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ON THE COVER

Paintbrushes are tools used daily in Cheryl Kelly's classroom.

Photo by
Amy Ramirez.

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mailed free of charge to homes and businesses in the Ennis ZIP codes.*

*Subscriptions are available at the rate of \$35 per year or \$3.50
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EDITOR'S NOTE



Sandra

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Hallmark, here I come!

February is the month of many cards. Of course, there's Valentine's Day, but I also have birthdays and anniversaries to contend with. Many times, I find myself in a greeting card dilemma because I can't find just the right card for the person I'm shopping for. Sometimes it's difficult to find a card that expresses all I want to say. Most of them are too mushy, but I do what I can to find the perfect one.

Although I celebrate five birthdays (including my hubby's) and two wedding anniversaries (including my own) this month, one of my favorite celebrations is the February 14th birthday of Easton's beloved Pup Pup. Since Easton is 6, that means Pup Pup will be turning 5 on Valentine's Day. That's the day that Pup Pup came to life after sitting on a Wal-Mart shelf. That's the day when all the "adventures with Pup Pup" first began. I see a series of children's books in my future, thanks to all that Easton and his Pup Pup have been through in the last five years — washing machine baths, a pair of button eyes and new stuffing after all the original stuffing had been hugged flat.

The Adventures of Pup Pup, I can see it now!



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It's National Children's Dental Health Month!



For National Children's Dental Health Month, I thought I'd share some information on a topic that many parents struggle with. Are thumb-sucking and pacifier habits harmful for a child's teeth? The short answer is yes. These habits may result in long-term problems.

As a parent and a pediatric dentist, I see various oral habits, but the most common of them all is thumb

-sucking. Most kids suck their thumbs because it's soothing and is most prevalent during times of hunger, fatigue, stress, sleep, teething, and shyness. In fact, some children are seen upon ultrasound sucking their thumbs.

The intensity and frequency of the thumb-sucking habit, as well as the pattern of jaw growth, determine whether dental problems will develop. The American Dental Association recommends breaking the thumb-sucking habit before your child's permanent teeth come in. If left uncorrected, thumb-sucking can result in reshaping of the jawbone (narrow upper jaw), flaring of the upper front teeth, poor tongue placement, speech issues, overbite and open bite, and airway issues.

It is important to know that a thumb-sucking habit will typically stop on its own, and that, ideally, it will stop before the permanent teeth erupt. Once the permanent first molars erupt, usually around age 6, there can be changes to the direction of the growth of the jaws. If your child cannot stop by age 4, I recommend a few things:

Talk to your child. Explain what you're worried about. Kids respond better when they know why they are being told "no."

Enforce thumb-sucking limits. Giving up the thumb all at once isn't easy for a child. It is OK to suck his or her thumb in bed,

but not anywhere else. The goal is to have the habit taper off on its own.

Provide a replacement coping skill. Like adults, kids find it hard to break habits if they don't have an alternative way of coping. Consider letting your child have a "lovey" or "fidget" to squeeze when they're anxious.

Help your child recognize the habit. Remind your child when you see them doing it. Not all kids are conscious that they are sucking their thumbs, especially when they're bored or tired. Pointing it out can help them become more self-aware.

Keep in mind that change is not easy and may require lots of patience, which sometimes is easier said than done. If the thumb habit is still present at age 6, enlist your dentist's help. There may be some orthodontic issues developing, so I recommend a consultation to find the most appropriate method for addressing the problem and reversing the dental effects.

Sam Alzayat, DDS

Pediatric Specialist at Navarro Dental Center

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EXPRESSING T



"I have always been an artist, and seen myself being a teacher," Cheryl Kelly shared as she glanced around the massive art studio provided for the students by Ennis High School. "Art and kids are probably my two favorite things in life."

Cheryl went to college right out of high school and earned an associate degree in art. After marrying, she joined the corporate world, taking a job at an HVAC company working in the graphic design department. After having her children, Grant and Ryan, home was her career of choice for a couple of years, but she soon returned to the workforce as a paraprofessional at Bowie Elementary. There, she served as a computer teacher and started the art program. She also earned her bachelor's degree and teaching certification while working at Bowie.

Next, she took a position teaching art in Ferris. After eight years, she received a great honor when her former art teacher, who was retiring, called to see if she would consider coming back

THEMSELVES

— By Debbie Durling



to Ennis. Cheryl was happy to apply and then be chosen to step into the shoes of her former teacher.

Cheryl feels that art is a platform for expressive release. Her explorative art class allows students the freedom to experience various forms of art in the hopes that a connection will be made to one of them. “Last year, a student took this class simply because he needed an art credit. By the end of the year, he had connected with charcoal and created a beautiful piece of art that he was proud of,” Cheryl remembered.

Cheryl turned an ordinary classroom into one in which students can find their niche in what otherwise could be an intimidating space. “My job is more than a job. It’s about having a purpose in life, and it looks a whole lot different than it did when I started,” she said.

In her class today, students explore glass fusing, painting, digital media, drawing, weaving, polymer clay, fibers, photography, wood burning and anything else that piques the students’ interests. Students spend several weeks exploring areas of their choice and then return to their favorite at the end of the year. Her vision for the class is for the students to get their hands into a little bit of everything and eventually find a way to express themselves through their own favorite medium.





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Every student is also encouraged to spend some time on photography skills while in the class. "My goal is for all art to be original, which means they take their own pictures to model their creations by," Cheryl said.

One such creation might be custom glass art. Off the main art room is a smaller room that holds a glass kiln. Students take different shapes and shades of glass pieces and heat them in the kiln, using various processes resulting in different designs. Some of the glass completely fuses into a smooth piece with the colorful pieces seeming to float inside, while a different process leaves an embossed shape on the glass base.

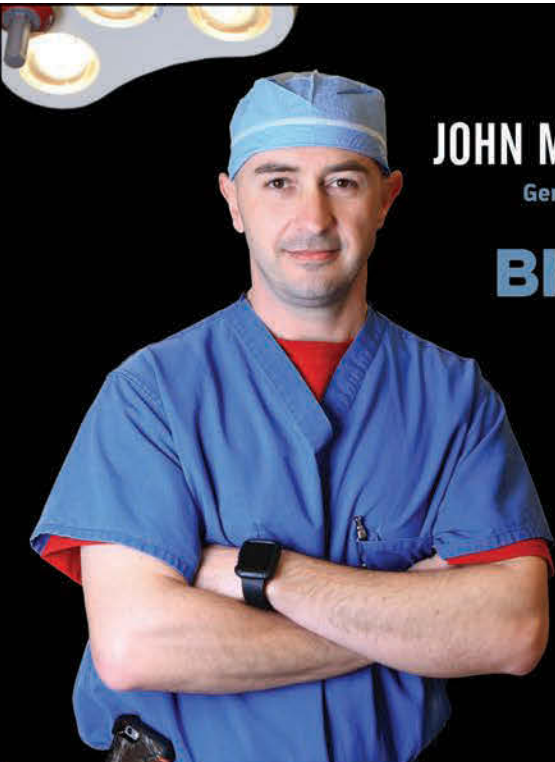
In addition to student creations displayed in a hallway cabinet, some students leave pieces of themselves in the classroom. The backslash



for each counter space was painted by a student. The backplash under one set of cabinets is inspired by an interpretation of *Starry Night*, while another is a geometric design. No direction as to the style was given, only that the student create a beautiful expression of their own imagination. This continues a creative tradition, which began on the wall of the adjoining art room with a mural painted by students of the former art teacher, Jeannie Lucky.

Another tradition is Senior Studio night hosted by Cheryl, who serves Crock-Pots of food for seniors who come after school to paint their own chair. Wooden chairs of all shapes and sizes are donated from various people each year, on which seniors paint an original design that characterizes their interests. The outcome is a display of the students' personalities, and the ultimate goal is an explorative arts exhibit in April.

Cheryl has seen students come into the Explorative Art class just to fill requirements and leave with new vision and confidence because they discovered parts of themselves they didn't know existed. "I care about the students the way I would care about my own children," Cheryl said. "Every time I look at a kid and know I have touched their heart and made a difference, it makes it worth it all." **NOW**



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Be Happy

— By Rick Mauch

AT HOME WITH
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Just inside the front door of the home of Steve and Stephanie Medina is a plaque that reads All our visitors bring happiness, some by coming, others by going. That sums up the Medina philosophy: If you're going to hang around, be happy or get happy, because the Medina home is a place to enjoy yourself. "We entertain quite often. Steve has a lot of family in the DFW area," Stephanie said. "This past year, we hosted Thanksgiving and Christmas. I think Steve would entertain every night if he could. Steve won't say this, but he's an excellent cook, which is good, because we love to eat."

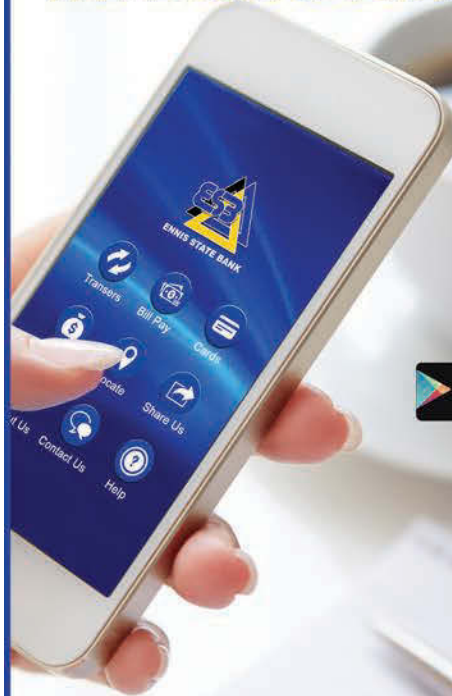
Their house was built in 2008, when they were still dating. They married in 2010, and now the home is the cozy abode for the two of them and their pets — dogs, Lexi and Lucy, along with cats, Zoe and Roxy.

"We call it the house with 20 legs," Stephanie said. "There's me and Steve, that's four legs, and the animals are the other 16."





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One of the more special features of the home is what you cannot see. The house was built using structural insulated panels, which consist of a thick insulating core, sandwiched between two oriented strand boards. "The whole idea was to make it energy efficient, which it is," Steve said. "It retains the internal house temperature very well, no matter the season."

What you can see is very cool, also.

The three-bedroom home features a stone exterior, and inside, the 3,000 square feet offer a variety of decor. The living room features a tall, stacked stone fireplace. The room seats eight comfortably with a grand view of the backyard that is surrounded by a ranch-style wooden fence. "We even decorate in the backyard because we look out there a lot," Stephanie noted.

Stephanie loves to decorate. February

is one of her favorite times, in fact, as she fills the home with heart designs. Not only is it Valentine's month, but her birthday also falls in February. "February is a big month for us," she said, smiling.

The living room flows directly into the kitchen, and is perfect for the entertaining the couple loves to do. They also find hours of enjoyment watching the large TV above the fireplace.

And when watching a game, they have no need to go to a sports bar. Steve and Stephanie have a whole-house audio system that gives visitors that "sports bar feel," so the game or music can be heard in every room. "You can even go outside on the patio and still hear the action, just like you would at a sports bar," Stephanie said. "Except it's better than a sports bar because it's home."

Steve owns a small engineering company in downtown Ennis, Eyncon Engineering, which he started in September 2015. It evolved from his father's company, AGTM Engineering.

Stephanie works from home with



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her travel business, BeachBliss Honeymoons and Destination Weddings. She and Steve travel themselves to research places. This also offers her the opportunity to show off one of her talents, photography.

On display in the living room are a couple of large photos so crisp they look like paintings. One is of an old pickup, showing a hint of the pretty blue color it once was, along with the rust that resembles red mud, with snow on a fender. That and others from one of their favorite getaways are compiled in a book called *Santa Fe Road Trip*. "There's nothing altered about those," Steve said. "Stephanie is so great at capturing the beauty."





Next to the photos is a wooden ladder that holds four blankets. Steve made it by hand. "Steve has more skills than he believes," Stephanie said.

In the master suite is a large shelf above their bed. It resembles an old piece of wood with stains of gray. They made it together, one of several such projects, including the wall in the utility room and a wine bar upstairs.

Also in the bedroom are three black-and-white photos with the numbers 1-4-3 on them. They are code for the words "I love you" ("I" has one letter, "love" has four and "you" has three). "We still text each other 1-4-3 often," Stephanie said. "It's a special thing between us."

The backyard, just under an acre in size, has a bubbling fountain with rocks, and a rock wall garden with shrubs. But most importantly, it is a pathway to Stephanie's "secret garden." While not really secret, (it's simply on the east side of the house instead of in back), it is a special place for Stephanie to escape. It has three chairs and a few flowers. "It's a nice place to sit in the evening," she said.

Upstairs is Stephanie's office, a media room, pool table and a small outdoor balcony. The balcony overlooks a hilltop with a special story Steve loves to tell. "Rumor has it that Bonnie and Clyde came through here a lot and hid out behind that ridge," Steve explained.

Hopes are to add a pool in the future. Otherwise, the couple can't imagine what they would change about their home. "We like having space. It would be tough to leave this house and have someone besides us living here," Stephanie said.

"If we moved, I'd like about 10 acres, and maybe some chickens," Steve said. "But, I think we're perfectly happy right where we are." **NOW**

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A Dream Fulfilled

— By Virginia Riddle

Upon entering the doors of Ennis Regional Medical Center, visitors and hospital staff find the welcoming and brightly lit gift shop the to-go place for candy, reading material or a special present. The cozy shop, hosted by an auxiliary volunteer whose smiling face and helpful ways can soothe each visitor's soul, is a favorite stopping place and another way in which the ERMCA Auxiliary raises funds. Maggie Holy is one of those auxiliary members who treasures her time spent in the gift shop. "Volunteering at the hospital was a dream of mine ever since I, as a child, first saw the pink ladies," Maggie recalled.

Gone are the "pink ladies," but auxiliary members' jackets are still pink, and their mission is the same — to provide any help the nonprofit auxiliary can to the hospital and its staff and patients. An auxiliary member for the past six years, Maggie started working in the emergency room. "We cleaned the rooms, making sure the rooms were

restocked, and we talked to patients whose families weren't there yet. We wanted to calm them," she explained. Other members can be found performing needed tasks in day surgery, in the hallways and rooms of patients. Answering phones, helping with paperwork, filing or passing out magazines or delivering flowers to patients are examples of tasks that are open to these auxiliary members.

Founded in 1951 by Addie Pearl Pinson who was, at that time, superintendent of the then Ennis Municipal Hospital, the auxiliary currently has 16 volunteers. Marvin White is the hospital's coordinator, Billie Tay serves as president and treasurer, while Maggie is the vice president and secretary. Members attend a monthly meeting, and prospective members are always welcome to attend and later fill out an application to serve. "There's always a need for our part-time lay person help," Maggie said. The benefits far outweigh any challenges these auxiliary members face. "It's always a challenge to do the job right. People are depending on us," Maggie said. "But members enjoy doing this work, and we are treated to a free meal in the hospital's cafeteria on the days we volunteer."

All auxiliary members, upon return of their application,

must pass a background check before receiving an auxiliary job. "Assignments are made based on need, but members have a say, too. We can pick whatever we're comfortable doing. Our assignments can be permanent or temporary," Maggie said. Assignments often reflect the talents, training and prior experiences of members.

Beyond the gift shop's revenue, auxiliary members raise funds twice a year through hospital lobby-area bake sales, jewelry sales and book fairs. "Since we're a nonprofit organization, we also welcome all donations," Maggie added.

Scholarships to students studying nursing are presented by the auxiliary annually. "In keeping with our mission of helping our hospital, we do require that scholarship students work for this hospital for two years following their graduation," Maggie said.

Additionally, the auxiliary annually funds two requests from hospital departments. "We vote on what requests will be funded," Maggie explained. Recent donations include vacuums for housekeeping, utensils for the dietary department, a mirror for the rehabilitation department and televisions used for patient education. "These are all examples of our commitment to put the money raised back into the hospital," Maggie added.

A native of Ennis, Maggie graduated from St. John Catholic High School and attended business school. "I worked for two law firms and had the same boss for 27 years," she said proudly. Retired, she enjoys spending time with her family, which includes four daughters, one son, 15 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

Besides her auxiliary work, Maggie enjoys cross-stitching and crocheting. She's a member of the Ennis Quilting Circle and St. John Nepomucene Catholic Church Golden Crusaders. She concluded, "I've loved living in my hometown, and it's a joy helping others in different ways." **NOW**



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CookingNOW

In the Kitchen With

KATHY WOODS

— By Virginia Riddle

As the oldest of four and the only girl, Kathy Woods helped around the house by learning to cook from her mother and her Mamaw, her paternal grandmother. “They both encouraged me,” Kathy remembered.

Starting with traditional family favorites, Kathy has experimented with new recipes and techniques. “My family appreciates different foods now,” she said.

Nine years ago, she and her husband, Dennis, moved to the country. “We have a garden, fruit trees and chickens, so a lot of my cooking today revolves around finding ways to use the abundant fresh food we have.”

Kathy, who also likes to bake, taught her two children to cook and is now sharing her skills with her 3-year-old granddaughter. She added, “I like the creative aspect of cooking.” **NOW**

Danish Apple Cake

Cake:

2 eggs
2 cups sugar
1 1/4 cups oil
3 cups all-purpose flour
1 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. baking powder
1 cup nuts, chopped
1 cup coconut
3 cups apples, peeled and diced
1 tsp. vanilla

Topping:

1/2 cup butter
1 cup brown sugar

1/4 cup milk
1 tsp. vanilla
Nuts, to taste (optional)

1. *For cake:* Preheat the oven to 325 F; grease and flour a Bundt pan.
2. Mix the eggs, sugar and oil together; in another bowl, sift the flour, baking soda and baking powder together.
3. Combine both mixtures; add the nuts, coconut, apples and vanilla. Mix well; pour the batter into the Bundt pan.
4. Bake for one hour, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.
5. *For topping:* While the cake is cooling, melt the butter in a saucepan; mix in the brown sugar, milk and vanilla.

6. Bring the mixture to a rolling boil for 2 1/2 minutes or a little longer to thicken.
7. Let the topping cool about 2 minutes; spread or drizzle it over the slightly cooled cake. Top with nuts.

Zucchini Cobbler

Serves 8-10.

8 cups zucchini, peeled
1 cup sugar
3 Tbsp. flour
1 dash salt
1 tsp. cinnamon
1 tsp. cream of tartar
1 Tbsp. lemon juice
1 10-oz. can pineapple, crushed
1 box Jiffy yellow or white cake mix
1/2 to 1 cup butter, melted
1/2 cup nuts (optional)

1. Cut zucchini in 1/2-inch slices; strip off seeds. Cook in boiling water until tender.
2. Drain; cool the zucchini in cold water for 5 minutes. Drain; add the sugar, flour, salt, cinnamon, cream of tartar and lemon juice, stirring well.
3. Add the pineapple with its juice; mix well but don't beat the mixture.
4. Pour the mixture into a greased 13x9 baking dish; top zucchini mixture with dry cake mix.

5. Drizzle butter over the cake mix. Top with the nuts; bake at 350 F for one hour.

Blueberry Buttermilk Pie

Makes 2 pies.

- 1 cup flour
- 3 1/2 cups sugar
- 1 3/4 sticks unsalted butter
- 6 eggs
- 2 cups buttermilk
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla
- 2 uncooked pie crusts, thawed or homemade
- 1 cup fresh blueberries or other favorite fruit, lightly tossed with 2 tsp. flour (divided use)

1. In a large bowl, mix the flour and sugar; set aside.
2. Melt the butter; pour it over the flour mixture. Mix with an electric mixer on low until the butter is totally incorporated.
3. Add the eggs, one at a time, allowing each egg to become totally mixed in before adding the next one.
4. Add the buttermilk and vanilla; mix and set aside.
5. Sprinkle the bottom of each pie crust with 1/2 cup of floured blueberries. Evenly distribute the filling between the two pie crusts. With a spoon, push the blueberries into the filling.
6. Bake at 350 F for 25 minutes on middle oven rack. Rotate the pies and bake for 10-20 additional minutes, or until the pie tops are golden brown and fillings are set.
7. Remove from the oven; place on a rack to cool. Once cooled, refrigerate pies until about an hour before serving.

Broccoli Salad

Serves 8-10.

Salad:

- 6 strips bacon
- 2 stalks fresh broccoli, crowns and stalks, finely chopped
- 1 medium red onion, chopped
- 1 cup cheddar cheese, shredded

Dressing:

- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1/3 cup red wine vinegar
- 1/4 cup sugar, or to taste

1. For salad: Fry the bacon until it's crispy; drain and let cool.
2. Toss together the broccoli, red onion and cheese. Crumble the bacon; add it to the broccoli mixture.
3. For dressing: Mix all the dressing ingredients together; pour over the salad and mix well.
4. Let the salad set in the refrigerator at least 1 hour to overnight before serving.

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— By Sandra Strong

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Fifteen years ago, Kim and Bob Woods saw a need and wasted no time in doing something about it. Family First Hospice was born from that need. Six years ago, they added Family First Palliative Home Care, which specializes in care for those with serious illness and also provides traditional home health care. “We wanted to provide palliative care for those patients who were not yet ready for hospice care,” Kim said. “It’s important to educate patients and their families on the level of care needed when they contact us. Palliative care is a bridge to hospice care.”

With palliative care, Kim, Bob and their staff are equipped to administer the level of care needed from traditional home health to hospice care. “Our goal from the beginning has remained the same — to keep the quality of care at the highest possible level at all times,” Bob explained. “We are now offering services to a second generation of patients.”

“We’ve taken care of so many family members of friends,” Kim shared. “Knowing us personally gives family members the comfort level they seek when looking for home health, palliative or hospice care.” Family First Hospice & Palliative Home Care is proud to offer hometown, homegrown care for those in need, not just in Ennis, but in the surrounding areas, as well.

One of the most important things to know when palliative and/or hospice care is needed is educating the patient and their family on where the patient really is in their illness and what type of care they need for the duration of the illness. “There is a special way to handle conversations with family members,” Kim

stated. "It's up to us to teach the family where the patient is in the process when dealing with a chronic illness. It's up to us to make sure they understand how the bridge between palliative and hospice care works in the end-of-life care for their loved one."

At Family First Hospice & Palliative Home Care, patients and their families have a choice when it comes to the type of care needed. Palliative care is an approach that helps improve the quality of life for patients and their families as they face upcoming problems associated with a life-threatening disease. Hospice care is supportive care that takes place during a patient's final journey, usually the last six months of life expectancy. "Hospice care is focused on comfort and quality of life instead of a cure, while also making sure to keep dignity intact," Kim further explained.

"Knowing us personally gives family members the comfort level they seek when looking for home health, palliative or hospice care."

These terms, when addressed properly, should not cause fear in the patient or their family. The staff — 40 full-time and 10-12 part-time employees, as well as 15-20 volunteers — at Family First Hospice & Palliative Home Care understand just how important it is to remove the fear factor when dealing with end-of-life situations that warrant palliative and/or hospice care. "This type of work is a calling," Bob said, "and the staff loves what they do." Many employees have a 14-year or longer tenure with the company, which says so much for the company as a whole.

Kim and Bob agree that what they do pulls at their heartstrings, but they know this is where they are supposed to be. For them, it's about dignity and quality of life until the final breath. **NOW**


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Photos provided by Town of Silverton/Silverton Area Chamber of Commerce.



TravelNOW

Basecamp for Adventure

— By Lisa Branner

Nestled at 9,318 feet above sea level in Colorado's San Juan Mountains, Silverton is a picturesque former mining town steeped in Old West history. Established in 1874 as Baker's Park, the town was named a National Historic Landmark in 1961. Today Silverton has a population of 600, and has become a perfect basecamp for adventurous travelers of all stripes.

The San Juans boast some of the most rugged and beautiful terrain in the lower 48, and are home to 13 of Colorado's "Fourteeners," mountains so called because their peaks rise to over 14,000 feet. The range is dotted with alpine lakes and waterfalls, fields of wildflowers and historic ghost towns that are relics of a bygone era.

Train buffs can enjoy an unforgettable adventure on the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad, traveling by

coal-fired, steam-powered locomotive on the same tracks that miners, cowboys and settlers took over a century ago. Climbing nearly 3,000 feet, the train winds through spectacular canyons and remote wilderness. Travelers disembark on Notorious Blair Street, whose wooden sidewalks were once lined with saloons, gambling halls and bordellos.

The Million Dollar Highway, built as a toll road in the late 1880s by railroad magnate Otto Mears, is one of the most spectacular drives in the USA. This journey weaves through the mountains, clinging to tight curves and topping out at an elevation of 11,017 feet on Red Mountain Pass before dropping into the town of Ouray. In autumn, the abundance of Aspen trees makes this ideal for leaf peepers.

For the adventurous, a jeep or OHV tour along the Alpine

Loop provides a full day of thrills. This 65-mile, four-wheel-drive byway connects Silverton, Lake City and Ouray, climbing over two 12,000-foot passes. Along the way, stop for a visit to Animas Forks, a well-preserved ghost town. In its heyday, this bustling mining hub had more than 30 structures including hotels, saloons, a post office and a general store. Today fewer than a dozen buildings remain, restored by the San Juan County Historical Society.

Silverton is a mecca for winter recreation, too, with two ski areas and boundless backcountry. Kendall Mountain offers affordable family fun, with 240 feet of vertical drop, four groomed trails and one double chair lift. Ice skating, sledding and snowshoeing are allowed any time. For fat bikes and Nordic skiers, the Town Loop offers 2.5 miles of groomed cross-country trails accessed right from town. For the advanced skier, Silverton Mountain is a challenging big mountain experience with expert-only terrain and heli-skiing. The extensive winter trails on Molas Pass can be explored on your own or with a local snowmobile outfitter like Ice Pirates. Be sure to bring a camera to capture the impressive views.


Summer visitors seeking tranquility will relish Molas Lake Campground, rated "Most Scenic Campground in Colorado" by AAA. Just six miles south of Silverton, atop Molas Pass, the well-maintained campground provides unforgettable scenery, starry skies, a stocked 25-acre lake and hiking access to the Colorado Trail.

For year-round accommodations with historic flair, the Grand Imperial Hotel provides an upscale lodging experience in the heart of downtown Silverton. Built in 1882, recent renovations have returned this 135-year-old landmark to its original grandeur.

For more information or to plan your trip to the heart of Colorado's high country, visit www.silvertoncolorado.com. **NOW**

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The Sweetest Valentine

— By Zachary R. Urquhart

There is no bad time to open your heart to a new family member, but some people use Valentine's Day as the perfect reason to bring a four-legged friend into their home. If you have been thinking about adopting a pet, maybe this month is the time to make it happen. Here are some tips for selecting an animal for your family to love.

Choosing an Animal

- *Give it some thought.* There are dog people, and there are cat people. Probably the first thing you should do, if you think your family is ready to adopt a pet, is get an idea of what type animal you want to adopt. You might even decide that a bunny, bird or fish is what your family needs. There are so many animals out there that need a home. If you head into a shelter without any thought, you might be overwhelmed. Before heading out, a little research regarding animals, their personalities and needs may make your decision easier.

- *Be flexible.* Even though you should go in with a plan, do not assume the exact color or breed of dog or cat you want will be there waiting to be adopted. If you are really wanting something specific, call

the local clinics and shelters to see if they have what you are seeking. Because the size and temperament of dogs is so widely varied, if you are leaning toward a canine, there are some things you need to decide. Think about the size each breed is as an adult, how well they will interact with children and how much yard or house space you have to spare.

- *Start sooner rather than later.* If you are really set on a Valentine's Day adoption, you will want to get yourself ready within the first few days of the month. The actual adoption process at a clinic or shelter is relatively simple, but if there is any specificity in what you are looking to adopt, you should give yourself a few days to find the pet that is just what your family wants.

Choose an Organization

- *There are many options.* Probably the most well-known pet adoption agency is the SPCA. But in any given area, there are typically dozens of adoption locations. If you are specifically looking for a canine or feline, veterinary clinics and city pounds will sometimes have pets that face a short future if they are not adopted. Different agencies will have varying services, fees and requirements, so your willingness to welcome a pet with an unknown health history may be a major factor in where you adopt.

• *There are online options.* In the last decade or so, many Internet pet-finder services have begun helping people find the pet that fits their family. If you have specific needs, or if you are looking for a less common breed or type of pet, using an online search engine may be your best bet. If you do find an animal this way, though, be sure to contact the pet's current home before leaving. Some sites are third parties, so there could be a lag from animals being adopted to websites being updated.

Get Ready

• *Make living arrangements.* If you are bringing a dog or cat into your home, you will need to have a place for them. With the relative cold this time of year, plan on having them inside the house, even if that means they are sleeping in a laundry room or other extra space. Have a litter box for your cat or a piddle pad if you have chosen a puppy. While you do not need to safeguard your house the same way you would when bringing a baby into the home, you do want to put up anything a new pet could either hurt themselves with or anything that you do not want damaged. And if your pet is a more contained animal like a fish or reptile, be sure you have a safe spot for the bowl or terrarium that a young child would not easily knock over or break.

• *Buy supplies.* You should wait until you are sure of the exact breed of pet you are getting before buying food, in case the Chihuahua you think you want turns into a Golden Retriever that needs a heartier diet. Buying more neutral items — like a water bowl or chew toy — might help the rest of your family and any existing pets transition more easily.

• *Prep the paperwork.* For the most part, all you will need to complete the adoption will be a nominal fee and your ID. Before you head to the shelter, make sure there is nothing else required. While you are getting any pre-adoption paperwork in order, make sure you have identified a local veterinarian so that you have a plan for the first time your pet needs to go in.

Use Valentine's Day to make your pet adoption a big event. Bring your pet home to heart-shaped tags, or wrap your crate, kennel or carrier with a red bow. Whatever pet you are considering, February 14 is a special time to add to your family through adoption. **NOW**

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Zoomed In: Ginger Gonzales

By Sandra Strong

Ginger Gonzales is so much more than a wife, mom and grandmother — she is a person who has a great love for people. “I believe we are all responsible for each other to some degree,” Ginger said, “so caring for others is the same as caring for myself.”

She began caring for the Ennis community in February 2015 as the Ennis Convention & Visitors Bureau Tourism and Main Street Secretary. “I greet and assist visitors in any way that I can,” she said, explaining her secretarial duties. “I also assist in marketing and promoting all the wonderful Ennis events.” Ginger also creates the *Existing Ennis Events* e-newsletter. “Currently, we are preparing and marketing spring events that you can find listed on the Ennis Y’all app.”



Andrew Leach competed in a recent Palmer JV cross country meet.



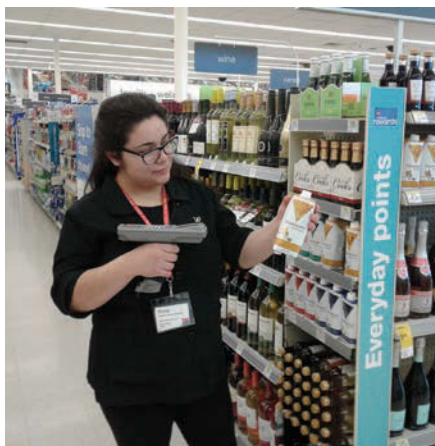
Glena Cumby spends a chilly winter morning shopping at Wal-Mart.



Abby Oliver, Nadia Bryant and Jeffrey Barker enjoy the middle school science club in Palmer.



Bricks 4 Kids holds a Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting.



Rosie Rodriguez restocks the shelves at Walgreens after a busy weekend.



Anniston Butler and Tori Guthrie share a hug during a recent birthday party.



Greg Teague fills up his car at the local Valero station.



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Calendar

1

John Conlee: 7:30 p.m., The Palace Theatre, Corsicana. Tickets are \$25-45. For more information, visit www.corsicanapalace.com.

9

Ennis Czech Music Festival Pre-Party: 7:00 p.m., Sokol Activity Center, 2622 E. Hwy. 34.

9 – 25

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof: Theatre Rocks!, 505 N.W. Main St. For more information, call (972) 878-5126 or visit www.theatrerocks.com.

10

Downtown Ennis Valentine Event: 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., downtown Ennis. For more information, download the “Ennis Y’all” mobile app, call (972) 878-4748 or visit www.visitennis.org.

Ennis Czech Music Festival: Sokol Activity Center, 2622 E. Hwy. 34. For more information, visit www.ennisczechmusicfestival.com.



17

SPJST #25 Fundraiser: 3:00-6:00 p.m., cornhole tournament (must sign up at the SPJST bar on **Wednesdays** from 5:00-10:00 p.m.); 6:00-8:00 p.m.,

barbecue dinner; 6:00 p.m.-midnight, music by Lost Money, auction and raffles. For more information or to make a donation, call (214) 837-9490.

26

WISD's Lighthouse for Learning/Community Education: spring semester begins, Waxahachie. Contact www.wisd.org or call (972) 923-4631 for registration and class offerings and information. Early sign up is encouraged since classes fill up quickly.



Ongoing:

Mondays

Sign Language Class: 4:00-5:30 p.m., Ennis Public Library, 501 W. Ennis Ave. Classes are free and available for all ages. No sign up required.

Third Mondays

Ellis County Veterans Networking Group: 6:00 p.m., Ryan's Steakhouse, Waxahachie. Come join the group for dinner and listen to what the guest speaker for the evening has to share. For more information, call Mike Lamb at (214) 763-0378.

Ellis County Aggie Moms meeting: 7:00 p.m., Waxahachie First United Methodist Church, 505 W. Marvin, Waxahachie. For more information, visit www.elliscountyaggiemoms.org.

Fourth Mondays

Texas Master Naturalists Indian Trails Chapter: 6:00 p.m., First United

Methodist Church, Waxahachie. The program begins at 7:00 p.m. For more information about the group, visit www.txmn.org/indiantrail.

Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis County meeting: 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the Waxahachie Bible Church, 621 Grand Ave.

Second Tuesdays

Ennis Masonic Lodge No. 369 meeting: dinner at 6:30 p.m., meeting to follow at 7:30 p.m., Masonic Lodge, 209 N. Dallas St. For more information, contact Cecil Curry at [ccurry_98@yahoo.com](mailto:c Curry_98@yahoo.com).

Wednesdays

DivorceCare: 6:30-8:00 p.m., First United Methodist Church of Midlothian, Family Life Center, 800 S. 9th St., Midlothian. DivorceCare for Kids ages 5-12 meet at the same time, as well as childcare for younger children. For more information, call the church office at (972) 775-3993.

First Wednesdays

Bluebonnet Patches Quilt Guild meeting: 9:30 a.m., First Presbyterian Church, 210 N. McKinney. Contact Judy Wensowitch at (972) 921-8800 or Diana Buckley at SeldomSeenQuilting@gmail.com for more information.



Thursdays

Chess: 5:30-7:30 p.m., Ennis Public Library, 501 W. Ennis Avenue, Ennis. Elementary age and above. No sign up required.

Ellis County Bible Study

Fellowship Satellite Class: 6:30 p.m., Waxahachie Bible Church, 621 N. Grand Ave., Waxahachie. This is a nondenominational Bible study class. For more information, call Lou Archibald at (214) 850-5303.



Fourth Thursdays

MACS: 6:00 p.m., Tabernacle Baptist

Church Life Center. Evening includes a covered dish meal and a program of singing or informational message.

Second Thursdays

Mom's Connected meeting: 9:30-11:30 a.m., Tabernacle Baptist Church, 1200 Country Club Rd. Call the church office at (972) 875-3861 for more information.

First and Third Fridays

MOPS meeting: 9:30-11:30 a.m. during regular school semester, Tabernacle Baptist Church, 1200 County Club Rd. A ministry for mothers of preschoolers in the Ennis community. Visit www.tabernaclefamily.org/mops/.

Fourth Saturdays

Bristol Opry: 7:00 p.m., featuring local singers and musicians. Sponsored by Bristol Cemetery

Association and Caring Hands of Bristol. For more information, contact Jim Gatlin at (972) 846-2211.



Sundays

GriefShare meeting: 2:30-4:00 p.m., Cowboy Church of Ellis County in the sanctuary Youth Inc. room. For more information, call (972) 935-9801 or visit www.cowboychurchofelliscounty.org.

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

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What's the Investment Outlook for 2018?

By most measures, 2017 was a pretty good year for investors. But what can you expect in 2018?

It's difficult to precisely predict the immediate future of the financial markets. However, many signs point to improved global economic growth and rising corporate earnings — both of which are important drivers of stock prices. In the United States, economic growth may be more modest than in other regions, which could result in international stocks outperforming domestic ones.

Here's another consideration: Low interest rates typically benefit the financial markets — and unless inflation jumps sharply, the Federal Reserve will probably remain patient, only raising short-term rates slowly throughout 2018.

Despite these positive signs, there's also reason for caution. Political uncertainty and changes in economic policies may lead to increased market volatility. Another factor is the long-term history of the stock market, which includes a drop of 10 percent or more — technically called a “correction” — about once a year. We've gone two years since the last correction, so it would not be surprising if we saw one in 2018.

Given this outlook — which could be classified as “moderately optimistic” — what investment moves should you consider this year? Here are a few suggestions:

Rebalance your portfolio.

The market's gains may have increased the value of your stocks so much that they now represent a greater percentage of your portfolio than you had intended — and you may not be comfortable with this increased presence.

So, you may want to rebalance your portfolio to achieve a suitable mix of stocks and bonds, based on your goals, risk tolerance and time horizon. As part of this rebalancing, and in an effort to help reduce the impact of market volatility, you may need to add investment-grade bonds and cash investments. (Of course, bonds carry some risks, too, including interest rate risk and credit risk.) The availability of cash will also make it easier for you to purchase stocks during a market downturn, when prices may be lower.

Look beyond U.S. borders.

You may want to consider adding some international equity investments to your portfolio, if appropriate. As mentioned above, these stocks may do better than U.S. stocks in 2018, but regardless of performance, the presence of global stocks can help diversify your portfolio — and diversification can help decrease your overall risk level. (However, diversification can't guarantee profits or protect against all losses.) Keep in mind that international investing carries some inherent risks, such as those related to currency fluctuations and foreign political and economic events.

Be aware of “big” versus “little.”

If you don't own many stocks of smaller companies, you might consider adding them to your portfolio. Smaller U.S. stocks have traditionally outperformed larger ones and may benefit from stronger economic growth and lower corporate tax rates. Be aware, though, that small company stocks tend to be more volatile than those of larger companies. And, as with all stock investments, you may risk losing some or all of your principal.

You may want to consult with a financial professional to determine which of these moves, or any others, are right for you. You can't control the external factors affecting the financial markets, but you can take total charge of your own investment decisions — and in the long run, these decisions can help determine your success as an investor. **NOW**

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Jeff Irish is an Edward Jones representative based in Ennis.



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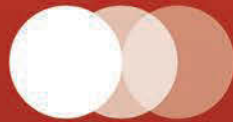
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