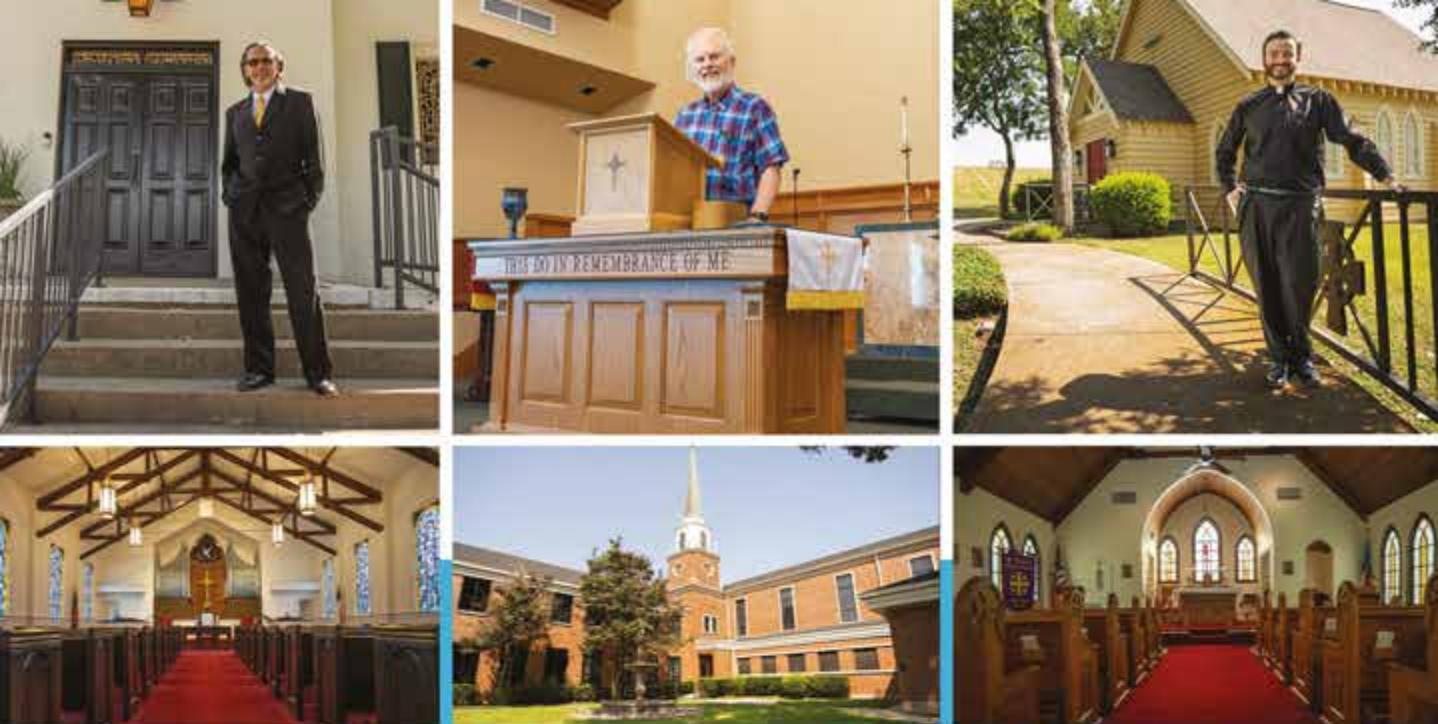


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BACK to the FUTURE

— By Bill Smith

Established in 1872, the city of Ennis was widely known as a railroad town with humble beginnings. The contract between the city and the railroad contributed greatly to the city's stability and growth, as the railroad agreed to maintain its presence as a major employer as long as the city provided water for the trains. Another thing the railroad did was offer free town lots to any Christian communion that would build a church. The community of faith in Ennis has continued to grow since then, and three churches that were established just three years after the city was chartered, continue to minister here. St. Thomas Episcopal Church, First Methodist Church and First Presbyterian Church all celebrate 150 years during 2025.

Rev. Julian Borda is a young pastor at St. Thomas who glows with enthusiasm for his parish and the community. Looking back in time, Rev. Borda shared, "There was an Irishman in Nebraska who had a heart for North Texas. He told his local congregation that a lot of people settling here did not have a church to attend. He was sent as the first Episcopal bishop to Texas. People were not very concerned about particular denominations, and might be baptized in whatever church there was, because there weren't that many! The Presbyterian Church already had a building when we were getting started, and they let us use it for a while.

"We may have differences with the other churches regarding certain doctrines and hierarchy, but we all agree on a common reason for our mission to support the Gospel. We agree and cooperate in various ways. The Methodist Church reached out to us last year about having a joint Vacation Bible School. It worked out so well that we did it again this year."

Dr. Larry Jinks, pastor of the First Methodist Church, agrees with a similar passion about the ecumenical cooperation of the three churches. "We will have a joint worship service and anniversary celebration on September 14. It will be here at the Methodist Church, just because we have the largest sanctuary," he explained. "All three pastors will have a role in the service, and we expect it to be seamless. I want the body of Christ to come together. Fr. Julian; Rev. Zoltan Kelemen, the pastor at First Presbyterian; and I will be co-directing the service, but I don't expect the joint congregation to recognize the different parts as 'that part was Methodist' or 'that part was Presbyterian' or that part was 'Episcopalian.' I want people to walk away from that service saying they never noticed a transition."

The whole community is invited to the joint celebration and worship. Dr. Jinks continued, "We want to celebrate the things that unite us rather than those that might divide us. This is not just a celebration of 150 years, but a testimony that God can use in a greater way, to see the people of God show that they love Him and love one another."

Conni Durbin, elder at First Presbyterian Church, shares the common zeal for the cooperation between the churches and is excited about what the future might hold. "The joint Vacation Bible School for the past couple of years has been great," she agreed. "We have hosted several free community pipe organ concerts since we acquired the new organ a few years ago, and we love having the community join us." She also pointed out how the local churches have cooperated in other areas such as Be Church, community Thanksgiving services and support for local charitable organizations such as A-CROSS and Give A Kid A Chance, just to name a few. "The Methodist Church has served a Thanksgiving meal to the community for several years, and some of our members have joined in the preparation and serving. I see the things that bind us together far outweigh the things that separate us. For the joint worship service, we are working on having the three choirs join together for a few songs. Sara Erwin is working on that with the other churches."

All three churches look back with

fond memories of how they have reached this point as a community of faith. They have seen fire and storms remove buildings but faithfully declare that God continued to bless through some difficult times. They are looking toward their future with hope and assurance of their place in Ennis, both individually and collectively.

Rev. Borda said they know St. Thomas will one day need a larger building to support their growing congregation. "I came to Ennis on the heels of COVID, and we have seen our church family stabilize and grow since then," he said. "We are making plans to offer services in Spanish in the future, and we have already expanded our parking area. We have a sacred task, and we intend to work until Jesus returns."

Dr. Jinks confirmed that the process has already begun for the churches to share Vacation Bible School again next year. "It has worked so well," he said. "We had over 80 kids here during that week in June. We count the kids, but there were a lot of adults supporting in various leadership roles."

Conni concluded her thoughts, "As



First Presbyterian Church Ennis prepares to enter its next 150 years, it stands ready to face the challenges that all traditional churches are facing in this new era of worship. We know our identity. People come here, and they know what to expect. Faith and grace shall lead us in our mission."

Of course, 150 years seems like a long time, but with the growth that Ennis is experiencing, it may be just the foundation for what is to come. As the city celebrated its sesquicentennial just three years ago, and these three churches celebrate this year, the future has never looked brighter. Join the celebration! **NOW**

SCAVENGER HUNT WINNER!



Taylor Daniell, winner of \$50 cash and whose wife Brooke is pictured here, said, "This was our very first time to play!"

An advertisement for HotWorx, a 24-hour infrared fitness studio. The ad features three fitness instructors (two women and one man) holding large wooden signs that read "HOTWORX". The man is wearing a black tank top, and the women are wearing yellow and black athletic gear. Below them, text reads "JOIN FOR \$1.00 During the month of September". The HotWorx logo is prominently displayed with the tagline "24 HOUR INFRARED FITNESS STUDIO". A QR code is in the bottom left, and the bottom right features the text "JOIN & SAVE!" in large letters, along with the address "402 N I-45, Suite 110, Ennis, TX 75119" and the phone number "214-884-6332".

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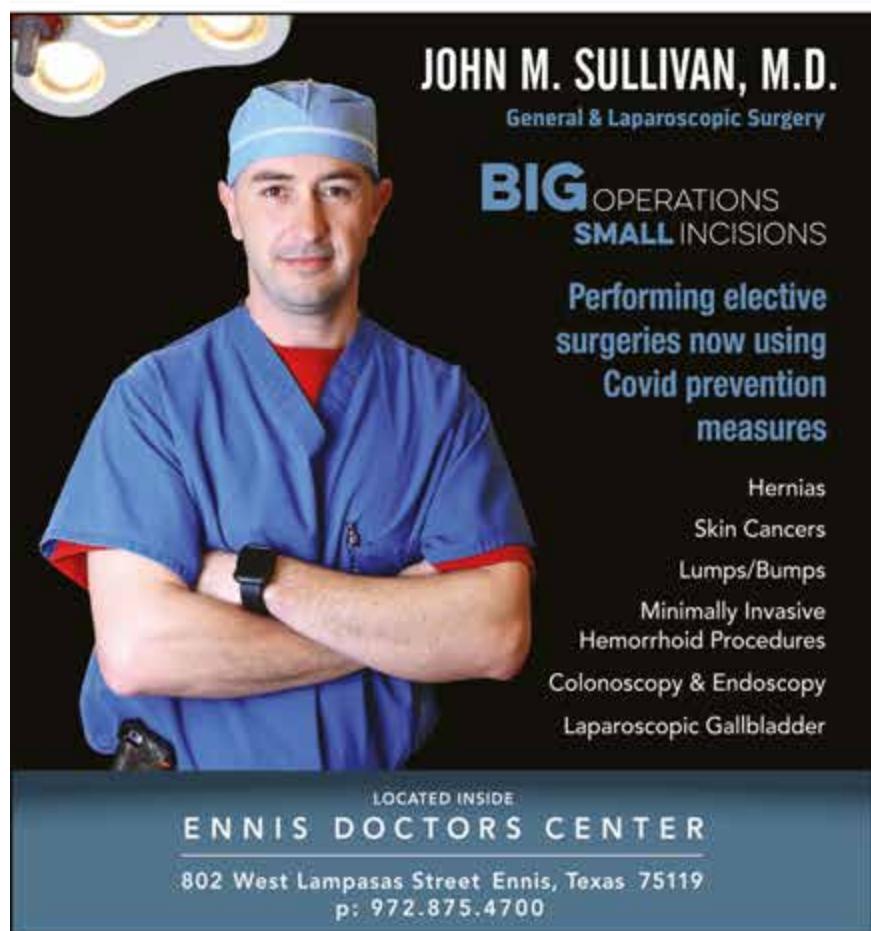
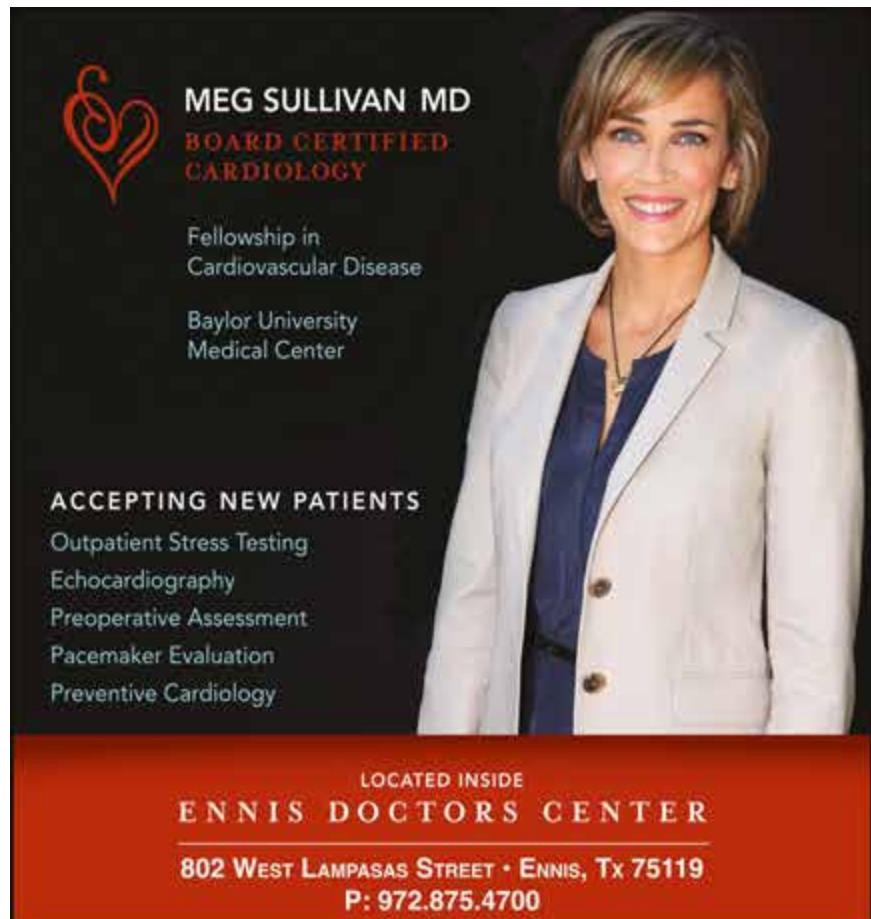
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— By Bill Smith

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dream of the bilingual office stems from a deep love of community. Amelia Valdez speaks often of her love for Ennis, as she has built her real estate career here. Amelia's first real estate experience was with her family's development business, but after a downturn in 2008, she decided to pursue becoming a real estate agent, expecting to reach clients that she could help because she is bilingual.

"I had a discussion with Wayne Norcross, the broker-owner at City Real Estate, in 2019, about the evolving changes in the real estate market. I decided to open a branch office and provide an opportunity for other aspiring Latino agents. City Real Estate En Español gives me the opportunity to assist clients in many ways, and it also gives me a sense of community in our historic downtown to extend services to whoever may need them," she continued. The bilingual branch includes agents Jake Martinez, Christina Klinck Gilman, Estefanie Gutierrez and the additions of Priscila Nunez, Jace Brewer and Andy R. Chavez in 2023/2024.

Having been born and reared in Ennis, Amelia loves the city

In 2019 City Real Estate En Español was formed as an addition to City Real Estate in Historic Downtown Ennis. The experience behind the office goes back many years, and the

and has a dedicated referral clientele. She is devoted to helping people make Ennis their forever home. "I have experience in most all real estate transactions, but I keep myself up to date in residential, lease management, farm and ranch, unimproved property and commercial properties," she said. Her successful career seems to speak for itself, as she has been recognized as one of the top 250 Latino agents in the United States for many years and, most recently, she received the Agent of the Year Award by Rate My Agent. Amelia was also featured in the July 2025 edition of *Texas Monthly*.

These accolades have allowed her many opportunities and some of her team to go to San Diego, where they were able to hear keynote speakers like Lin-Manuel Miranda, Gloria Estefan, Luis Guzmán and even President Obama at the NAHREP Conference in 2022. "Being included in that conference made me so excited for what could be here in Ellis County," Amelia said. She has earned real estate designations including ABR, CRS and GRI, and has had her Real Estate Broker License since 2013.

Amelia is also very involved in her community with roles consisting of president of the Ennis Main Street Board, president of The Lights of Ennis Board, a member of the United Way of Ennis Board, and she's very dedicated to what is going on at the Boys & Girls Club of Ennis. "My love of Ennis is not just about providing services. It is about relationships, and it is about involvement with the clients. I was able to educate our community on the Hispanic Wealth Project. This program shares financial and educational information to the Hispanic communities in America. I am very passionate about educating the Hispanic culture on their home ownership and business start-up options, so they do not feel like it is something they cannot 'obtain.' I also feel that I bridge the gap for all cultures and facilitate relationships with everyone in our community."

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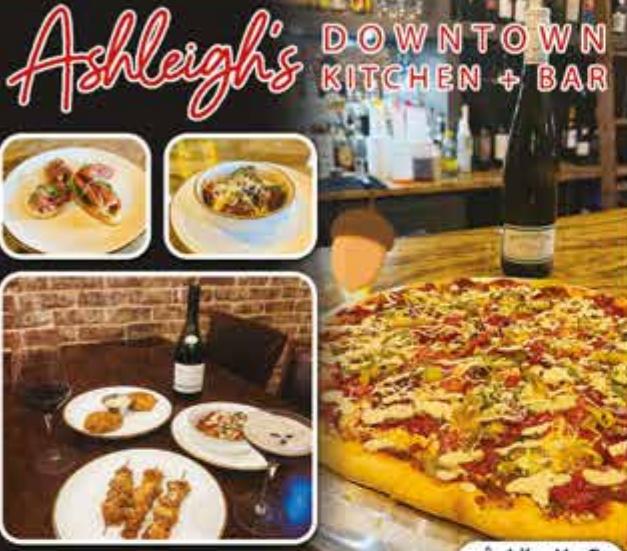
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By Bill Smith

Zoomed In: George and Kathryn Bunting

George and Kathryn Bunting spent almost 37 years in Ennis. George worked at Transportation Tax for several years after having worked for Hunt Energy. Kathryn retired from an almost 30-year career with Ennis Business Forms.

Today, they can often be found at the Ennis Golden Circle. "We are always here on Tuesdays because I teach the weekly Bible study," Kathryn mentioned. "While our building is being renovated over the next couple of months, we are meeting at Faith Assembly of God on Baldridge Street. There are a lot of other activities here, also. Last Friday, we enjoyed playing bingo and having ice cream!"

They certainly seem to be enjoying retirement. George added, "We also like spending time with our three children and five grandchildren."



Cooper and Phyliss Stewart are joined by Jessica Dominguez and Tiffany Calhoun to lead Make It at the Market.



Barry Wolverton and Jeremy Robinson prepare to broadcast on KBEC radio.



A large crowd attends the ribbon cutting at the remodeled library.



EHS Cheerleaders Alexis Ensor and Paignton Trojacek happily register students at Give-A-Kid-A-Chance.

NOW



Children love the bubbles at Minnie McDowal Park.



Kortlyn Busby and Shandra Washington greet customers at The Dessert Spot.



Lynda and Braden Isbell attend the library opening.



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CookingNOW IN THE KITCHEN WITH KYMBERLEE BARROW

— By Bill Smith



Kymberlee Barrow enjoys cooking so much that she plans to attend culinary arts school next spring and become a professional cook. "I started cooking when I was 15 years old," she said. "I learned how to cook by observing relatives, TV shows and reading recipes. I usually cook for family and friends, although I have had cooking positions at certain jobs in the past.

"The women in my family enjoy cooking, and cooking is one of my passions. It's very therapeutic. I love to be creative and to watch people eat my food!" she enthused. "I like finding new recipes in cookbooks, online, and I also ask other people about the ingredients they use in a dish." **NOW**

Taco Pizza

Homemade Crust:

3/4 cup cold water
1 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
1 3/4 cups bread flour
1 tsp. instant dry yeast
1 tsp. salt

Taco Meat and Toppings:

1 lb. lean ground beef
1 pkg. McCormick 30% Less Sodium Mild Taco Seasoning Mix
1 cup prepared salsa
3/4 cup water
2 cups shredded Mexican cheese blend
Shredded lettuce, to taste
Chopped tomato, to taste
Sliced jalapeños, to taste (optional)
Sour cream, to taste (optional)

1. For crust: Whisk the water and olive oil in a liquid measuring cup. Place flour, yeast and salt in a food processor; pulse until well blended. With the machine running, gradually add the water mixture just until mixed and no dry flour remains in the bowl, about 30 seconds. Process 1 minute longer until the dough forms a ball.

2. Transfer the dough to a lightly floured surface. Knead by hand about 30 seconds until the dough is smooth, shaping into a ball. Transfer to a lightly greased bowl. Spray the dough lightly with nonstick cooking spray. Cover with plastic wrap. Place the bowl in a warm, draft-free place and allow the dough to rise about 1 1/2 hours until puffy. Transfer to a lightly greased sheet pan. Press and stretch the dough into a rectangle about 15 inches long by 10 inches wide. Cover with plastic wrap. Place the baking

sheet in a warm, draft-free place; allow the dough to rise about 45 minutes longer.

3. For taco meat: Brown the ground beef in a large skillet on medium-high heat; drain the fat. Stir in the seasoning mix, salsa and water. Bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to low; simmer 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.

4. Preheat the oven to 450 F. Gently stretch the dough toward the corners of the sheet pan to return to the original size. Spoon the meat mixture evenly over the crust. Sprinkle with cheese.

5. Bake 15-20 minutes, or until the cheese is melted and the crust is lightly browned. Top with shredded lettuce and chopped tomato. Add additional toppings as desired, such as sliced jalapeños and sour cream.

Filet Mignon

1/2 tsp. McCormick Sea Salt Grinder
1/2 tsp. McCormick Pure Ground Black Pepper
1 tsp. McCormick Garlic Powder
1/2 tsp. McCormick Whole Rosemary Leaves, crushed
3/4 tsp. McCormick Whole Thyme Leaves, crushed
2 filet mignons (about 6-8 oz. each)
1 Tbsp. salted butter

1. Mix the salt, pepper, garlic powder, rosemary and thyme in a small bowl. Pat the steaks dry with paper towels; sprinkle both sides with the seasoning mixture. Let the steaks stand at room temperature for 5-10 minutes.

2. Melt the butter in a large, heavy skillet on medium-high heat. Place the steaks in the skillet. Sear 3 minutes on each side. Continue cooking 4-6 minutes longer, flipping the steaks every 2 minutes, until the internal temperature reaches 125-130 F for medium-rare. (Reduce the temperature if the steaks are over-browning.)

3. Transfer to a clean plate. Tent with foil and let rest 5-10 minutes before slicing or serving.



Email us at

bill.smith@nowmagazines.com

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

9/12-9/13

Patriot Day BBQ Bash:

Honoring those who give so much, the Greater Ennis Chamber of Commerce hosts this barbecue cook-off. **Friday** night features a concert at the KJT Hall, 1216 S. Paris St. On **Saturday** there is a car show, and the barbecue competition begins. \$185.00 for individual cooking team. Sponsorships are also available. Load in begins: 9:00 a.m. on **Friday**. Contact Geoeffery Williams at gwilliams@ennis-chamber.com or call (972) 878-2625.

9/17

County Convene 2025:

Join cross-sector leaders across Ellis County for a time of equipping and encouragement. Register for free

at: <https://www.uniteellis.org/event-details/county-convene-2025>. 9:00 a.m.-noon, Waxahachie Bible Church, 621 N. Grand Ave., Waxahachie. (832) 719-1641.

9/18

Taste of Ennis:

This 33rd annual event is a primary fundraiser for Helping Hands of Ennis. Come sample food from many of Ennis' great restaurants. We are excited to announce some great trips, getaways and other items up for auction. You don't want to miss this. Bring your friends! \$15 per individual. Sponsorships available for \$1,000 (Silver), \$2,500 (Gold), \$5,000 (Platinum). Watch Facebook for release of website for advance tickets and advance bidding on auction items!

5:30-7:30 p.m., SPJST Hall, 1901 E. Ennis Ave. For more information, call (972) 875-0218.

9/20

Stars Hollow Harvest Day:

Last year was a hit, so we wanted to do it again, bigger and better! Sweet treats, Lorelai and Rory inspired merchandise, an awesome playlist and fall vibes! In the heart of downtown Ennis, we bring Stars Hollow to you! 10:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m., The Village Shops, 113 NW Main St. For more information, contact support@the-village-shops.com.

9/26-9/28

Hollydays Market of Waxahachie:

Discover over 130 small businesses offering one-of-a-kind gifts perfect for every holiday celebration. Three days of festive shopping fun await! "First Call": \$10; General Admission: \$6; 12 and under are free. **"First Call Shopping" Hours:** **Friday:** 9:00 a.m.-noon; **General Admission Hours: Friday:** Noon-5:00 p.m., **Saturday:** 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. and **Sunday:** 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Tickets online or at the door. Waxahachie Civic Center, 2000 Civic Center Ln., Waxahachie. homefortheholidaysgiftmarket.com.

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

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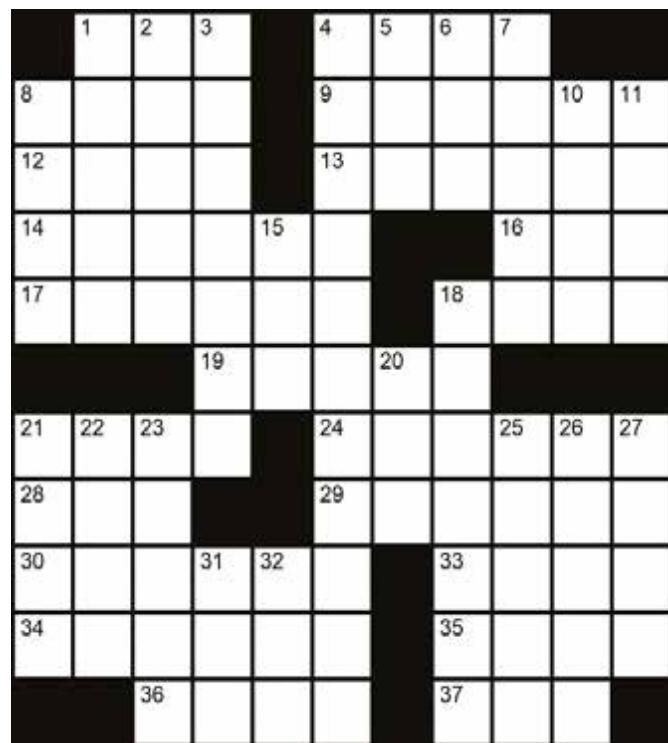
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