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West Middle School Scholar Names 2017-2018 DeSoto ISD Spelling Bee Champ

Congratulations to Coula J Eans, a West Middle School eighth-grader who won the December district spelling bee competition after 13 rounds of intense spelling bee action.

Eans will advance to the county spelling bee in hopes of making it to the 60th Annual Dallas Morning News Spelling Bee in March.

Fifth-grader Grashon Latimore of Ruby Young Elementary finished as the first runner-up in the spelling competition and will serve as an alternate in the county bee. East Middle School eighth-grader Caden Simpson finished as second runner-up.

DeSoto ISD Announces 2018 Pre-K Round Up

Interested in taking advantage of DeSoto ISD's early childhood education programs? Begin the enrollment process online at www.DeSotoISD.org, then attend the Jan. 20 Pre-K enrollment event from 8 am to noon at Amber Terrace Discovery and Design Early Childhood Academy. Parents or guardians will need to bring a parent/guardian photo ID and proof of residency, along with student social security card/ tax ID number, birth certificate and shot record.

For more information about early childhood education opportunities in DeSoto ISD, contact DeSoto ISD Early Childhood Director Myla Wilson at 469.297.4556.

CALENDAR

- **12/25-1/5:** Winter Break
- **1/8:** Classes Resume
- **1/5:** Girls & Boys Basketball v. Grand Prairie at DHS; 6p & 7:30p
- **1/12:** Girls & Boys Basketball v. Duncanville at DHS; 6p & 7:30p
- **1/15:** MLK Holiday; District Closed
- **1/19:** Girls & Boys Basketball v.SGP at DHS; 6p & 7:30p
- **1/22:** Regular Board Meeting

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ON THE COVER

*Teen Council members
Amaya Isaac, Amon Thapa
and Moriah McCain learn
what it takes to run a city.*

Photo by
Shane Kirkpatrick.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Winter is here ...

I am no fan of the traditional Texas ice storm. Power outages, car wrecks and bursting water pipes are no fun at all. But cold winter months are fun. I like coats and scarves and especially sweaters. It's like wearing a costume for a play, or going to the Scarborough Renaissance Festival.

I like snow, for short periods of time, preferably on a weekend. And when it comes, I always hope for enough to cover everything in a nice crisp, glittering blanket of white, because that kind of snow makes me think of a favorite childhood treat. You may be dreaming of hot chocolate, sugar cookies and banana bread right out of the oven, but I'm looking forward to the possibility of snow cream.

When I was a kid, anytime we got a good, thick snow, Mom would go outside and carefully collect a big mixing bowl full of the whitest, brightest, fresh-fallen snow and bring it inside. A little milk, a little sugar, a splash of vanilla. Pop it in the freezer to set up. There are a lot of memories in that bowl.

Happy New Year!

P.S. New year, new look and some fresh, new ideas! The NOW Magazines team has been working hard on this project, and we hope you love it. Cheers!

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YAC

How would you like to host a statewide conference with over 300 attendees? Now think about doing that as a high school student. That's exactly what the exceptional young men and women on Cedar Hill's Mayor's Teen Council are doing. This February, youth from every corner of Texas will be descending on Cedar Hill for a Youth Advisory Council Summit to discuss teen issues and how to be involved members of their communities, both now and in the future.

Amon Thapa, Amaya Isaac and Moriah McCain are some of the teen citizens of Cedar Hill engaging with Mayor Rob Franke and other members of city government to make their city an even better place to live. "Under Library Director Toni Simmons' direction, the library had developed a lot of teen programming," Mayor Franke explained. "Toni and I got together to explore ways to get the teens more involved in the city and invested as leaders. The Texas Municipal League encourages and supports developing teen councils, so we decided to take the library programs and make them more formal and high profile. That's how this started back in 2013, but it has expanded to include multiple city departments."



**"I BELIEVE THE MAYOR'S TEEN COUNCIL IS ABOUT
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SESSION

— By *Adam Walker*



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“This started with the library’s teen volunteer programs and the Teen Advisory Council that helped redesign the library space and advised on programs and resources for the library,” Adult Services Coordinator Aranda Bell confirmed. “Now our teens are becoming more effective servant-leaders at the community level to benefit the entire city.”

Many of these teens have made several years of commitment to the teen council already. Amon Thapa, who was secretary for the council last year and has just been elected president of the council, has found a lot of value in the experience. “Having the mayor and the library staff as mentors, I’ve learned a lot, from the importance of making eye contact to stepping up and giving back and planning events. We’re learning how to actively involve youth in the community by being role models.”

“I believe the Mayor’s Teen Council is about bringing together people who don’t feel like they have a voice, and giving them that voice,” Amaya said.

Moriah added, “It’s great that we get to have this YAC Summit in Cedar Hill. We get to come together as a group and think about how we want to portray Cedar Hill to the rest of the state. What we do as teens, what



we think about Cedar Hill, matters.”

This will not be the first YAC Summit the Cedar Hill group has attended, but it will be the first time that Cedar Hill has hosted the event, and these ambitious young people are concerned about showing their city in a good light. Mayor Franke is free with his praise for the work they are doing. “I’m impressed with their maturity and heart. These teens want to learn about the city and how it works. Our secret mission is to help young people fall in love with the city, to make them want to come back here after college, to make Cedar Hill a generational city.”

Even before the officers were elected for this year, Amon and the others were meeting with each other and the officers from last year to keep the planning moving forward over the summer months. “I met with the past president to brainstorm ideas,” Amon explained. “We needed to think about service projects and activities to fit with our environmental theme and survey the ideas committee, so we could think about what speakers we wanted, and who we really could get to speak.” And these young people weren’t shy about asking big names to come speak: NFL stars, Olympic athletes, rappers and children of former presidents were all on the

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list of those they contacted, or tried to contact, as well as movers and shakers in technology and business. And they decided early on that it was important to include speakers from law enforcement to help bridge the gap between youth and the police.

Cedar Hill has invited DeSoto's teen council to attend, and Duncanville is sending a delegation to explore the possibility of setting up a similar council there. Rockwall will be there, as well as past hosts, Abilene and Pearland. But Cedar Hill has also been invited to make presentations to city governments in Midlothian and Lewisville about the possibility of those two cities setting up YACs for their young citizens. So these young people are getting opportunities to interact not only with their own city government, but with government officials in other Texas cities, and to build a sense of community beyond Cedar Hill.

"Being part of the Mayor's Teen Council has made me a more sensitive leader," Amon reported. "It's helped me tune my ear to my community, to listen to what the community has to say. Small things like smiling and eye contact are important when you meet someone. If you really listen, you might change someone's life instead of just babbling ideas."

Visiting one of the council meetings, you can't help but be struck by the enthusiasm and involvement.

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There is no shortage of ideas on offer for every aspect of the planning, whether the discussion centers on possibilities for service projects with local nonprofits, environmental activities or activities for the Friday night social at the YAC Summit. There is real concern that they find something at least as cool as the silent disco at last year's summit. They are teens after all!

But this is a council that functions year-round and will still be actively involved in civic projects long after the YAC Summit is over. "We are always doing something," Aymara explained. "Last year, we helped the library with a Hurricane Harvey benefit."

Mayor Franke can't help smiling when talking about them. "These young men and women quickly earned my respect, because they are so respectful. We started with 20, but it kept growing because there were so many qualified young people. We ended up starting a second council, called LEAD, specifically focused on teen interaction with Cedar Hill law enforcement."

Amon summed up the hopes for the YAC Summit. "We hope students will be able to develop as leaders and build character to be the best they can be. We want to become servant-leaders with vision and purpose to lead in our own special, different way — to serve other people."

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LIFE'S NEXT CHAPTER

— By Virginia Riddle

As a native son of Egypt — Egypt, Texas, that is — Marlon Daniels was destined to see the world, which he's done thanks to his Uncle Sam and the U.S. Air Force. This retired senior master sergeant has chosen to live in Cedar Hill near his youngest daughter. "I have four kids ages 26 to 15," Marlon explained. "The three older ones live in Colorado, and I missed a lot with them while serving for 26 years in the military, but I wanted to be more engaged in Jaidyn's life."



Marlon's athleticism started in his youth. He was the Texas state champ in the 800-meter in high school. "I knew, however, that I didn't want to run all my life," he recalled. By the time he was 16, his mother was in prison, and he was living on the street, or occasionally with relatives. "I needed to either join the Job Corps or the military to get housed and fed," he added. His first job in the military in 1990 was in general electronics, and Marlon worked on the air defense systems of NORAD (North American Aerospace Defense Command). By 1994, he had top secret clearance for the intel community and special operations. Marlon's 14 military assignments took him to all seven continents with six tours in Afghanistan and Iraq, where he sometimes wore an Army or Navy uniform. Along the way,

At Home With Marlon Daniels



he earned an associate degree in IT from the Community College of the Air Force and studied architecture and graphic design at Columbia Southern University.

Having lived just over a year in the civilian world, Marlon has settled comfortably into an apartment with high ceilings and a view of the hustle and bustle of Cedar Hill. He's decorated his home with displays of his mementos, primarily from the Far East. "This was the perfect location for me," Marlon said. "It's convenient to restaurants, a movie theater and a gym. It's a very uptown and urban community."

Walking up the three flights of stairs to his doorstep helps keep



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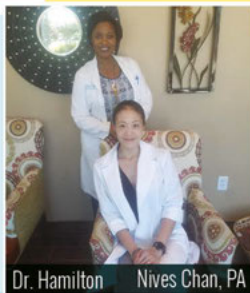
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and dining space dressed in brown, blues and white. On a café table, an antique Japanese globe spreads its beautiful hues even in the dark and is flanked by candle holders in which Marlon has planted live bamboo. Nearby, a Japanese sword and African decorative pieces create a floor display, while a custom-made shadow box contains his service ribbons, pins and patches. “Every room has a theme and displays different aspects of my life,” Marlon explained. Giant glass fish partially filled with marbles and a wine holder from Thailand decorate the kitchen’s countertops.

Marlon’s last assignment was as communications superintendent for Air Force Headquarters Recruiting. A recruitment poster signed by friends was presented to him at his retirement party. Framed, it decorates a living room wall along with blue- and white-themed paintings. Marlon was the recruiting service, senior non-commissioned officer for



Marlon in shape. His apartment is also in “ship-shape” condition. “When people come through here to visit, they are surprised and often say, ‘I thought you were single!’” he said.

Marlon is single, but he credits his working mom, who raised him and his siblings, for his housekeeping skills. “My mother made us OCD about keeping up the house. The military was just a natural transition. My mother always wanted to come home to a clean house. She needed to see a vacuum cleaner’s track through the carpet every day!” he recalled with a smile.

The first story of the home sports an open area kitchen, living



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two years in a row, the first for the recruiting service command.

A first-story bedroom is adorned with hues of purple, gray and white touches. A collection of stuffed bears from countries Marlon has visited occupy an easy chair. The bedroom's accompanying bath is decorated in complementary blues, white and gray.

Stairs lead to his loft office with a replica of the famed Hollywood sign. "I like to think of it as coming up to the hills," Marlon quipped. From his office, he operates Daniels Prints, his graphic design company, and his real estate business which he operates in San Antonio and Houston, where he owns homes occupied by family members. The black and white theme is enhanced with his display of a black and red Hawaiian dish collection. Nearby, speakers tell of his amateur DJ times. The comfortable seating is Italian.

Marlon's collection of ships serves as a focal point on the stair landing. Photos from his service and of his kids complete this nook.

The office opens to a balcony overlooking the complex's pool. "My daughter loves the pool, but I haven't been swimming yet," Marlon admitted.

The master bedroom is dressed in black, white, red and gold. A cabinet holds Marlon's overflowing watch collection, and a Chinese jewelry box from his youth holds more treasured pieces. "My cousin found this jewelry



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box, and knew I would want it,” Marlon said.

A wall hanging that states, *Be the Light*, declares what Marlon strives for. Busy building his businesses, he’s not yet started working out with other veterans as he had planned, but he’s already helping neighbors with their workouts. “I used to compete in bodybuilding from the mid-’90s until 2005 in the military,” Marlon said.

When he’s not enjoying time with Jaidyn during father/daughter dinners and school activities, working or exercising, Marlon takes in a movie at the nearby theater. “It’s my unwind Tuesday. I’m a movie buff. I’ve made a network of friends here and have all I can want within a walk,” he said. He’s well into writing another successful chapter in life. **NOW**

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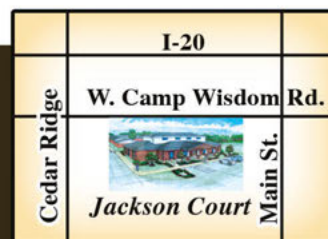
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Where Are They NOW?

Jackie O'Connor

— By Adam Walker



Jackie O'Connor grew up in Duncanville, attending ChristWay Academy with her sisters, where her father coached football and other sports. "I remember the times when the parents, teachers and students from the school would TP our house when we won games and would throw long, paper chains in our trees after homecoming every year," she said. "Those were fun times. And every time we went to Tom Thumb, we would always run into someone we knew!" Jackie thinks of Duncanville as a place where community is important. "One year, my mom lost her job, and we were really low on funds. It was winter and the heater went out. We knew there probably wouldn't be much for Christmas. But then someone gave us some money for food, and the dad of one of the football players my dad coached helped us get a heater. Someone even gave my parents money for presents. I saw the community come together and help my family," she reminisced.

Growing up, Jackie's mother taught her to be an open, strong-willed individual. "I learned to speak my mind, but be kind doing it. People aren't afraid to come to me for an honest opinion." Her parents and youngest sister

still live in Duncanville, and she returns for holidays. "I come back to see family friends and walk the dog with my mom. I'll notice a store that hasn't changed, one that's gone or a new one that's come in. It's interesting to see the place change while I'm gone."

Now Jackie lives in Allen, with her middle sister who is also a college student. Jackie is studying at SMU Guildhall in Plano, where she is completing her thesis for her Master of Interactive Technology in Digital Game Development focusing on art creation. If that sounds like fun, but also a lot of work, she confirms it is. "Going to school here, I get to meet a lot of neat people. Recently, our school helped with an Extra Life fundraiser for the Children's Miracle Network. We played video games for 24 hours, live streamed on Twitch, to raise money for Children's Medical Center Plano. We raised \$7,600 — more than our goal — and then the Hersch Foundation doubled it! Being able to do this by playing video games and having fun was really cool. And I got to be one of the hosts for the event." Jackie was especially pleased because this was the hospital that helped her youngest sister several years back.

Her studies have changed the way Jackie looks at both video games and life. "I grew up playing video games, experiencing them as the audience," she explained. "But you don't get to see the magic happen. Now I get to *make* the magic happen. And it doesn't make it any less exciting. Now when I play games, I'm looking for inspiration. I walk around campus, or at restaurants or on the street and see some object. I stop and stare at it thinking, *I wonder how I can recreate that texture, reflection or whatever.*" She also gets to do lots of research on how things are made, so she can recreate them in digital worlds.

"I want to be in a place where I can take in a lot of information and learn, but also give a lot back."

Her future plans are a mixture of the grand and the mundane. "My mother encouraged me to go for my master's degree, so I can get a better job. So I did, and now I'm almost finished. I hope to stay alive and pay off my loans!" she laughed. "I want to be in a place where I can take in a lot of information and learn, but also give a lot back. I want to be effective in helping people. I have come to realize that wherever you are, you can make a difference and be a light in your workplace." This young woman is on her way to big things. **NOW**



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In the Kitchen With

RHYS REMAR

— By Virginia Riddle



Rhys Remar remembers attempting to prepare a soufflé as a youngster. “It was a challenge I wanted to take. They turned into very fluffy brownies!” He helped his grandpa make homemade pickles and admired his dad’s cooking. “He always cooked as a science, and I think of cooking as edible science,” he explained.

“When I started cooking, I primarily loved baking,” Rhys stated. Lately, however, he has begun to prepare more meals, especially Asian cuisine. “I have fallen in love with Japanese and Indian food,” he said. A student of Japanese, Rhys loves the balance of bitter with sweet in that country’s cuisine.

A network technician studying to become a network engineer, Rhys serves, along with his wife, Lauren, as youth ministers at his church. **NOW**

Chicken Tikka Masala

6 Tbsp. butter (divided use)
2 lbs. chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch chunks
1 yellow onion, diced
3 garlic cloves, minced
1 Tbsp. garam masala
1 Tbsp. fresh ginger, grated
1 tsp. chili powder
1 tsp. cumin
1/2 tsp. cayenne pepper
1 1/2 cups or 1 14-oz. can tomato sauce
2 cups half-and-half
Salt and pepper, to taste
Lime and cilantro
Rice, cooked
Naan (oven-baked flatbread)

1. In a large skillet, using 2 Tbsp. butter, brown the chicken on every side over medium-high heat. Chicken doesn’t need to

be fully cooked. Work in batches; set aside.

2. In the same skillet, melt another 2 Tbsp. butter over medium heat. Add onion; cook about 3 minutes. Add garlic, garam masala, ginger, chili powder, cumin and cayenne; stir well. Cook about 45 seconds before adding the tomato sauce.

3. Bring the mixture to a simmer; cook for 5 minutes, then add cream. Return the mixture to a simmer; add the chicken. Simmer for 10-15 minutes, keeping heat low.

4. Stir in remaining butter, salt and pepper. Serve garnished with lime and cilantro, alongside rice and naan.

Tonkatsu (Fried Pork Cutlet)

2 medium cut pork chops
Salt and pepper, to taste
1 large egg
1 Tbsp. water
1 cup all-purpose flour

1 cup panko breadcrumbs
Vegetable or canola oil

1. Pound the meat until tender; mold to original shape. Cut small slits on both sides of meat; sprinkle with salt and pepper evenly.

2. In a bowl, combine the egg with 1 Tbsp. of water; mix, creating an egg wash.

3. Coat the meat in flour; dredge in egg wash. Coat with breadcrumbs.

4. Heat oil to 350 F; deep fry meat 1 minute per side. Cool on wire rack over paper towel; let oil drain. Cut meat into 1-inch pieces; serve.

Katsudon (Fried Pork Rice Bowl)

1/3 cup dashi (1/3 cup water combined with 3/4 tsp. Hondashi)
1 Tbsp. soy sauce
2 tsp. sugar
2 tsp. aji-mirin (sweet rice wine)
4 slices yellow onion
1 tonkatsu cutlet
2 large eggs
2 scallions, thinly sliced (divided use)
White or brown rice, cooked

1. In a small saucepan, combine the dashi, soy sauce, sugar and aji-mirin; simmer over medium heat.

2. Add onion; let simmer until tender. Cut tonkatsu into 1/2-inch strips. Place over onions; simmer 1 minute.

3. Beat eggs and scallions together. Pour onto cutlet; cover. Let the eggs set for 1-2

minutes depending on desired firmness; serve over rice or rice bowl topped with scallions as garnish.

Tiramisu

6 egg yolks
3/4 cup white sugar
2/3 cup milk
1 1/4 cups heavy cream
1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
1 lb. mascarpone cheese
2 3-oz. packages ladyfinger cookies
1/4 cup strong brewed coffee
Cocoa powder, to taste

1. In a medium saucepan, combine egg yolks and sugar until well blended. Add milk and cook over medium heat, stirring until boiling. Let boil for 1 minute; let cool. Tightly cover and store in refrigerator for 1 hour.
2. In a medium bowl, beat cream with vanilla until stiff peaks form.
3. Whisk mascarpone into yolk mixture (custard).
4. Split ladyfingers in half and drizzle coffee over them, allowing them to absorb the coffee. (More coffee enhances the flavor, but makes them mushier.)
5. In a 7x11-inch pan, layer as follows: half ladyfingers, half mascarpone custard, half whipped cream, remaining ladyfingers, remaining custard, remaining whipped cream. Sprinkle with cocoa. Cover and store in refrigerator for at least 4 hours to set.

Reverse Seared NY Strip Steak

2 NY strip steaks
Kosher salt, to taste
Coconut oil, to taste
4 Tbsp. butter (divided use)
3 garlic cloves
Thyme sprigs

1. Coat steaks liberally with salt; cover. Let sit for 1 hour.
2. Preheat oven to 250 F; place steaks on a wire rack or cookie sheet. Cook for 45-60 minutes, or until internal temperature equals 135 F; remove from oven.
3. Over medium heat, lightly coat a cast-iron skillet's bottom with coconut oil.
4. Place 1 steak in skillet; turn it so all steak surfaces touch the skillet. When both large steak sides are golden brown, move steak to one side of skillet.
5. Add 2 Tbsp. butter, garlic and thyme to other side of skillet; melt. Tilt the steak away from heat; with spoon, gently baste the butter mixture over the steak for 1 minute.
6. Remove the steak from the skillet; wrap with foil to seal flavor. Repeat process with second steak.

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— By Adam Walker

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Ben Franklin Apothecary has stood in the heart of Duncanville for the last 53 years. It's a family-owned throwback to the old drugstore of long ago, complete with Kitchens Deli, a '50s-style lunch counter and soda fountain boasting a black-and-white checked tile floor. The store features toys and candies you, your grandmother and her father all enjoyed, while the quilt shop in the next room can supply everything you need for your next project, including buttons and contact with fellow quilters.

This is a family business. Pharmacist Dan Jespersen, and his wife, Janice, “the boss,” along with Director of Operations Kasey Cheshier and his wife, Joy, who is the buyer, are only some of the family members who work or have worked here. “We have at least seven family members working here now, and other employees who have been here so long, more than 20 years, we just adopted them!” Dan exclaimed. “This is a relationship-based business,” Kasey explained. “It’s about real people serving real people.” They answer their phone during business hours, with no voice menus to dig through.

This is a place where you can get your prescription compounded on-site, while you buy a Coke or Sprite in a glass bottle. You can enjoy a lunch from the past or shop for yo-yos, jacks and board games you played with your parents, or materials for your next craft project and decorative items for your home.

Kitchens Deli has been part of Ben Franklin's pharmacy for more than 20 years, and in that time, has remained popular with locals. "The world is so complex," Dan lamented. "It's nice to have somewhere to go that's simple." This is a place where fountain drinks are mixed on the spot, and the menu includes sandwiches of many kinds, baked potatoes and homemade desserts, including pies and cobblers. "The deli is so popular that we've had to expand it out into the sales-floor space," Kasey smiled.

People come from all over the state and beyond to see an old Ben Franklin store.

The store started out as an old five-and-dime concept and grew. Now it specializes in old-fashioned toys, candies of yesteryear, nostalgia products like replica tin signs and unique decorative and home decor items for Valentine's Day and other holidays.

"Ben Franklin's is more than just a store. We also have community events like the Elvis Show put on by performer Kraig Parker. We also put on the Heart of Duncanville 5K that gives classroom grants to teachers, and we host several community meetings throughout the year," Kasey explained.

The Texas Historical Commission placed a plaque on this old store for its 50th anniversary. "They believe that this is the last Ben Franklin store in Texas. People come from all over the state and beyond to see an old Ben Franklin store. We want to take you back to the good old days," Dan said.

"This is a place where your kids are safe, the lunch is good and we know your meds. It's important to shop small and keep your dollars in your community," Kasey reminded. "Let us take care of you!" **NOW**



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Getaway to Good Times

— By Emily Nipps

Northwest Florida often gets less attention than Miami and Orlando, but it makes an ideal spot to explore and relax without the crowds. Sugar-sand beaches, emerald waters, historic landmarks and sunny outdoor adventures await families or couples designing the perfect getaway.

You don't have to venture far beyond the Alabama-Sunshine State border to find a treasure of activities, ranging from museums and mini-golf to waterfront dining and fishing. At the northwest tip of Florida sits beautiful Pensacola, known for its protected beaches and 18th century-era restored neighborhoods.

To get a real-life feel for Pensacola's past, start your trip by passing through Historic Pensacola Village. Whether you explore on your own or discover the area with a guide, don't

miss seeing the T.T. Wentworth, Jr. Florida State Museum, built in 1908.

Aviation geeks won't want to miss visiting the National Naval Aviation Museum. Located on Naval Air Station Pensacola, the museum features more than 150 aircraft on display. It's also where the Blue Angels Naval aerobatics team trains.

Pensacola owes its pivotal role in American aviation history to its famous warm climate and sunny skies. With free museum admission and free guided tours, the National Naval Aviation Museum is an affordable and fun adventure.

From Pensacola, it's about a one-hour drive along Scenic Highway 98 to the unspoiled beaches of Santa Rosa Island. Enjoy luxury beach houses, upscale dining and the unique

artist colony known as Gulf Place. Santa Rosa Beach also has several entrances to Point Washington State Forest, a 15,000-acre preserve known for rich hunting, off-road bicycling and hiking.

Santa Rosa Island is home to five fascinating all-brick forts built to defend coastal Florida after the War of 1812. Fort Pickens, finished in 1834, was active until 1947. Walk through the halls where soldiers were in the Civil War, World War I and World War II and where the great Apache leader, Geronimo, spent seven months after he was captured in 1886.

Fort Barrancas was built on the ruins of an old Spanish fort and finished in 1844. Fort McRee was built too close to the water with too much wood in its construction and was blasted to bits by artillery in the first months of the Civil War. The ruins are clearly visible near the surf at Perdido Key.

If the family is up for another three-hour drive continuing east on US-98, St. George Island is a perfect getaway along the water. Climb the 92 stairs to the top of the Cape Saint George Lighthouse, built in 1852, for a beautiful view of the island and surrounding waterways. St. George Island is also home to 17 miles of paved bike paths and numerous off-road trails for exploring. Jolly Roger Beach Shop rents bikes by the hour, day and week and is located in the center of the island.

For sunset, stop by the Blue Parrot Oceanfront Café for fresh seafood, cocktails and a great view of the water. Don't miss trying the fresh Apalachicola Bay oysters while you're there.

And if you want an even closer look at the sparkling waters, check out Journeys of St. George Island to charter boat trips for great fishing, rent kayaks or take your little ones on the guided dolphin tour or sunset cruise.

Whether you wish to relax or explore, look no farther than the sunny shoreline of northwest Florida. Its rich history combined with soft beaches and nature trails make it your getaway for good times. **NOW**



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A Brand New You

— By Zachary R. Urquhart

There's never a bad time to start exercising, dump bad habits or learn a new skill, and the beginning of the new year can be the jumpstart needed to make a change. If eating healthier is your goal this year, here are some ideas for a fresh start on becoming a new you.

Gluten-free vs. Low-carb¹

- *Know why you are changing.* Celiac disease and wheat allergies cause a small percentage of people to be unable to digest the protein from wheat properly, but many others have cut gluten and seen improvements in their health. It isn't clear if everyone would be healthier on a gluten-free diet, but if it means you avoid cookies or donuts and don't drink beer, less gluten would make you healthier. The key is understanding what you are avoiding and why, so you don't miss nutrients like fiber.

- *Eat less bread.* If you aren't actively staying away from breads and wheat-based starches, you are likely eating more bread than you need. While enjoying a roll with dinner may not be a bad thing, going for third and fourths is over-consumption.

- *There are other carbs.* The gluten-free trend stemmed from an earlier craze of reducing carbohydrates. But there are many types of carbs. Fruit is high in natural sugars, which is better than foods with added sugar, but too much fruit can still be a bad thing. The key in low-carb eating for weight loss is to avoid sugar and sugar substitutes like aspartame and sucralose as much as possible. If you need something other than water to drink, try unsweetened tea with a fruit wedge, instead of diet soda.



Diabetic Diets²

- *Control your glucose.* Diabetics should eat at regular times, with a focus on healthier foods like fruits, vegetables and healthy carbs. This helps the body produce and regulate the insulin it either makes or gets from injections.

- *Know what to avoid.* Diabetics are at a higher risk of heart problems, so limiting the amount of both saturated and trans fats is important. Fats in avocados and almonds are healthy in moderation, but animal proteins and processed foods aren't. Sodium and cholesterol should also be limited.



Heart Healthy³

- *Eat better to live longer.* If the goal is long-term health, you will want to make some long-term diet decisions. Choose whole grains over refined flour or calorie-high muffins and pastries. Add plenty of fruits and vegetables, while limiting sodium. Keeping portion sizes down to limit your caloric intake will improve your overall health.

- *Make good choices.* A heart-healthy menu includes good fats like those in healthy oils, nuts and seeds. Limit saturated fats and avoid untrimmed beef or hot dogs. Instead, choose



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good proteins like lean ground meat or poultry, eggs and legumes.

- *Follow a plan.* Find a variety of healthy options and buy groceries with a menu in mind to get food that meets your nutritional needs, while limiting the unhealthy options you are trying to avoid. And include a sensible “cheat” meal once in a while to curb cravings for unhealthy options.

Whatever your diet and health goals are this year, your first steps should be researching and deciding on a firm plan to follow. No matter your goal, knowing what to and what not to eat will help you become the new you that you are hoping to be. **NOW**

Sources:

1. “Is Eating Gluten-Free Healthier” obtained from <http://www.eatingwell.com/article/9943/is-eating-gluten-free-healthier/>
2. “Diabetes Diet: Create your healthy-eating plan” obtained from <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/diabetes/in-depth/diabetes-diet/art-20044295>
3. “Heart Healthy Diet: 8 Steps to prevent heart disease” obtained from <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/heart-disease/in-depth/heart-healthy-diet/art-20047702>



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Zoomed In: Julio Velasquez

By Adam Walker

Julio Velasquez became the new library director for the Duncanville Public Library in August of last year. He has been a librarian for 15 years in Dallas, and has big plans for expanding services in Duncanville. “It’s fantastic getting to learn about this community and the day-to-day needs of the patrons,” Julio said. “We already have great programming for kids and teens, but we’re adding more for adults — library karaoke, cross stitch and knitting, ESL, GED and citizenship classes.”

He is looking forward to partnering with other community groups, schools, churches and civic organizations to make the library a place everyone wants to be. “We can celebrate being a diverse community,” Julio said. “The library can be a unifying place in the city.”



Barbara Douglas accepts a Turkey Bucks donation from DeSoto ISD Gifted and Talented students at the DeSoto Food Pantry.



Reed Middle School students go to the All-Region band competition.



Timothy Walker makes a corner kick in a tournament at Duncanville's Harrington Park.



Veterans and Cub Scouts from Pack 520 read to each other at Reading With Our Heroes.



The DeSoto Chamber of Commerce, city government and Outback Steakhouse Corporate celebrate Matthew Sanker's ribbon cutting.



Josh Session rings a Salvation Army bell at Wal-Mart.



Dr. Chad Tucker aligns the spine of Mr. Nutty Mut, so his tail can wag again.



Duncanville ISD construction teacher Tamara Gurnell and members of the board ride The Grinch float in the annual parade.

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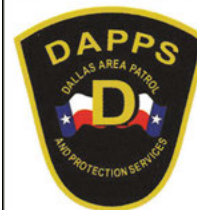
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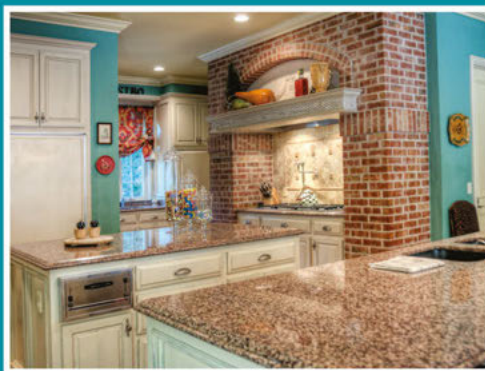
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Calendar

1

First Day "Precious Prairie" Hike: 1:00-2:00 p.m. Cedar Hill State Park, 1570 FM 1382. Regular park admission. Leashed pets welcome on a two-mile nature hike.

First Day Nature Walk on Penn Farm: 3:00-4:00 p.m. Cedar Hill State Park, 1570 FM 1382. Regular park admission. Learn about native plants and their uses.

First Day State Park After Dark: 6:00-7:00 p.m. Cedar Hill State Park, 1570 FM 1382. Regular park admission. Learn about nocturnal animals and tell star stories.



3

Winter Read & Watch: 4:00 p.m., DeSoto Public Library, 211 E. Pleasant Run Rd. Read *Man in the Moon* by William Joyce and watch the movie version *Rise of the Guardians*. Decide which is better, the book or the movie.

6

Spotlight on Myna Birds: 5:00-6:00 p.m., Backyard Wildlife Resource Center, 406 W. Beltline Rd., Cedar Hill. Free. Come talk to Chitter the myna bird.

Tournament of Champions: 5:00-10:00 p.m., Grady Lamb Building, 601 E. Beltline Dr., Cedar Hill. Free. Dads and dad-like figures in the lives of CHISD students come together for dominoes and spades while watching the NFL Wildcard Games. RSVP at cedarhilldads.org/TOC.

12

Canterbury School Homecoming: 6:00-7:30 p.m. The Canterbury Episcopal School, 1708 N. Westmoreland Rd., DeSoto. Alumni reception and homecoming game.

Discover the Arts after Dark: 6:30 p.m., Zula B. Wylie Library, 225 Cedar St., Cedar Hill. Live performance and refreshments.

13

ASL Class: 11:00 a.m., Duncanville Public Library, 201 James Collins Blvd. Come learn basic American Sign Language.



Show and Tell: Exotic Pets: 4:00-5:00 p.m., Backyard Wildlife Resource Center, 406 W. Beltline Rd., Cedar Hill. Free. Show off your exotic animal and tell about yourself. Free beverages.

DeSoto Dining and Dialogue Dinner event: 6:30-9:30 p.m., Corner Theatre, 211 Pleasant Run Rd. Free.

Register at www.desotodd.org or call (972) 230-9648.

16

Old-School Family Game Night: 6:30 p.m., Zula B. Wylie Library, 225 Cedar St., Cedar Hill. Bring the whole family to play favorite board games of years past.



17

Liars' Luncheon: 11:30 a.m., Crescent Point, 235 W. Pleasant Run Rd., Cedar Hill. Storyteller Donna Ingham tells tales with a Texas twist. Lunch provided. RSVP with aranda.bell@cedarhilltx.com.

19

Duncanville Senior Dance: 7:00-9:30 p.m., Hopkins Senior Center, 206 James Collins Blvd. \$5. Live music from Final Showdown.

20

Open Mic Night: Fingerprints: 5:00-6:00 p.m., Backyard Wildlife Resource Center, 406 W. Beltline Rd., Cedar Hill. Free. Come use a university-grade microscope to explore fingerprints and forensics.

21

Canterbury School Open House:
2:00-4:00 p.m. The Canterbury
Episcopal School, 1708 N.
Westmoreland Rd., DeSoto.

MLK Celebration & Peace
March: 3:00-5:00 p.m. Cedar Hill
Government Center, 285 Uptown
Blvd. Free event for the community.

27

DIY Pest Control: Exposing Rats:
5:00-6:00 p.m., Backyard Wildlife
Resource Center, 406 W. Beltline Rd.,
Cedar Hill. Free. Learn all the dirty
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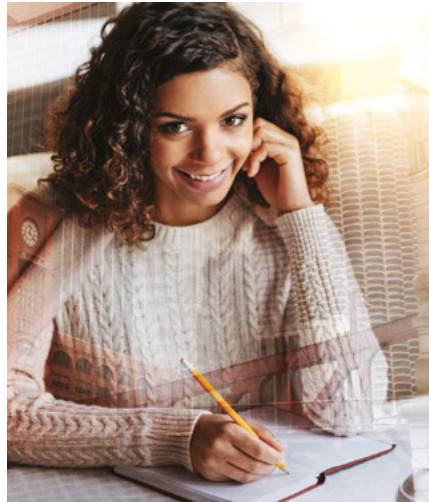
29

Evenings with the Authors: 6:30 p.m.,
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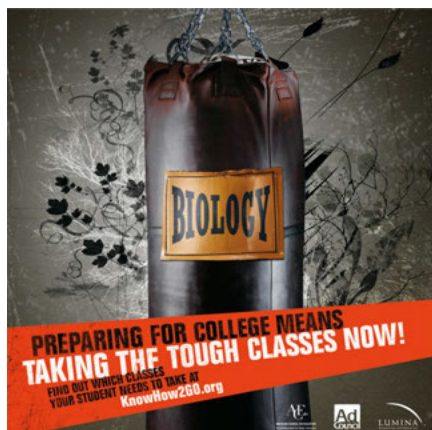
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