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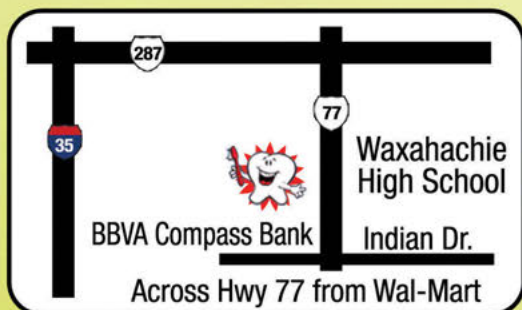
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Editorial Assistant, Rachel Smith | Writers, Lindsay L. Allen
Allison Burdick . Debbie Durling . Joy Horn . Derek Jones . Rick Mauch
Zachary R. Urquhart
Editors/Proofreaders, Pat Anthony . Shannon Randall*

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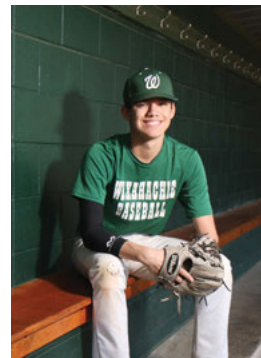
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ON THE COVER

Cristian Gonzalez sees his full potential as he lives out his dreams.

Photo by
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EDITOR'S NOTE



Sandra

Sandra Strong
WaxahachieNOW Editor
sandra.strong@nowmagazines.com
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What are you sensing?

I had a conversation with a loved one the other day. The topic was our five senses — seeing, hearing, touching, tasting and smelling. As I pondered the idea of possibly losing one, I realized the most important sense to me is seeing. Without my sight, I wouldn't be able to see the accomplishments my grandchildren make as they continue to mature. I'd miss seeing them all dressed up for their first prom. I'd miss seeing them walk across the stage to receive their high school diplomas. I'd miss all the milestones that are up ahead on this journey as their Granny.

Hearing runs a very close second. Without my ears, I'd miss all the "I love you" and "Hey, Granny" expressions that are still to come. But, I'd be able to recall all the words I've heard them say up to this point. I would draw from my vivid, in-living-color memories for as long as I could, and I'd pray that forgetfulness would not come knocking.

Taste and smell would be the first two senses to go. If I couldn't taste, maybe I wouldn't eat so much. Not smelling unpleasant odors would almost be considered a blessing. Thank goodness, this was just a hypothetical conversation with a loved one!

Which sense gives *your* life the most meaning?

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Employees enjoy competitive pay; great benefits with medical, dental, vision and more; paid holidays and paid vacation; a 401(k) company match; educational assistance; and employee discounts. The newest benefits also include an onsite health clinic and fitness center that are open to employees and their spouses.



The new onsite health clinic and fitness center are an important testament to Mouser's leadership in doing what is right by employees in the 21st century. The health clinic offers expedited medical attention and lower costs for employees who would otherwise need to schedule a doctor's visit off-site and maybe even lose a day of work in doing so.

"Both of these additions are receiving fantastic reviews from employees. The clinic offers prescriptions, so if employees have an illness or something like strep throat they can get in and see the nurse and be taken care of — and it's for their spouses, as well," says Tracey Mellenthin, Mouser's Vice President of Human Resources.



The fitness center is a state-of-the-art facility for cycling, weight training and endurance training, and contains just about every type of workout equipment found in commercial fitness centers, Mellenthin adds. Employees have 24/7 access with their badge and are even able to bring a guest.



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ELIMINATE



WAITING

All Excuses

— By Sandra Strong

Cristian Gonzalez was born with a gift, as well as what many would consider a disability. "He was born with symbrachydactyly," his mom, Vanessa Vasquez, said. "It's a birth defect that causes an upper limb deficiency. Fifteen years ago, statistics were that one in every 32,000 babies were born with this deficiency, and there is no reason or cause."

But this wonderfully blended, close-knit family has never looked at Cristian's anatomical difference — the loss of a fully developed left arm and hand — as something that would bring him down or as an excuse he could use not to excel in life. Yes, he may be different at first glance, but when he takes the mound as a pitcher, he brings his own special magic to the game of baseball.

From an early age, his desire for baseball was uncanny. Once he could communicate, baseballs were all he asked for. "We had no idea what we were doing at the time," Vanessa said, referring to buying that first Texas Ranger ball, bat and glove. "But, looking back now, I'm so thankful we gave Cristian what he asked for."

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Cristian with his mom and stepdad, Vanessa and Zack Vasquez.



At the age of 2, the family quickly realized that he was good at anything pertaining to baseball. They also knew he was not going to be limited in what he didn't have. "The first time I threw the ball to him, he hit it," his stepdad, Zack Vasquez, remembered. "He was a natural."

Once Vanessa, Zack and Cristian's dad, Lee Gonzalez, saw what their son was capable of, they did nothing to stand in the way of his success. In fact, they became a trio who looked



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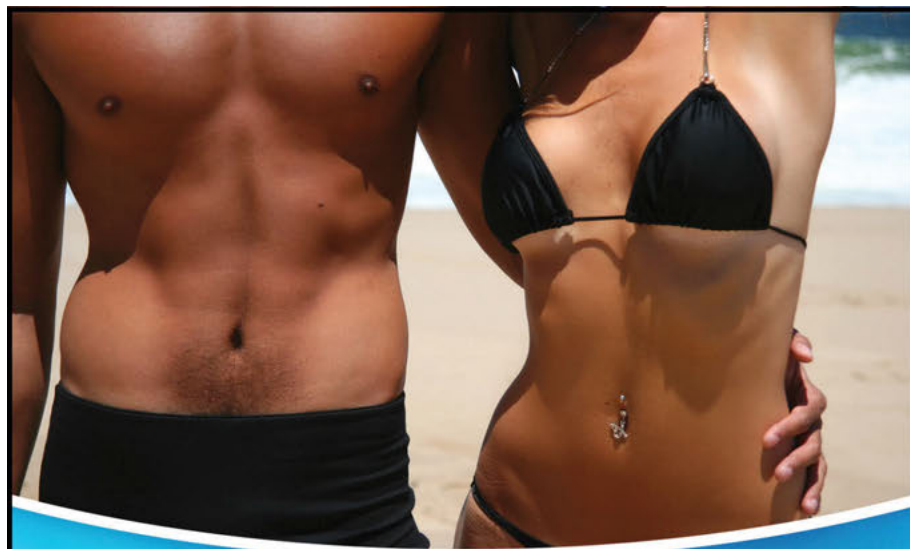


out for Cristian and had his best interests at heart. They began as a network with a focus on their son, and they continue to be his strongest source of support. "It's a blessing what he's able to do," Lee stated.

Vanessa is Cristian's PR manager and most decisions about where he plays are filtered through her, while Zack and Lee bring the athletic common sense to the mound. "I've always been the baseball mom," Vanessa admitted. "At least one, if not all three of us, has always been there at his games. We support him 100 percent."

At age 10, they entered Cristian in what's known as a "homerun derby." This challenge, or battle of the best, was held in Red Oak. The goal was to hit the most homeruns within an allotted amount of time. "He ended up winning the whole competition," Vanessa said. "And the trophy he won is still displayed in his room."

Cristian has played many games on many teams, and the trophies, ribbons, plaques and championship rings are a testament to his overall playing abilities. After those first few pitches in the backyard, the parental trio didn't hesitate to get him signed up to play at the age of 8 on the first of many select teams. Then Cristian tried out and earned a spot on the



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CRISTIAN'S DESIRE TO PLAY
BASEBALL TO A MUCH HIGHER LEVEL.**

WHS team his freshman year. "I play select in the fall and summer months," Cristian explained of his schedule. "I play with WHS during the months of February through April."

After seeing firsthand how gifted their son was, the trio began to have some real concerns. "We wanted coaches to see in Cristian what we saw in him," Vanessa explained. "We wanted them to see that it is much tougher to excel as a one-handed player."

They also wanted to make sure he was going to be challenged. "We decided it was best to sign him up to play with older kids," Lee shared. "If the competition was lacking, Cristian would pick up on harmful habits that included laziness, bad form and a lack in overall effort."

"We wanted to eliminate all excuses," Zack added.

Playing with older, more experienced athletes took Cristian's desire to play baseball to a much higher level. It kept him engaged. "We always knew he would prove himself," Zack said, "and he continues to do so time and time again."

His pitching style is unique, to say the least. He holds the ball in his right hand while his glove rests in his left armpit. Simultaneously, as he releases the pitch, the glove is released to rest on his left hand, making it easy for the right hand to scoop it up. "He pitches



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Cristian with his dad, Lee Gonzalez.

the ball, and his right arm comes around and goes into the glove, allowing him to catch a fly ball or grounder without any trouble,” Lee said. “The transition from armpit to his right hand is amazing.”

As they reminisce, they all remember a time Cristian was on the mound. The crowd was silent as he prepared to pitch the ball, while the batter waited at home plate. He released. The glove dropped into place just in time for his right hand to scoop it up and catch the ball that had been hit right back to him. Everyone heard the smack of the ball as it connected with Cristian’s glove. The crowd cheered as the batter was called out.

As a sophomore at WHS, Cristian is looking forward to another successful year on the mound. What started with 14 strikeouts in a single game during his freshman year has culminated into a record of more wins than losses and more strikeouts than allowed runs. “Cristian picked a lane and has stayed the road. He’s stuck with it,” Lee said.

Once he chose baseball, his three parents made his success at the sport a priority. They have pushed him to get to where he wants to be with one common goal in mind — that he sees his full potential while living out his wildest dreams. Cristian is ready to go wherever this baseball life takes him. **NOW**



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Simple Living

At Home With Gary and Cheryl Taylor — By Debbie Durling



Gary and Cheryl Taylor recently moved to Waxahachie to retire and be close to family. They have found new friends and landed in a beautiful community on the southeast side of town.

Austin stone, black and red brick and gorgeous crepe myrtles in luscious flower beds greet the visitors of this new build. A mixture of cherry wood and deep taupe carpets provide elegant footing which accents the creamy walls and white moldings.



Off the entry is the family theater room. On a large wall facing the arched opening to the hallway is a unique arrangement of nostalgic family photos set in antique-style frames. Metal artwork trees are placed on each side of the massive arrangement of pictures, completing the "family tree" theme. Like the rest of the home, the room is well-ordered, and items are carefully



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placed, with two theater-style recliners facing the entertainment center.

One of the most unique features of the home is the cathedral ceiling in the living room that rises in an architectural display resembling a European chapel. It defines the room and adds a sophisticated flare to the open concept great room which houses the kitchen, dining and living areas. A tiled fireplace surrounded by cherry wood made into a mantel complements the cherry wood

kitchen cabinets directly on the other side of the room. A large dining table surrounded by upholstered parson chairs creates a stately space for gathering.

Gary and Cheryl met at high school back in the '60s. Before they could marry, Gary joined the service and went to Aircraft Maintenance School. He ended up being a helicopter pilot in the Vietnam War. "When he returned," Cheryl said, "we were married. We have enjoyed 48 years

since that special day in 1969." Theirs has been a marriage of best friends, through a quiet and sweet life.

After the war, Gary worked for a lawn care company until he retired. He then took a job at the post office and retired from that at 69. Cheryl enjoyed being a housewife, as well as securing a job where she could work from home to have her own spending money.

Hunting is Gary's favorite thing to do. He loves to go with his friends

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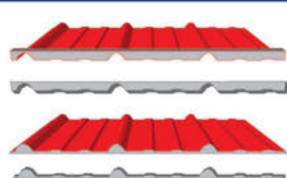
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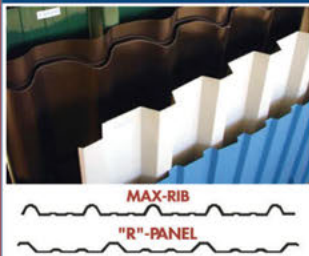
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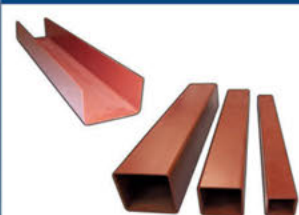


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to a deer lease to get away from it all. While Cheryl is happy for him to get away with his friends, she really misses him when he's gone. "I drive Ms. Daisy," he joked.

"He drives me everywhere," she added. "I love to shop and look at the countryside, so he becomes my chauffeur."

These two are modest, Master Gardeners. The front yard features carefully placed plants and flowers. Two comfy rockers are on the front porch, so they can sit, rock and admire their handiwork for hours. In the backyard, plants and shrubs are found in large pottery, and they also line the fence. "I planted those before we moved here and having them in pots made them easy to bring with me," Cheryl said. Their favorite part of being in this house is the view of the surrounding area.


Gary and Cheryl never had children. "It just never happened," Gary said. However, they have raised Maltese dogs, not to sell, but as part of their family. Gary and Cheryl have shared their home with as many as six at a time.

One of their dogs was named Sophie. She loved a particular Target commercial. She would jump up and bark at the TV when it would come on. Then, she would watch intently throughout the duration of the advertisement.



Presently, they have only one dog, Lolabelle. "She is like our child," they agreed. She is a well-groomed, white, fluffy princess. Sitting on momma's lap is her favorite pastime.

Each room of this beautiful home is decorated with Cheryl's special

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touch of class and Victorian style. Florals, decorative plates, sculpted rugs and leather finishes all complete the design of the home — a comfortable palate that creates a beautiful retreat while the couple enjoys the freedoms of retirement.

Travel is also a joyous pastime of this quiet couple. Gary's sister lives in Maine. The first vacation they ever took was to see her. They decided to go cross country and visit Niagara Falls on the way. "It took us four days to get there," Cheryl said. It happened to be the year the large hurricane came to the northeast region of the United States. It caught up to them when they arrived in Vermont. "Vermont was like driving into the past," Gary shared. They went to a mountain lookout but could not see a thing because of the mist from the hurricane.

Gary's sister is a teacher who has lived on two different islands. She takes a ferry back and forth to the mainland. There is no bridge. With only 360 people on the island, it is a quiet paradise.

There is more to this modest couple than they are willing to let on. In the office of their home, pictures of helicopters and awards from the time Gary spent in the service of the United States line the walls. Cheryl's gardening talents outshine many. However, when exploring their lives, they say, "We are just simple people and have enjoyed living our lives." There is no telling the depth of talent and influence these two have had on others as they went to work faithfully, served their country and created beautiful landscapes for others to admire. **NOW**

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Content on Hall 700

— By Sandra Strong

Earl Williams is a self-proclaimed prodigal — a boy who went out into the world and returned home a man. “I know what it is to live in the world and make wrong choices,” Earl shared. “I also know what it is to live my life making right decisions.”

He will soon celebrate 25 years of one of the best decisions he made in his adult life. “I started working for Waxahachie ISD on August 1, 1993,” he said. “So much has changed over the years. You know, that’s what time does. It changes things.”

After 20 years as a machine operator came to an end, due to a major layoff, Earl knew he needed to find employment that would offer permanence, so he applied with the Waxahachie ISD. His days with the district

started in the maintenance department, where his duties included delivering food to all the campuses. From there, he moved to the athletic custodial department, landing back home at Turner Middle School, which used to be Turner High School, Earl’s alma mater. Today it is Turner Prekindergarten Academy. While at Turner, he was promoted into the position of maintenance supervisor, overseeing the entire maintenance department. “I had lots of responsibility during this time,” he admitted, never realizing what an uncanny ability he possessed when it came to leading people in the right direction.

Earl has always loved people, and he finds great rewards when dealing with students. His philosophy has remained the same in all these 25 years. “If you show the kids love and kindness, they will show love and kindness back,” he explained. “The most important thing I can give students is a listening ear. I make it my business to hear what they have to say.”

Over the years, his responsibilities changed. He is no longer a supervisor, but he’s quite happy with that fact. He’s now the lead janitor at Finley Junior High, as one of eight janitorial employees. “I never want to be over people

anymore,” he confessed. “I’m content on Hall 700.” He also maintains the trailers and the field house. “I enjoy the time spent with the boys,” he added. “It brings back memories of sports and my days on the football team at Turner High School.”

Earl may no longer be the one in charge, but as a lead person, he is still the one that new employees go to when it comes time to learn the job. “I still train all the new custodial employees,” he stated. “We strive for consistency, and believe it or not, there is a specific way to do what we do.” Earl teaches newbies how to properly wax the floors in the summer months by showing them how to “lay the wax” correctly and instructing them in the proper way to operate the machines used in the custodial department.

Changes in 25 years have been many, from rules and discipline techniques to curriculum centered around final test scores. But, the one thing that has remained the same is Earl. “How I do my job speaks volumes, and setting a good example is very important to me,” he said. “For whatever reason, my example can help a student in a way that a parent or teacher cannot.”

He admits the job is not an easy one, but it’s always been one that has brought him great pride and satisfaction. “I love what I do, and I love the kids,” he admitted with a smile. “This has been a really good job for me.”

As he reminisces, Earl is thankful for the path he chose to walk so long ago. As a teenager, he never imagined all ethnic groups together in one classroom learning the same lesson. As he dreams of the future, he looks forward to more days spent at the fishing hole and special times ministering at Waxahachie Miracle Revival Center. “By doing so,” he said, “I will continue to find the joys life has to offer.” **NOW**



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The Power of Art

— By Joy Horn

When stepping into Jodie Schenck's classroom, imagination is instantly sparked. Each nook and cranny offers an opportunity for creativity. Throughout the room, student displays, art supplies, inspiration and love are seen. Students come and go in a way that shows they feel at home here. "In today's society, all children need to find a place where they feel comfortable, where they can relax and deal with issues," art teacher Jodie Schenck said. "Art allows that. When I think about young people who get off on the wrong track, I think they need art. Art is a place where they can try to turn it all around, where they can look inward."





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Jodie has been teaching since 1979, only taking time off to care for her own family. After graduating with a double major in art and education and moving to Waxahachie, she fell into subbing and eventually started teaching. "I have loved every single day. Even on the days when I want to run out, I love it. I love the kids," she said. Jodie is not only passionate about what she teaches, she is passionate about getting to know her students. She believes art can reach students on a different level and offers a certain flexibility other classes may not. "I like the freedom of this place," she said. "I can build relationships with kids and get to know them on a personal level."



It is evident Jodie sees art as a catalyst to change the world. According to her teaching philosophy, art is one way to help students work through negative emotions and feelings to become the best person they can be. It also allows them to master a skill they can be proud of and have fun with. "Art opens up all possibilities to kids. Everyone can learn to draw, so even kids who feel they aren't successful at much can be successful here," she shared. In Jodie's mind, teachers have the power to change the trajectory of a person's life, so they should always go above and beyond to make a difference in whatever way they can.

Making trips to the alternative campus is not unheard of for Jodie. She likes to go and offer art therapy for students who are struggling to fit into mainstream classrooms. "Art is a way for these students to work through anger or other issues," she added.

Jodie has been in the classroom in Waxahachie for 29 years and has many reservations about leaving. Not only does she feel good about making a difference in students' lives, she also enjoys being around them each day. "When my son died, other people's children saved my life," she shared. "Every time I start to wonder if time is up, I feel like the debt hasn't been repaid, and I am not ready to walk away."

There are many students whom Jodie enjoys having in class, but there is one who stands out as extraordinary. Judson Willett has been her art student since he was in sixth grade. "Judson is a great art student because of his intense ability to concentrate and listen," she said. "He has a keen ability to improve and perfect his work, but his real talent is listening. He is able to synthesize what I say, and then put it into action."

Judson has always been passionate about art. He loves the creativity it has to offer. "I love looking at a blank page and knowing you can do anything with it. You can draw whatever you want," he explained. "It's also a great stress reliever for me."

He has been drawing for as long as he can remember, but since taking Jodie's class, he has gotten more serious about his projects. "I always loved art, but I never applied myself until I took Mrs. Schenck's class," he admitted. At home, he enjoys doodling, especially on rainy days, to get ideas and inspiration for art projects. His favorite medium is drawing. "I like drawing and shading with a pencil, but I also love painting," he admitted. "I am drawn to the colors of blue and red because they remind me of the Texas Rangers."

He receives inspiration from sports, famous athletes and cars. "Sometimes,



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I like to draw a famous athlete, like Babe Ruth, and then incorporate an inspirational quote into the drawing," he shared. One of his favorite drawings is one he drew of his dad's car. "I am really proud of the picture I drew of my dad's Corvette," he said. "It was challenging because it was like drawing in third person. Mrs. Schenck had to help me, but it turned out really nice."

Judson's family is supportive of his art. One time after a trip to Belize, he drew a picture of a beach he and his family had visited. "School had just started, and I was really missing the beach," he remembered, "So I decided to draw a picture of it. My parents and sisters really liked it." He often uses his family vacations for inspiration. One of Judson's favorite assignments this year was his travel poster. "The travel poster was fun. My family and I had just been to Hawaii, and I really enjoyed drawing the island," he said.

Jodie commended him on his work. "It was nicely drawn and beautifully painted," she expressed. The painting was laminated and hung up in the hallway for display.

Judson sees art as a creative expression, a way to capture special memories and a stress reliever. "I hope my art will impact the world one day," he shared. "That is the goal, anyway." It is evident Jodie feels the same about art, and she is passing this mindset on to her students. **NOW**

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A man with a beard and sunglasses on his head, wearing a plaid shirt, stands in a kitchen. The kitchen has patterned wallpaper, a clock, and a stove in the background.

CookingNOW

In the Kitchen With

CHARLES BURNS

— By Lindsay L. Allen

As an extremely picky eater, Charles “Chuck” Burns knew that if he wanted something cooked the way he liked, he better cook it himself. “I started cooking when I was around 9 years old, the only problem is that my parents both loved to cook, so finding a spot in the kitchen to cook was always difficult,” he remembered.

Chuck has a love for grilling and cooking with his cast-iron skillet and often finds himself recreating recipes that his wife finds, but adjusting them to fit his picky taste buds. He can always count on family to visit during the holidays as he enjoys cooking for a crowd, and also enjoys teaching his youngest son his way around the kitchen. **NOW**

Goldfish Cheeseburger Sliders

2 lbs. ground beef, never frozen
1 cup coarsely crushed Goldfish crackers, any flavor
2 eggs
2 1/2 tsp. McCormick garlic seasoning
2 tsp. McCormick chipotle roasted garlic and herb seasoning
1/4 cup real bacon bits (optional)
3 tsp. Bull’s Eye Texas Style BBQ Sauce
1 pkg. dinner rolls
1 Tbsp. butter, melted
Burger toppings (optional)

1. Combine beef, Goldfish, eggs, seasonings, bacon bits and barbecue sauce into a large bowl; mix thoroughly until everything

is evenly mashed together. Let rest for 5 minutes before making patties.

2. Once meat has rested, make patties that are about 1/2-inch thick and as big around as a regular hamburger bun (they will shrink during the cooking process). Should make about 10 patties.

3. Preheat a seasoned cast-iron skillet on medium to medium-high heat; place burgers on the skillet and cook 6 to 7 minutes per side, or until internal temperature reads 150 F.

4. While burgers are cooking, preheat oven to 425 F; place dinner rolls on a pan. Cut them all in half; butter the top and bottom of the rolls. Cook for 5 minutes, or until brown.

5. Add your favorite cheese and condiments to your slider and enjoy!

Super Simple Beef Tips and Gravy

2 lbs. stew meat, cut into 1-inch cubes
1 jar Heinz brown gravy, beef flavor
1 can cream of mushroom soup
3 tsp. garlic powder
1 tsp. crushed black pepper
1 pkg. egg noodles

1. Combine all ingredients, except for egg noodles, in a slow cooker and cook for 10 hours on low heat, stirring every couple of hours.

2. Cook meat until internal temperature reaches 160 F in the middle of the largest piece of meat in the pot.

3. Let it sit while bringing water to a boil in a pot and cook the egg noodles for 10 minutes, or until they reach desired tenderness. Pour meat and gravy on top of your noodles and enjoy.

Slow Smoked Baby Back Ribs

2- to 3-lb. rack of baby back ribs
Seasoned salt, to taste
McCormick Chipotle Roasted Garlic and Herb Seasoning, to taste
Brown sugar, to taste

**I can of cooking beer (Chuck uses
Shiner Bock or Bud Light.)
Head Country Bar-B-Q Sauce, to taste**

1. Remove membrane from the back side of the ribs (online tutorials are available for this).
2. Give ribs a light coating of the following, in this order: seasoned salt, roasted garlic and herb, then a heavy layer of brown sugar.
3. Wrap in foil and place in refrigerator for one hour.
4. Preheat smoker to 250 F, using apple or pecan wood; place ribs in a large pan with a small lip. Place ribs in smoker, pouring half the beer around the foil in the bottom of the pan; let it smoke for 4 hours.
5. When internal temperature reaches 145 F, open the top of the foil from the ribs and pour remaining beer on top; brush with barbecue sauce.
6. Smoke for 30 more minutes, or until barbecue sauce starts to form a crust.
7. Remove from smoker; let rest for 20 minutes. The bone should pull straight away from the meat with little to no resistance.

BBQ Shrimp Skewers

**1 1/2 lbs. Argentinian Red shrimp
2 Tbsp. olive oil
Juice of one lime
1 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. ground smoked paprika
Head Country Chipotle Style
Bar-B-Q Sauce
Lime halves to serve**

1. Place shrimp in a large bowl; slowly pour olive oil and lime juice on top.
2. Add the salt and ground smoked paprika; stir to coat thoroughly. Set in refrigerator for 15-20 minutes.
3. Preheat the grill for direct heat cooking; remove shrimp from the marinade. Thread onto metal skewers.
4. Brush both sides of your shrimp with barbecue sauce; place on the grill. Cook for 5 minutes on each side, brushing with sauce as needed until the shrimp are cooked thoroughly and are charred around the edges.
5. Serve immediately with lime halves.

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BusinessNOW

The ZigZag Stripe

— By Sandra Strong

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Leslie and her crew learned through trial and error how best to improve their online status and provide the best

possible shopping experience for their customers, while remaining profitable. “It’s been a hard balance,” Leslie stated. “We’ve made the difficult decision to close two of our three stores at the same time we began revamping online.”

The Waxahachie store was second in line out of the three locations to open within six months of each other. The ZigZag Stripe in Waxahachie has proven to be the model they will use for any future locations. Yet, this was not the original planned location. Leslie and her mom, Susan Lindsey, had visited another city to look at property and were headed home. The Waxahachie location came after an evening of “passing through town,” just in case there might be something available. “We literally parked and walked the square and surrounding streets. With just one peek in the windows, we knew it was the place for

the store,” Susan remembered. “The hometown atmosphere, beautiful exposed brick and an amazing staircase said this was where we had to be.”

“Our boutique makes the everyday woman feel confident and comfortable in her own skin,” Leslie said. “Everyone is fighting a battle in their life one way or another. Having clothes that fit your body and give you a little extra confidence is one less thing you have to worry about in the world we live in today.”

Customers get personalized help from ladies who know what looks good and feels comfortable.

The store is also equipped with a “man couch,” where husbands can relax while their wives shop for clothes. “I’ve had husbands tell me, ‘I like shopping with my wife here, because she has such a good time, loves her clothes and feels so good about herself,’” Susan shared. There have even been a few naps taken by hubbies while wives shopped.

Women identify with the cheerful staff in The ZigZag Stripe, where customers get personalized help from ladies who know what looks good and feels comfortable. “We definitely did something right in Waxahachie,” Susan admitted. “It’s our pride and joy!”

Leslie and her husband, Joel, may have founded The ZigZag Stripe, but today, it is truly a family-oriented operation. While Leslie stays busy with the business, Joel is a full-time firefighter, and in his spare time works as the company’s chief financial officer. “We are different because we’re family run,” Leslie said. “There isn’t another boutique out there with the amount of family or almost-family, working under one roof.” As the old saying goes, the family that works together stays together. **NOW**

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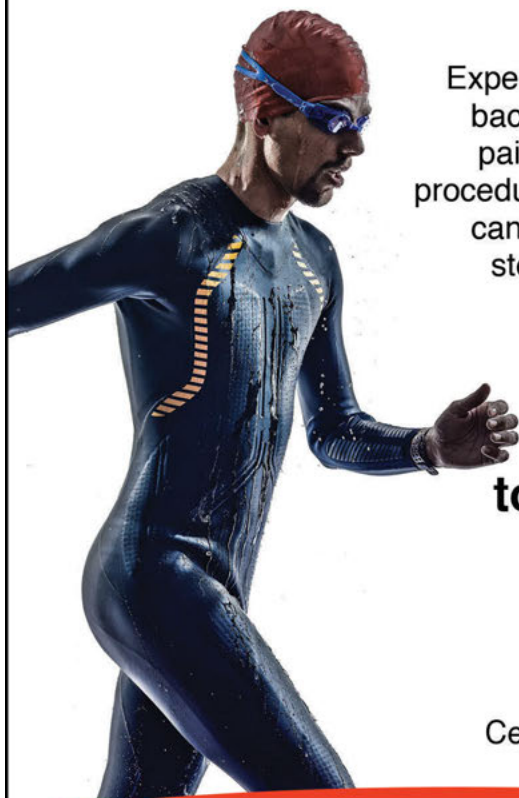
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TravelNOW Hidden Gems

— By Allison Burdick

What do gold, Bruce Lee, and strawberries have in common? They're all part of Seattle's heritage shared through not one, not two, but three National Park Service sites that explore the area's history, culture and community.

History: Pioneer Square

All hail to the Klondike!

Situated within historic Pioneer Square (Seattle's original neighborhood) is a restored building known as the Cadillac Hotel. Constructed in 1889, it is now the home of Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, which shares stories from the 1897-98 gold rush in the Yukon Territory of Canada that swept gold-seekers through Seattle and up toward the Klondike gold fields. History buffs are exposed to Seattle and the Pacific Northwest's past through the eyes of stampedeers looking to strike it rich, including John Nordstrom and how

he managed to start a shoe empire. Kids can earn Junior Ranger badges by completing activities, while they explore the park. Short films and rotating exhibits are also part of the experience and help visitors delve deeper into the impact of the gold rush on Seattle.

Culture: Chinatown-International District

Enter the Dragon!

A short walk from Pioneer Square is the Chinatown-International District, a neighborhood rich in restaurants, shops and public art. The Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience, an affiliated area of the National Park System, celebrates the art, history and culture of Asian-Pacific Americans through vivid storytelling and inspiring experiences. Learn how the neighborhood shaped Seattle's most famous martial artist and world icon, Bruce Lee. Take a historic building tour and catch preserved scenes of the everyday lives of the

hundreds of Chinese, Japanese and Filipino immigrants who once made this building their home. A menu of other guided tours takes you through the neighborhood — including one led by your stomach — with different seasonal dishes that may include dumplings, noodles, rice and barbecue.

Community: Bainbridge Island

Nidoto Nai Yoni — "Let it Not Happen Again."

A short, and extremely scenic, ferry ride from Pioneer Square takes visitors to Bainbridge Island, a community that encourages us all to learn from a dark chapter in our nation's history. Japanese immigrants first began arriving on the island in the 1880s, and strawberry farming was introduced in 1908. Many Japanese Americans went on to own and operate farms on the island and became integral to the community. However, immediately following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States government began arresting and facilitating the mass removal of all individuals of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast. The Bainbridge Island community was the first to have its members of Japanese ancestry forcibly removed from their homes. The Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial, a unit of Minidoka National Historic Site, is an old-growth red cedar, granite and basalt memorial that honors all 276 Japanese and Japanese Americans who were exiled from the Bainbridge Island community. These were the first of what would become 120,000 individuals of Japanese ancestry — two-thirds of whom were United States citizens — forcibly removed from their homes and incarcerated during World War II. Visitors can check regularly for tour schedules.

Whether you are looking for stories, activities or new cuisine, the Seattle area is your destination with three National Park Service sites to visit, all easily accessible through public transit. For maps and other planning tools, visit www.nps.gov/state/wa/index.htm. **NOW**

Photos courtesy of the National Park Service.

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Better Safe Than Sorry

— By Zachary R. Urquhart

If it has not happened yet, you can expect to get the first tornado scare of the year any day now. Late spring to early summer is the height of storm season in North Texas, and you will want to be sure you are prepared for an emergency situation. Here are some ideas for what to stock up on and how to be as ready as possible if severe weather comes your way.

Have a Plan

- *Know your home's safest spot.* Depending on your house, this could be a simple one. You want to stay away from windows, ideally staying close to interior walls without much that could fall on you. Most importantly, make sure everyone in your home knows where to go in case of danger, so you do not have children panicking and missing if storms are happening.



- *Know how to leave.* One of the saddest sights when major storms hit are the thousands of cars along the freeways trying to find refuge. Be sure you know the major evacuation routes, so if you have to evacuate, you can get somewhere to stay for a while.

- *Know if you can bunk with a friend.* If your house does not offer a good safe spot, plan ahead to have a place you can go when severe weather is expected. You might

have friends who have a bunker, or at least a better safe spot than you do. Storm shelters are not the norm in this part of the country, but more and more contractors are offering to build or install them.



Have Supplies

- *Get food and water now.* If you want to avoid the price gouging that sometimes happens in a storm's aftermath, go ahead and stock up on bottled water and canned foods. One easy plan is to always have a surplus of those items, and every few months, consume what you have and buy replenishment. Be sure to include food for your pets when you are making your grocery list. And remember that your pets will increase the amount of water you need.

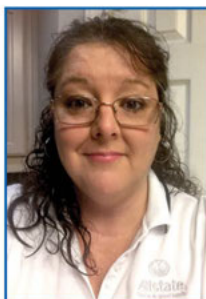
- *There are other useful items.* If you lose power, you may not be able to do much about your refrigerator and cold food, but you can be ready to stay warm with plenty of blankets. And just like you should have a stock of sustenance, be sure you have a supply of the



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Have Information

- *Use the radio in the mornings.* Each morning, before you press play on your favorite CD or turn to your satellite music station of choice, tune into a station that includes regular news and regular updates. Forecasters never know exactly when storms might sprout up, but they usually have an idea at least a few hours in advance. In the same vein, keep a television turned on and tuned to a major network. You don't have to do anything more than watch for a break from regularly scheduled programming to bring a breaking weather update.

- *Download a Weather App.* There are many options, so many in fact that the only bad choice is not having one at all. Apps like WeatherBug or AccuWeather will not only warn you of tornadoes and extreme conditions, they also track lightning, so you know whether it is smart to be outside in less severe conditions.

Hopefully, you will never need any of these tips. But, if the worst does happen, your best plan is to be prepared. **NOW**

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Vanna Nguyen has been in the real estate industry for over 10 years. She began her career as a real estate agent and has been a mortgage loan officer for the last seven years. Great customer service is the foundation of Vanna's success. Vanna specializes in an array of unique mortgage products which include first-time homebuyers, doctors and professionals. Vanna is happily married to her college sweetheart, Huy, and they have three children ages five, four and one. She enjoys taking vacations and weekend activities with her family. For amazing customer service, stop by our Mansfield office or give Vanna a call when you're ready to build or buy!

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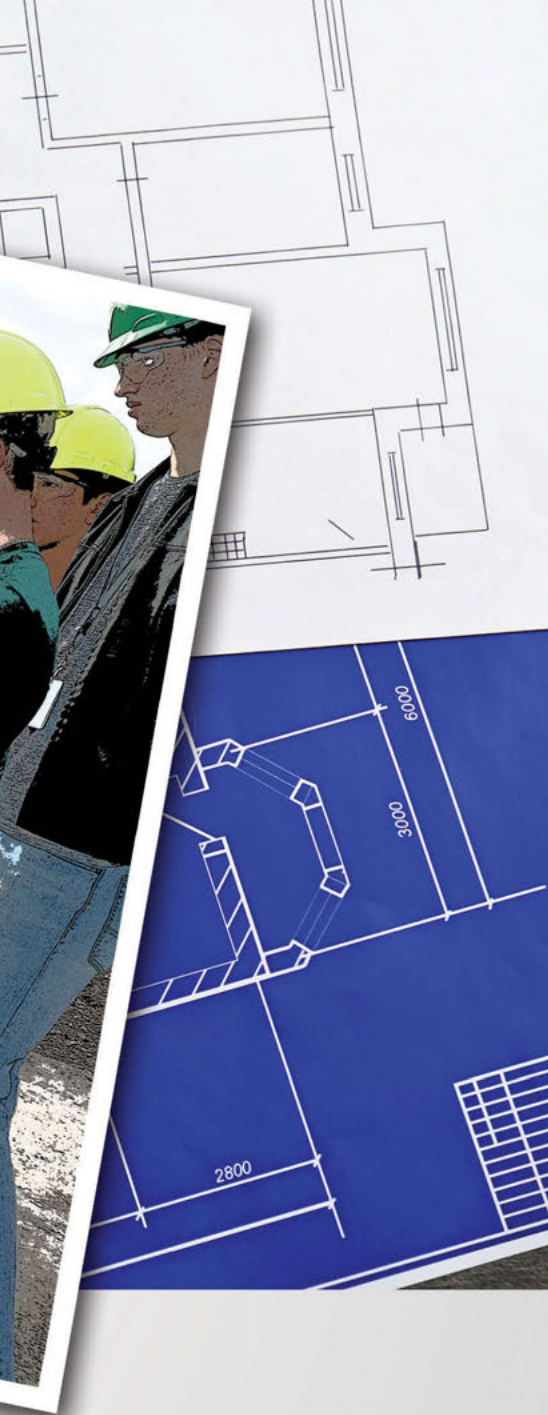
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BUILDING A BETTER TOMO

It all started with a field trip. Now, Curtis Green and his students are helping Waxahachie grow. Curtis teaches in the Architecture and Construction cluster at Waxahachie High School. Resulting from a partnership with John Houston Custom Homes, 29 of his students are participating in the actual building of a 2,200-square-foot, four-bedroom, two-bath home in The Cove in North Grove. "A couple years ago, I got this strange idea to take the kids on a field trip to a neighborhood and find houses being built," Curtis said. "Everything was exposed for them to see. The kids really liked it."



RROW

— By Rick Mauch



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That led to an idea. There is a shortage of help in the construction industry, and John Houston representatives said they would welcome help from Curtis' students. In early February, the Build Waxahachie Project got underway. "It's something we're growing. It's an infant at this point, but the kids seem to really like going to the work site, and it's a very educational opportunity for them," Curtis said. "I think this is the start of something great as we move forward with our program."

Though participation is limited for liability reasons, the experience has been invaluable. He takes two groups, one of 14 students and another of 15, to the house weekly for about three hours, and they help in a variety of ways. Sometimes it's moving supplies, other times its



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sweeping or cleaning, and they always observe. "We got to watch them pour the foundation," he said. "They're coordinating with me, so I can bring the kids. They can see the whole house being built step-by-step. I'm hoping we get to help put Sheetrock in and help with insulation. We're not going to put them on the roof. I have kids who would do that, but we're not going to take that risk."

John Houston is donating proceeds from the sale of the home to the school's program. Curtis is hoping to use the funds for such things as scholarships to trade schools. "It's exciting to know that we can help kids make decisions about their future through teachable moments," said Humphrey Cockrell, regional construction director for John Houston.

The program is called Build Waxahachie Project because that's exactly what they are doing. Curtis said the name is a perfect description of the project, and the idea came to them in a meeting with John Houston representatives. "The kids in my program, I hope, will be building homes for years. There's a real need," he said.

"We have the opportunity to provide students with hands-on, real-life experience," said Damon Richardson, vice president of construction for John Houston. "These students are able to take what they learn in the classroom to an actual job site and see how that knowledge can transfer into a fulfilling and successful career."

Curtis is hoping the program will also help bring more females into the industry. Currently, only 9 percent of



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those working in the homebuilding industry are women. "I only have four girls in my program, but this could help that," he said. "Involvement in projects like this could translate into a very successful career someday. Most of the people I've worked with at John Houston are women. There's no reason women can't be great in this business."

A handful of his students have already committed to study construction technology at Texas State Technical College. Another has committed to study construction management at Tarleton State University. "When we've got this thing rolling, students will develop their own relationships with building trades people — the plumber and the electrician, for example," Curtis explained. "Long-term goal: I'd like for every senior who walks across the stage from my class at graduation to have a full tool belt given to them, so they can be ready to go to work. I'd like for them to have jobs already."

Though he's never been a contractor himself, prior to teaching Curtis was in retail sales for a lumber company, working with contractors on a regular basis. He was also on the board of directors for the Abilene Habitat for Humanity, getting his own hands-on experience building houses.



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Curtis has been in the career and technology department at WHS for 16 years. This is his fourth year to lead the construction classes. He was hoping for something like this when he was first hired but, ironically, was placed among computers. “When I started teaching, I expected to go into a woodshop. I didn’t. I ended up in the computer lab,” he said with a laugh.

But fate has a way of correcting things. Though it took a dozen years, Curtis got his chance when he learned of an opening at the school. “One day, the guy teaching this took another job,” he recalled. “I said, ‘I can teach that.’ And here I am. I have to tell you, I’m as excited as the kids are each time we come out here, seeing the looks on their faces, watching as they play a part in this house being built. This is something they can be proud of for a long, long time, and hopefully, we’ll have a lot more for other students in the future.”

The hope is for Curtis’ students to have a new home to work on every year. “That would be fantastic,” he said. “I’d like for this to evolve to where we’re raising some of the walls.” **NOW**

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Camillia Wren, owner of Camwren, and Michelle and Carlos Beltran, owners of Copy & Ship Resources, celebrate being new members of the Waxahachie Chamber.

Zoomed In: Brenda Morris

By Sandra Strong

Brenda Morris is one of several valet attendants who takes her job at Baylor Scott & White Hospital seriously. Working at the hospital's main entrance parking cars at no charge to the hospital patrons allows Brenda to do what she loves doing — helping people. “I just love people,” she confessed, with a smile. “Even if I don’t park the car for the family member, I will make sure the patient gets into the building safely. I will even sit with them until the family makes it to the lobby.”

She is very attached to the elderly and the children that she serves. She knows one day she, too, will need extra help, and she hopes there’s someone just like her — ready and willing to help.



Todd Foster cleans a water feature just in time for the warmer spring weather.



Sean Connor Huntley Kirkland, Jonathan David Anderson, Thomas Bracken Allred and Matthew Aaron Anderson smile with happy pride after becoming Eagle Scouts.



James Bell and Ann Marie Haney with the Ellis Co. Local Homeless Coalition tour the Haven of Hope for Women in Ennis with its founder, Kimberly Malone.



Donny Goforth and Justin Robinson with Colonial Restoration tackle construction work on the soon to open White Rhino Coffee.



Mark Hillegeist, owner of Cork & Keg, and Christina Cooper happily host and serve up guests at the monthly Waxahachie Chamber After Hours event.



Angel Bridges, an intern with the local and global missions department of The Oaks Fellowship, helps Chick-fil-A Marketing Director Laure Henthorn feed the volunteers at The Waxahachie Project rally at Freedom Fellowship.

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Calendar

April:

7

Fundraiser for Heritage Jaguar Band: 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Midlothian Stadium, 1800 S. 14th St., Midlothian. A \$20 donation will be made to the Heritage Jaguar Band for every test drive taken at Waxahachie Ford during the car show. Registration for the car show is free when you participate in the Ford Drive. For more information, contact Randy Griffith at (817) 308-7412 or at vpoperations@heritagejaguarband.com.

7, 8, 14, 15, 21, 22, 28, 29

Scarborough Renaissance Festival: 2511 FM 66, Exit 399A and I-35E. Festival is set back in the time of King Henry VIII with arts, crafts, vendors, food and entertainment. For more information, call (972) 938-3247 or visit www.srfestival.com.



10, 17, 24

In the Music Room Studio & Listening Room Radio Show Tapings: 7:00 p.m., **April 10**, Peter Pope; **April 17**, Helene Cronin; **April 24**, Bittersweet Highway, 3103 Sanger Creek Way. For more information or to make reservations, call (972) 938-9990 or email rsvp@inthemusicroom.com.

11 — 15

Lucas Oil Divisional Southern Nitro Night: Texas Motorplex. For more information, visit www.texasmotorplex.com.



13

8th Annual Share the Love Gala: 6:00 p.m. The event benefits CASA of Ellis County. For more details, visit www.casaofelliscounty.org.

14

Help to Heal Sharing God's Love Yard/Bake Sale: 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., 670 Primrose, Midlothian. The event needs volunteers, garage sale items and baked goods. For more information, email Linda Miley at ldean@helptohealtx.org or visit www.helptohealtx.org.

Waxahachie Symphony Association – When Swing Was King: SAGU Jazz Band with WHS Jazz Band: 7:00 p.m., SAGU Hagee Communication Center Performance Hall, 1200 Sycamore St. For more information, visit www.waxahachiesymphony.org.

14, 29

In the Music Room Studio & Listening Room Live Performances: 6:00 p.m., **April 14**, Bill Nash & Tom Meny; 2:00 p.m., **April 29**, Tony Ramey & Tim McGeary, 3103 Sanger Creek Way. For more information or to make reservations, call (972) 938-9990 or email rsvp@inthemusicroom.com.

19 — 22

Crossroads of Texas Film & Music Festival: The festival is a tribute festival that not only celebrates Waxahachie-made films, but also salutes films made in Texas or by Texans. The event will include fun, films, food, music and so much more. For tickets and more detailed information, visit www.crossroadsoftx.com.

W3 – Wonderful Women in Waxahachie Girl Camper & Sisters on the Fly Texas Rally: Getzendaner Park. For more information, visit www.waxahachiecvb.com or www.girlcamper.com.

27

Brown Bag & History: Noon, Ellis County Museum. Call (972) 937-0681 for more information.

28

Waxahachie Downtown Farmers Market 2018 Season Grand Opening: 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., 410 S. Rogers St.



29

Wildflower Walk at Ellis County Rural Heritage Farm, Inc.: 130 Cunningham Meadows. Tour of natural areas of the farm to learn about Texas Blackland Prairie flora and fauna. Co-hosted with the Indian Trail Chapter of the Master Naturalists. For more information, call (972) 937-0681 or visit www.ruralheritagefarm.org.

30

Festival of the Arts: 5:00-8:00 p.m., Worship Center at ORBC, 3251 Ovilla Rd. The event, hosted by Ovilla Christian School, includes an art showcase with live performances throughout the event. Event will also include a silent auction, raffle prizes and concessions. Free admission. For more information or for details on submitting artwork, email Jami Navarro at jnavarro@ovillachristianschool.org.



May:

4,5

Waxahachie Cinco de Mayo Festival: downtown Waxahachie. Hosted by Ellis County Hispanic Organization (ECHO). For more information, visit www.elliscountyhispanicorg.com.

Ongoing:

Mondays

Bridge Club: 12:15 p.m., Waxahachie Senior Center, 122 Park Hills Dr. For more information, email Jeanee Smiles at smilestoremember@gmail.com or call (469) 309-4280.

Third Mondays

Ellis County Veterans Networking Group: 6:00 p.m., Ryan's Buffet, Waxahachie. Ellis County veterans and their families are welcome. Call Mike Lamb to RSVP at (214) 763-0378 or visit vetsnetgrp@att.net.

Tuesdays

Lariat Bridge Club: 6:30 p.m., Boy Scout Cabin, 1139 Brown St. For more details or to confirm the meeting, email Shari at weatherscf@yahoo.com or call (505) 270-4017.

Thursdays

Buckout Arena Ministry: 7:00 p.m., Cowboy Church of Ellis County, 2374 W. Hwy. 287 Bypass. For more information, call (972) 935-9801.

Fourth Saturdays

Bristol Opry: 7:00 p.m., featuring local singers and musicians. For more information, contact Jim Gatlin at (972) 846-2211.

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



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Still Brightly Shining

— By Derek Jones

After spending only a few minutes with Sandy King, it becomes obvious she is passionate about supporting her community. Sandy is serving as the newly appointed president of Waxahachie's Chamber of Commerce, and her enthusiasm spills over into everything she does. "I have always had a passion for volunteering and serving my community," Sandy stated. "I also really enjoy connecting people and organizations, so they can take advantage of one another's resources." These passions fit perfectly with the mission and vision of the Chamber of Commerce, and Sandy has high expectations for what she, along with her team, can accomplish to ensure the economic health of Waxahachie.

Sandy shared, "Our desire is to provide a way for the businesses of Waxahachie to network together for the benefit of one another and the city." In recent years, there has been a surge of new businesses coming to Waxahachie. "The city's economic development department has done a fabulous job enticing business to come to Waxahachie, and our job is to ensure those businesses are supported once they get here by helping them connect with the community and one another,"

she said. The effort seems to be paying off. "Three out of the last six months has seen a record number of businesses joining the Chamber," she smiled. "It is exciting to see business leaders joining together."

Even though Sandy has only recently been appointed to the role of president, she has years of experience working with the Waxahachie Chamber of Commerce. Her desire now is to see the organization move forward with new initiatives to benefit the city. "The previous president, Debra Wakeland, served the Chamber for over 30 years and helped build an award-winning Chamber of Commerce," Sandy said. "I want to take all the great programs and initiatives she brought and see what we can add as Waxahachie continues to experience rapid economic growth."

The excitement radiates from Sandy as she speaks about upcoming programs. "Everything we are doing is designed to help people connect and grow together." Building leaders within the community, increasing support of charitable causes and continuing to look for new ways to help business leaders discover how the Chamber can support them through the Ambassador Program are all ways the Chamber intends to strengthen its support of local businesses and the community. "Our desire is to make membership to the Chamber of Commerce valuable," Sandy shared. "We are all stronger when we work together." Through the efforts of Sandy and her team at the Chamber of Commerce, the economic health of Waxahachie will be in good hands for years to come. **NOW**

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