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M A G A Z I N E

MAY 2013

Polka Festival
Shopping
Guide
p. 21

Czeching Up on History

Mary Trojacek, the granddaughter of Czech immigrants, recalls a different way of life

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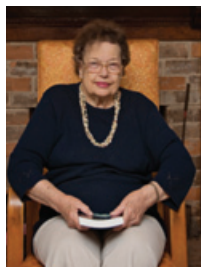
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ON THE COVER



In Mary Trojaceck's life Czech roots meet Ennis pride.

Photo by Amy Ramirez.

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Editor's Note

"In the merry, merry month of May..."

That Stephen Foster song still holds true after 150 years. May is a bright spot on the calendar, and there are many occasions to look forward to all month long. From Cinco de Mayo and Mother's Day to Memorial Day, we celebrate our heritage, our liberty, our heroes and our moms.


The biggest local celebration we enjoy in May is Ennis' cherished Polka Festival. During a colorful weekend expressing Czechoslovakian pride, we eat *kolache* and *klobase*, dance traditional jigs and delight in the parade that forms

the event's centerpiece.

We aren't all Czech, but we don't have to be to appreciate the rich culture that further brightens a beautiful month. Polka Fest will also give us a chance to console our grieving friends who have lost loved ones in the recent disaster that struck West, our Czech sister city. Our love and prayers are with them.

Randy

Randy Bigham
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Snapshots of SUCCESS



We recognize that Ennis schools are the pride of our community, and that you want us to be as successful as possible. Your support and engagement is vitally important. Please help us recognize the following milestones and accomplishments during the 2012-13 school year:

- Rachel's Challenge

New anti-bullying initiative District-wide that encourages students, staff and parents to model behavior based on kindness and compassion

- iPads for Seventh Graders

Emphasizing technology-enhanced education, this initiative provides iPad devices to all seventh graders for use in the classroom and at home, with the goal of future program expansion

- EISD Student Showcase

First Student Showcase event highlights student achievement and special programs across the District, with community attendance and support that exceeded expectations

- UIL Academics

For the fourth straight year, the UIL Academic Team at Ennis High School wins the District Title

- National Merit Scholar Finalist

Senior Ben Betik earns Finalist status in the prestigious National Merit Scholarship Program competition

- Prestigious Scholarships

Seniors Zachary Matous and Kamryn Long earn two of five scholarships from Dallas chapter of Texas Society of Professional Engineers, alongside students from St. Mark, Dallas Jesuit and Highland Park

- Extracurricular Excellence

EISD students excel in various extracurricular activities, including Ennis FFA (students advancing to state competition), Band and Choir (excellent regional results and All-State Band qualifier), and numerous other examples

- Athletic Victories

Highlights include Ennis Lions football advancing to playoffs, Boys soccer making a post-season run, and Lady Lions softball attaining a Top 5 state ranking



Czeching up on History

— By Hope Teel

An Ennis native has a unique and endearing perspective on life — one that can be attributed to family, hard work and the integration of a people to an entirely new country and way of life. Today, Mary Betik Trojacek, a granddaughter of Czech immigrants, stands as a matriarchal symbol of an empire of Czech history and culture, especially for the Betik and Trojacek clans. Her book, Beyond Ellis Island, depicts a simple way of life unfathomable to younger generations.

“We lived in the great depression years,” Mary said. “Our kids wouldn’t know how to cope nowadays. This generation has so many giveaways. For us there was no welfare, or help like that coming from anywhere, but people made it. I call my parents and grandparents ‘the survivors,’ for each lived in a generation that truly tested their imagination and skills in methods of survival.”

Mary’s mom and dad were born in Ennis, but her grandparents were originally from Czechoslovakia, and came to the United States by ship through the port of Galveston. Her paternal grandparents, the Betiks, arrived in 1901; her maternal grandparents, the Marusaks, landed the following year. Upon their arrival, Galveston was still recovering from the great hurricane of 1900, and Mary speculated that her family didn’t find exactly what they expected. “The first Czechs that came to





“The Czechs have always been very family-oriented and believed in integrity, character and in doing the right thing,”

America wrote letters to families back home saying that life in America was so bountiful the streets were paved with gold,” Mary recalled.

Instead, widespread destruction was still evident in Galveston, but her grandparents were at a point of no return. They were in a new country, faced with unfamiliar customs, and a language they didn’t speak made it difficult for them to get around. They found a train station in Galveston, but it wasn’t in operation, so they walked for miles, carrying children and trunks. When the family found a station that was open, they boarded the train for their final destination – Ennis. There they were met by a friend from “the old country,” as Mary called it.

Most immigrants settled in clumped areas with relatives where they depended on one another, bonded, worked and socialized. They sharecropped on other immigrants’ farms until they saved enough money to buy land of their own. “These families, including children, really had to work to survive,” Mary said. “And always, there were enough chores to go around for everyone. Not one was left out.”

In her book, Mary chronologically details their lives as immigrants in rural North America, sharing the many experiences farm life had to offer. Mary was born in Ennis on Christmas Day in 1929, to Joe and Frances Marusak Betik. The third of 10 children, Mary’s childhood was vastly different from

that of today’s generation. She remembers a time in her youth when the only transportation was by horse and cart. Mary also noted that her family had no radio, refrigerator or running water until after she was of high school age.

“Now, life is faster-paced, and people take these comforts and conveniences for granted so much,” Mary pointed out. “Immigrants who had done without had no sense of entitlement and valued whatever good came their way.”

Beyond Ellis Island eloquently portrays the history of Mary’s family, and a segment of her husband’s family. Easily read, Mary’s book flows in a harmony of anecdotes. Events of the past, supported and explained within the context of the time, give the account some historical value. Mary’s book documents her life through the age of 18 — a life that was secure, wholesome, happy and built on family unity.

What was her inspiration and motivation for writing the book? “I wrote it for my kids,” Mary shared. “They kept asking me, ‘How were things when you were growing up?’ I would tell them bits here and there, but finally they just asked me to write



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it down so they could have something to share with their children. So, I wrote down what I remembered. They were fascinated with the manuscript and insisted I have it published!"

Mary and Jerry met while attending elementary school in Creechville. When Jerry was 9 years old his family moved from Telico to Creechville to a farm across the road from Mary's family. When school buses came into being, they rode the same bus. Mary remembers it was on one of these bus rides her fondness for the boy across the street began.

The Betik home was set back quite a distance from the road. When it was muddy, she and her siblings wore old



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shoes to the bus stop, then walked over to the Trojaceks and changed their shoes on their front porch. One particularly

**“You worked hard
and prayed a lot.”**

muddy morning, Mary boarded the bus, and Jerry noticed she still had mud on the back of her legs. He pulled out a clean, white handkerchief and handed it to her to clean off the mud. “I thought it was



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so sweet, I've never forgotten it," Mary smiled. "I remember thinking just how nice he was, and I guess that is when I started thinking I liked him. I'm not sure what point it was for him, though."

The two didn't make a connection until after graduating high school. Mary was in a nursing school in Dallas, and Jerry had enlisted in the Air Force. They were married in 1950 before her training was completed. After graduation, she moved to Wyoming to be with Jerry, and their first child was born there. Eventually, they relocated to Dallas, and in 1962 bought a farm in Ennis and have resided there ever since. Mary and Jerry, now retired, reared seven children. They boast of having nine grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. "Between rearing a family, having a full-time job, being an experienced farm hand, marketing homegrown produce and working in the family nursery," Mary said, "it has been a busy life!"

Mary, Jerry and her ancestors faced many obstacles. But in the end, family, faith, commitment and confidence in themselves and in each other, motivated them to keep moving forward.

"The Czechs have always been very family-oriented and believed in integrity, character and in doing the right thing," Mary said. "They were known as workers and taught their kids how to work and be self-sufficient. I think that has been very important in our lives. You didn't take anything for granted. You expanded on God-given talents. You worked hard and prayed a lot." **NOW**

Tonya Youngblood M.D., A.B.F.P.

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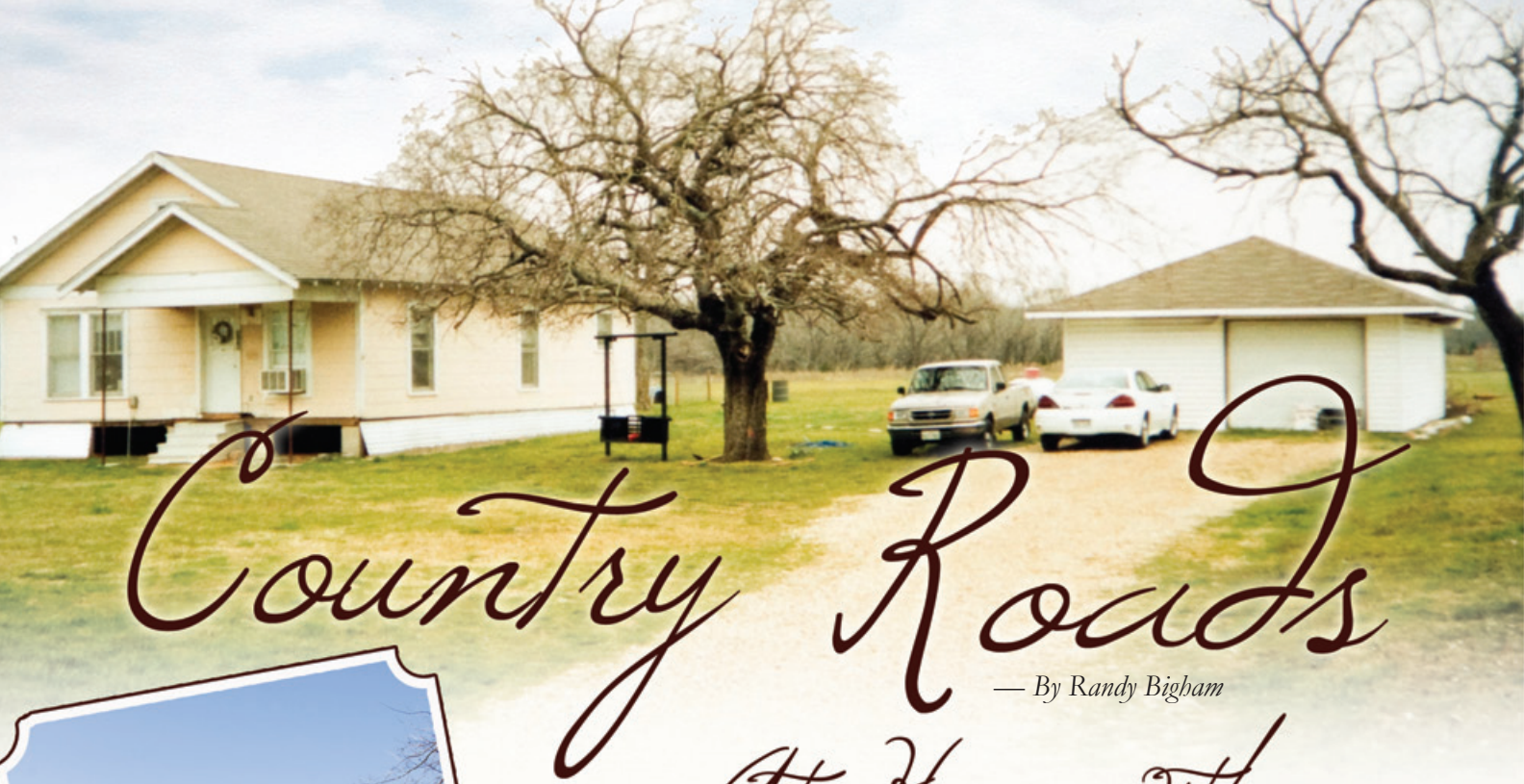
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Country Roads

— By Randy Bigham

At Home with

CHAD AND DEBBIE SPENCE



Even houses get second chances, and one old dwelling in the Ennis area has experienced the transition to a greater extent than most. No mere remodeling job would do for this house; it required a total change of venue. Although situated near downtown for 85 years, its new owners had plans for it in the country, and thanks to the miracle of house moving, it has enjoyed its bucolic life since 2000.



Chad and Debbie Spence were newlyweds when they began restoring the old home that once sat on West Knox Street. But that was the easy part. The trick was getting the house safely relocated from the city along winding country roads to the two-acre property they own halfway between Ennis and Rice. "There's nothing more amazing than watching your house going down the street!" laughed Chad, who is employed by Ellis County in the road and bridge department. "But the movers, Sutherlin in Corsicana, did a great job. The driver never stopped from the time he pulled out of downtown until he had it in place here."

There were a few casualties — window panes broke, chimneys collapsed. But all in all, it was a successful move, and Chad and Debbie began refurbishing what would become their dream house.

The dream started with Chad. He bought his two acres long before a blind date brought Debbie into his life. He used to stand on his land and contemplate the future, deliberating on whether to build a house there or find another place. But soon after he married Debbie, a pre-K teacher at Tabernacle Baptist Church, the house on West Knox became available. It happened that the owner was a good friend of Chad's father, the late Kelton Spence. The house would require extensive repairs, and moving it would be costly, so the owner insisted on giving Chad a good deal. "It was one he really couldn't pass up," Debbie smiled. "It was what I call a 'God Thing.' We were very blessed."

The Spences have now fully restored the home they share with the light of their lives, 11-year-old Lanie, who sings in the choir at Dorie Miller Intermediate and plays Upward Basketball at Tabernacle. The whole family is active in that church. Lanie is in the children's choir, which her mother directs, and both her parents teach Sunday school.

Decorating their home has been a shared interest, although Debbie has led the project with her eye for color



and instinct for detail. Chad and Debbie appreciate antiques, and several heirloom pieces are displayed. But they lead active lives, and with a growing child, they also value modern furniture for its practicality and ease.

The living room is arranged to meet the family's need for rest at the end of a long workday. Comfy chairs and a

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soft sofa fulfill the requirements, while familial touches adorn the walls in the form of paintings by Chad's mother,

Linda. Some depict flights of fancy, such as an English-inspired thatched roof cottage enveloped in ivy. Others record special moments in the lives of the young family. One shows a snowy day in 2004 when Lanie was only three. In the painting,

Chad holds his toddler daughter by the hand as they walk to the gate of their front yard. "I took a photo of them as they went out that day," Debbie recalled. "And Linda later used it to

paint that picture." The large canvas has pride of place near a front window which overlooks the very scene that's now immortalized in oil.

The dining room includes some choice items that echo the home's 1915 origins. Outstanding features of this space are



the built-in, twin corner cabinets flanking the entrance from the living area. "The cabinets are hand-cut," Chad explained. "No power tools were used, so they're probably original to the house, or at least put in many years ago." The molding and

doors are also original in this room, as are the hardwood floors, which Chad sanded and stained himself.

"When we got the house, the floors were covered in sunset orange, indoor-outdoor carpet from the '70s,"

Debbie chuckled. "So that had to go!" Among furnishings in the room is an antique china cabinet that belonged to Chad's grandmother. On view here is another time-kissed item – a big, oval portrait of Chad's grandfather and great uncle as little boys. In its original early

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1900s, bubble-glass frame, the picture is as delicate as it is beautiful. "I have to be very careful with it when dusting!" Debbie confirmed.

The kitchen opens off the dining room and is a fine example of well-blended modern and vintage elements. "The overhead cabinets were original,



but the sides, and everything else, were put in when we bought the place," Chad specified. All the new cabinetry and fixtures were installed by Debbie's father, Richard Chapman.

The bathroom has all new fixtures, but while remodeling Debbie was charmed to discover the room's original wallpaper. "It was the cutest thing," she said. "It was turquoise blue with clear soap bubbles on it!"

Lanie's room boasts a bunk bed, girly touches such as fringed curtains in hot pink and purple, a vintage chifferobe and art work provided by her grandmother, Linda. One of the prettiest of these

canvases is a scene of bluebonnets which perches over a Victorian piano Lanie plays to her musical heart's content. "This bedroom is actually larger than ours," Debbie said. "But Chad chose the other one when we moved in." Dad's decision now suits Lanie just fine.

Chad and Debbie's bedroom is an impeccable coalescing of feminine and masculine tones. The walls are sea foam, which is similar to the original paint color used there, and an old vanity and dresser are family heirlooms. Above the bed, covered in a tailored, striped spread in taupe, brown and green, hangs a cross stitch design made by a friend of Debbie's as a wedding gift.

The old house that once creaked across a hayfield to its final location is now "home sweet home" to the family who lives there and loves it. Chad no longer stands alone on his land, wondering about the future. He has the two loves of his life there with him now, and he is a happy man. The once-



abandoned old house is alive again, as Chad, Debbie and Lanie continue making their own history within its walls.

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AMAZING RACES

— By Rick Herron



Every weekend each spring, drivers traveling Highway 287, west of Ennis, can hear the roar of high-octane engines at the Texas Motorplex. The quarter-mile drag racing course was built in 1986 by Billy Meyer, the one-time funny car driver, and is the National Hot Rod Association's first super track.

For Jesse Cervantes, the sound emanating from the Motorplex is music to his ears. He's been a passionate participant in drag racing for most of his adult life, and he has passed his love of the sport down to his sons and daughter, as well as their families. "I've always loved drag racing," he said. "My first race car was a 1962 Chevy Nova, which I started racing part time in 1980. It was a 327 with 410 horsepower. I raced it until it was a wreck. At that time, I stopped racing for a while and didn't get back into it until my boys became interested in racing, too."

Today, the Cervantes family — Jesse and two of his three sons, Marcus and David; his daughter Cathy; her husband, Jimmy Falkenbach, and their son, Jeremy Falkenbach — all own powerful race cars that they take to the local track on a regular basis. "Jimmy has a 1989 Chevy S10 truck, Jeremy drives a 1981 Chevrolet El Camino and Marcus has a 1969 Chevelle," Jesse said. "My grandson,

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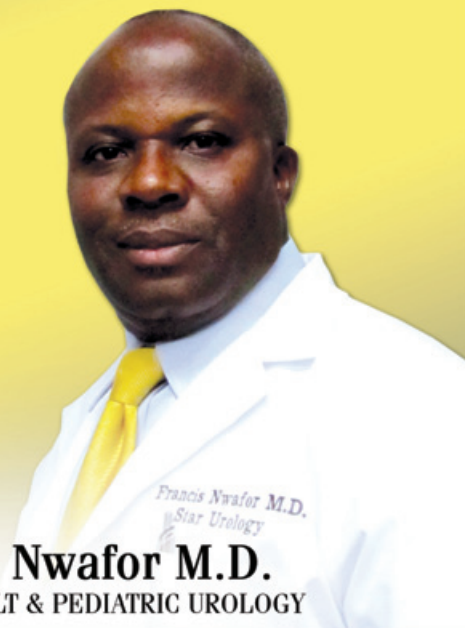
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Justin Cervantes, drives a 1970 Chevrolet Malibu, and I still drive the 1962 Chevy 2 Nova, which I eventually rebuilt." The family uses 116-octane fuel, which is specifically made for higher horsepower engines, in all their cars. Jesse's Nova is 890 horsepower, Jimmy's S10 truck is 620 horsepower, Jeremy's El Camino is 400 horsepower, and the Chevelle is 550 horsepower.

Jesse has made some significant modifications to his Nova over the years. "I put big 15-inch tires on it, which is called 'tubbing' it out," he explained. "I also put a roll bar on it and have done some special things to the motor and transmission specifically for the 'No Electronics' category in order to get the maximum speed I can obtain. All of it is very expensive, so winning money at a race is especially helpful."

Jesse's absence from drag racing following his wreck didn't last long, as the lure of the speedway was too great to ignore. "After I retired from the railroad, I started racing full time in 2005," Jesse remembered. He competes now in the No Electronics category, which is also known as foot racing. In this category, the driver exhibits everything from revving the car to pulling a "burnout" to get the tires hot.

For Jesse, his love of drag racing began in 1960 when he lived in Lubbock. "I developed an interest in drag racing then and would go to nationals in Amarillo," he said. "From that point on, I was hooked, and I've never looked back."

He remembers his first race like it was

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Jeremy, Jesse, Justin, Cathy and Jimmy at the race track.

yesterday. Completing the first rebuild on his Chevy Nova in 1962, he took it to Seven Points, where he competed in his first race. "I didn't win anything that night," he admitted, "but man, I had fun! In fact, I didn't really start winning trophies and money until my first trophy last year, in 2012, when I won the Wally at the Motorplex."

That was a major accomplishment for Jesse. The Wally, according to the National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Web site, is an award that stands over a foot tall and is in the form of a man — the late Wally Parks — with his hand on a tire. The trophy, with its dazzling brass finish, is known in racing circles as the most sought after award in the NHRA's Full Throttle genre.

The NHRA, founded by Wally Parks in 1951 in California, is a drag racing governing body that sets the rules in the sport and hosts events in the United States and Canada. More than 80,000 drivers are on its rosters, and it is considered one of the largest motorsports sanctioning bodies in the world, according to their Web site.

Looking back, Jesse maintains not much has changed in drag racing since 1960. He admits, however, that there has been a significant increase in speed on the course. "Back then, going one-fourth of a mile in 12 seconds was considered fast," he recalled. "Now, it's going one-fourth of a mile in eight to nine seconds. That's probably the biggest change I've seen over the years."

Born in Corpus Christi in 1945, Jesse

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moved to Crosbyton, Texas, when he was 16, where he worked as a farmer. In 1962 he moved to Ennis and joined the construction business. In 1976 he was employed by Southern Pacific Railroad and retired in 2005 to devote all of his time to drag racing. He's been married for 50 years to Evila Fira Cervantes.

Jesse and his family especially enjoy bracket racing, which is a form of drag racing that emphasizes the performance and skills of the driver over raw speed. It's the type of racing the Cervantes and Falkenbach drivers compete in most often.

However, speed is what Jesse continues to love most about the sport. "There's nothing like getting in place at the track and going for it," he said. "There's a special thrill about going from dead stop to 150 miles per hour. Of course, the biggest bonus of all is when you win!"

Jesse also enjoys watching his family succeed in the field he loves. One particularly gratifying moment was when his son, Marcus, won in the No Electronics category a few years ago. "I'll never forget that night," Jesse said. "I was very proud of him."

The Cervantes and Falkenbach drag racing families can be seen at the local track most weekends through September, when the Bracket Finals are held. It's an event that Jesse, for one, is eagerly anticipating. "There will be 500 cars at the Bracket Finals," he said. "Whoever wins in the four classes gets to go to Pomona, California, for the national championship and race in the NHRA Finals for the big bucks!"

Pomona has been Jesse's goal and dream for most of his life. "We almost won it last year when we were runner up," Jesse remarked. "It's where the sport of drag racing was born, and it's always been my dream to go to Pomona and race. Maybe this will be the year." **NOW**

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In the Footsteps of the Famous

— By Randy Bigham

Ennisites aren't strangers to success, and many have gone on to achieve fame and fortune. Dr. Red Duke, the noted surgeon and television host, grew up in Ennis, and Ed Whitacre Jr., former CEO for AT&T and General Motors, was born here and graduated from Ennis High. The city also attracts celebrity visitors. Country singer and actress Reba McEntire performed at a local concert a few years ago, while actress Morgan Fairchild regularly attends the Bluebonnet Trails Festival.



Ennis' past is similarly dotted with illustrious names, and locals like to reminisce about some of the fascinating characters who either once lived here or just passed through, hauling legend and lore in their wake.

Easily the most notorious man and woman to set criminal foot in Ennis were Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow. While on the lam after a multistate swath of robberies in the early 1930s, the gangster couple returned to their native Texas, stopping in Ennis on several occasions. Clyde was reared in nearby Telico and apparently maintained ties to family and friends in the area, which may account for the numerous sightings of the thieving duo in and around Ennis. "My dad and a friend saw Clyde getting into a car and driving off from a gas station near the old Rose Motel," recounted Jim Templin, a local historian. Jim's father, Lee Templin, a Southern Pacific Railroad engineer, recognizing the infamous hoodlum at once, turned to his pal and said: "Did you see that? That was Clyde Barrow!"

Robert T. Sanders, a retired diagnostician with Ennis ISD's Early Childhood Center, also has family stories to relate about the legendary Bonnie and Clyde. Robert's mother, the former Bobbie Champion, told him of the harrowing day the Ennis Police Department learned the Barrow-Parker gang was planning to rob the Citizens National Bank, where she worked as a teller. "The police hid out under desks and behind doors waiting for the hit,"



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Robert related, "and they told all the bank employees to just act natural. Mother said that was very hard to do. It was the scariest day of her life, but fortunately Bonnie and Clyde never struck." Robert remembered another story stating the modern day bandits often retreated to a hideout on the outskirts of town.

The relative of another Ennis resident had an even closer call. Betty Dillard's father, Leland Pringle, lived next door to friends of Bonnie and Clyde in the Irving area when a gunfight broke out there one night. "It was quite a scene," Betty said. "One of the bullets came through a window and struck my dad's bedstead."

Jim Templin recalled an interesting story of another local boy who hit the big time, only in a more legitimate way — Ernest Tubb. But the future musician didn't impress at least one neighbor, a rancher, who warned Ernest's dad, "That damn guitar's going to be the ruin of that boy."

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Without question, the most distinguished public figure to call Ennis home was Katie Daffan, who lived out her final years here. She first rose to fame as a journalist and social activist in the early 1900s, interested mainly in education and women's rights. The author of eight books, "Miss Katie," as she was popularly known, later became literary editor of the *Houston Chronicle* and president of the Texas Women's Press Association. In 1911 she was also the first female elected to head a state agency, the Confederate Woman's Home in Austin. Miss Katie even campaigned for governor in 1930, but withdrew from the race when her candidacy threatened to split the Democratic vote.

Katie's long association with the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), which she served five terms as state president, has ensured the local perpetuation of her memory. The UDC's Daffan-Latimer chapter No. 37 is based in Ennis, and its more than 40 members are proud of the legacy Katie and other founders of their group have left.

"Our chapter was established in 1896 and was named for Capt. Mark Latimer and Col. L.A. Daffan," explained the organization's president, Karen Esberger. "They were both prominent local businessmen who served heroically in the Civil War. We feel privileged to honor them, as well as Katie Daffan, Col. Daffan's daughter."

Betty Dillard is treasurer of the Daffan-Latimer chapter and has been with the group for 20 years. "It's a fine organization that honors all veterans," Betty remarked.

Susie Toal, recording secretary, commented on how welcoming the club



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is. "Officers of our group even showed up at my mother's funeral although she'd never officially joined," Susie recalled. "They just said, 'We're here to pay our respects to her because she's a daughter.'" A historical marker commemorating Katie Daffan was erected in Ennis' Pierce Park in 1986.

In her childhood, another famous woman briefly lived in Ennis. But Ginger Rogers, the glamorous Hollywood star, didn't come here willingly. In 1913, when she was only 2 years old, her father abducted her from Kansas City. Embroiled in a custody battle with his wife, Lela, William Eddins McMath struck out by rail with his daughter, Virginia, heading to join his family in Ennis.

On landing at the depot, the future Ginger was whisked off in a cab with her father to his cousin's house on Ennis' south side. Two months later, Ginger's mother finally tracked down her daughter. As Ginger related in her autobiography, her mother arrived at the station in Ennis in a frantic state. Luckily, she encountered the same taxi driver who had taken her estranged husband and daughter across town many weeks earlier. After being told the story of Ginger's kidnapping, the cabbie agreed to help her retrieve her daughter and make a speedy getaway back to the station. In an interview on the *Phil Donahue Show* in the 1990s, Ginger remembered Ennis as "a quiet place and very pretty, just a little country place with tree-lined streets."

Ennis has had other brushes with the famous over the years. Baseball's Jay Justin Clarke hit a precedent-setting eight homeruns in a 1902 game in Ennis. Irene Castle, the ballroom dancer and silent screen star, waved to fans from her private train when it stopped in the city in 1918. Even future President Franklin Delano Roosevelt passed through on a campaign drive in 1932.

With so many celebrated people who have visited over the decades, Ennis might do well to consider its own Walk of Fame. Even without such an attraction, sightseers standing on any street corner in downtown Ennis are in good company: Bonnie and Clyde, Ginger Rogers, Ernest Tubb and other ghosts of history may once have stood in the exact same spot. **NOW**

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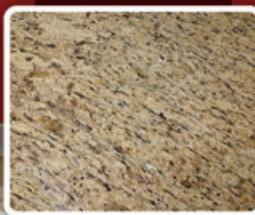
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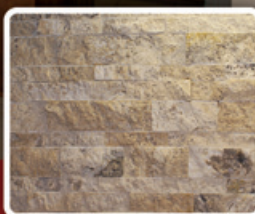
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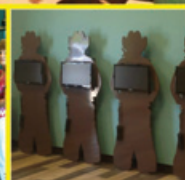


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Neither new nor Mexico, this state's culture is centuries old. Its flag features the ancient sun symbol of a Native American people called the Zia. The Rio Grande Valley itself has been populated and cultivated since as far back as 2,000 B.C., long before the first Spanish settlers arrived in Albuquerque in 1540. Albuquerque officially became a *villa* (city) in 1706 under the permission of King Philip of Spain.

While modern Albuquerque is a center of high-tech industry and research, it retains vital connections to the past, blending Native American, Spanish and Western cultural influences. Many of the traditional techniques and skills of the Pueblo people have been handed down through the generations and are practiced to this day. When you visit the city's beautiful cultural centers, you'll taste how Albuquerque has developed into the multicultural city it is today.





Chile — the staple ingredient of New Mexican cuisine — has been in existence for over 10,000 years and is still being enjoyed by New Mexicans. When spelled with an “e” (the correct spelling in Spanish), chile refers to New Mexico’s official state vegetable, which is harvested each fall. Classified as a fruit by horticulturists and a berry by botanists, the crop comes in two varieties: red and green, depending on its ripeness when picked. Whether you call it a fruit, vegetable or berry, this crop is tasty.

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Chile, beans and corn make up the basic ingredients of the addictively flavorsome New Mexican cuisine found all over the state. These ingredients give chile a different flavor than that of Mexican and Tex-Mex food. Visit in September during the green chile harvest to enjoy propane-powered roasters pumping the aroma of chile into the air.

You can find chile on the menu year-round in Albuquerque. Some local favorites include green or red chile stew, blue corn enchiladas and carne adovada (pork simmered in a red chile-based stew) and for dessert, *sopapilla*, a fried puffy pastry best enjoyed with a drizzle of honey. If your mouth isn't watering yet, that's OK. Albuquerque has a diverse array of culinary offerings that will satisfy any appetite.

With weather this gorgeous, opt to enjoy your meal *al fresco* at one of the many pooch-friendly patios. When airport has been replaced by sunport at the city's official aircraft transportation hub (Albuquerque International Sunport), you know you're in for some big rays. Albuquerqueans enjoy over 310 days of annual sunshine, making it nearly impossible to spend a few days here without getting a serious dose of vitamin D. The Sandia Mountains, making up the tail end of the Rockies, blush a vibrant pink at sunset. It's no accident that *sandia* means watermelon in Spanish.

Sunshine combined with a surprisingly high elevation of 5,326 feet make this high-desert city a four-season destination. The city boasts a ski area located just 30 minutes from the metro that adventurers



can drive to or arrive at via North America's longest aerial tram, The Sandia Peak Aerial Tramway. Albuquerque also enjoys over 400 miles of bike paths and trails, some of the Southwest's most beautiful — and affordable — golf courses, paddle craft opportunities along the Rio Grande and an "Albuquerque Box" wind pattern that makes it one of the country's most lucrative areas to fly a hot air balloon. The world's largest hot air ballooning event, the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, welcomes hundreds of thousands of visitors each October.

Great weather, excellent tax incentives and the ability to transform into nearly any city or location (including Mars) make Albuquerque an ideal location for film and television crews. From *Breaking Bad* to *The Lone Ranger*, this Southwestern city hosts many filming projects. Check






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out a local film tour for a glimpse at popular site locations. It's Hollywood without the frill, and film crews seem to like it that way.

It would be difficult to visit Albuquerque and not stumble upon Central Avenue, what was formerly known as Route 66. The city grew up along the nation's Mother Road and still flashes vintage neon signage along with aesthetic treatments modernized from the route's heyday. A visit along Central Avenue will take you from the volcanoes on the city's far west side past Old Town, the ABQ BioPark, into downtown and through the trendy Nob Hill district. It's one of the longest preserved stretches of Route 66 in an urban area.

Albuquerque's neighborhoods are as diverse as its culinary offerings. For familiar, upscale retail and dining options, check out the ever-developing ABQ Uptown, the city's newest shopping district. Visit Old Town for a taste of Southwestern history with local shops, galleries and museums. Enjoy dinner and a cocktail in trendy Nob Hill, featuring some of the city's best restaurants, boutiques and nightlife options.

New Mexico is commonly referred to as The Land of Enchantment. How appropriate that enchantment, by definition, means to fill (someone) with great delight; charm. Whether it's the people, the sky or the chile that beckons you, prepare to be enchanted by Albuquerque. It'd be hard to resist such an invitation. **NOW**

By Kelly Ryan. Photos by Albuquerque Convention & Visitors Bureau. For more information on planning your trip to Albuquerque, please visit www.ItsATrip.org or @VisitABQ on social media.

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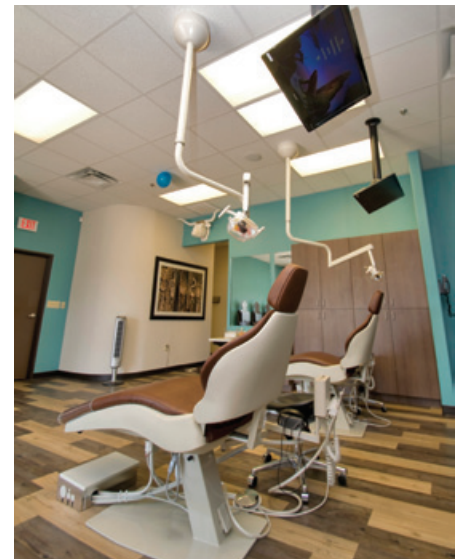


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The staff of Just for Kids believes in turning a trip to the dentist into a fun experience.



Teeth R Us

Just for Kids makes dental care seem like child's play.

— By Randy Bigham

It's obvious the new Ennis branch of Just for Kids Dental is exactly that: just for kids. From boxes full of toys to Nintendo Wii game stations to TVs perched above every patient chair, the conveniently situated office seems more like a playhouse than a dentistry center. Since its opening last June as an extension of its Waxahachie headquarters, Just for Kids has become a favorite refuge for local youngsters battling toothaches.

"We're proud to give quality care while providing a great environment for children," enthused Dr. Nasim Aleagha, who oversees the new satellite location. "We don't want a cold, clinical atmosphere. It's got to be fun."

And it is. Kids who come in a little anxious leave smiling, clutching balloons. "Some don't even want to go home," Nasim

admitted. "We know kids have had a good experience when they want to stay and play!"

Making her office fun is an accomplishment Nasim takes pride in, but she credits her competent employees for their contribution of high spirited diligence. "The staff is fantastic," the doctor raved. "They make it all possible because they're so dedicated." Brittany Bates, the facility's hygienist, is not only an asset but a long-suffering one, commuting every day from Terrell. Lorena Campos is equally devoted, driving to work from Garland. And Lupe Arriaga, Tammy Logue, Abby Newhouse and Veronica Salazar are other leading ladies who ensure the Just for Kids show goes on.

Founded by Dallas-based Dr. Jon Ousley, Just for Kids is

the only pediatric dental group in Ellis County. The practice has supplied quality health care for nine years as board certified pediatric dentists, and is one of the leaders in the field in Texas. "I have been with Dr. Ousley for three years," Nasim explained, "and even in that short period of time, we have seen the business grow by leaps and bounds."

Nasim, in collaboration with Dr. Ousley, opened the company's Ennis location because they recognized the county was underserved in the area of dental health care. "We knew we had many clients coming to the Waxahachie office from Ennis, Rice, Corsicana and other cities," she said. "So we decided to open a branch here to make it more convenient for them."

Originally from New Jersey, Nasim attended Rutgers and Columbia Universities. "Columbia is one of only three Ivy League schools for dentistry, so I felt very honored to be accepted," she shared. Moving to Texas to join her parents a few years ago, Nasim completed her residency at The University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio.

"We take pride in making kids feel at ease here."

Although she lives in Dallas, she enjoys working in Ennis and Waxahachie. "I wouldn't practice anywhere else," Nasim pointed out. "The culture is diverse and the people warm and welcoming."

Nasim looks forward to continuing to provide top-flight dental care to Ennis children. "We take pride in making kids feel at ease here," she enthused. "We have movies they can watch. And the girls can even have their nails painted when they come in."

Just for Kids treats infants to teenagers, offers flexible appointment schedules and vows to work around patients' financial challenges. "I can't stress enough that, if a child is in pain, we want to help," Nasim said. "If you can make the effort to get here, we will make the effort to help you. That's us in a nutshell." **NOW**



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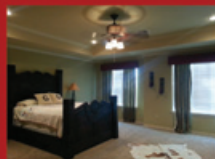
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Not everyone gets one, but it's always a welcome sight — a tax refund. If you receive a refund this year, how can you best put it to work?

The answer depends, to a large extent, on the size of your refund. In 2012, the average tax refund was about \$3,000, according to the IRS. Let's look at a few possibilities for how you might use this amount:

- *Help fund your IRA* — In 2013, you can now put in up to \$5,500 per year (up from \$5,000 in 2012) to a traditional or Roth IRA. And if you're 50 or older, you can put in an additional \$1,000 per year above the new contribution limit. Consequently, your \$3,000 refund could cover more than half of your maximum IRA contributions, or slightly less than half if you're 50 or older. And if you don't think that \$3,000 would make much of a difference, consider this: If you invested the \$3,000 in an IRA that earned a hypothetical 7 percent annual return, and you never put in another dime, you'd end up with nearly \$23,000 after 30 years. And if you put in that same \$3,000 per year to your IRA — well below the maximum — every year for 30 years, earning that same 7 percent annual return, you'd accumulate more than \$303,000. (Keep in mind that you'd eventually be taxed on your traditional IRA earnings; Roth IRA earnings grow tax-free, provided you meet certain conditions.)

- *Pay off some debts* — In the last few years, Americans have done a pretty good job of lowering their individual debt loads, according to the Federal Reserve. But if you still have some outstanding loans or a credit card balance that carries a high interest rate, you might want to consider applying your tax refund to these debts. The lower your monthly debt payments,

the better your cash flow — and the more money you'll have available to invest for your future.

- *Help build an emergency fund* — Life is full of unexpected events. If you need to purchase a new furnace or pay for an expensive car repair or incur a hospital bill, will you have the money available? If you don't, you might be forced to dip into your IRA or other investments. This move could result in taxes and fees; more importantly, it will reduce the financial resources you're counting on to help meet your long-term goals. You can help avoid this problem by building an emergency fund containing six to 12 months' worth of living expenses, kept in a liquid, low-risk account. Your tax refund could give you a nice start to this fund.

- *Invest in a 529 plan* — If you have children (or grandchildren) whom you'd like to send to college, you may want to invest in a 529 plan. Your earnings grow tax-free, provided withdrawals are used for qualified higher education expenses. (Withdrawals for other purposes will result in taxes and possible penalties.) Contribution limits are quite high, so you can put in significant amounts each year — including a \$3,000 tax refund.

As you can see, you've got some attractive options for using your tax refund — so consider them carefully. If you can apply more resources to your various financial goals, you may find yourself in a better position in the future. **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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Help for a Good Day

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

Your first conscious feeling when you wake up in the morning could be a great barometer for determining whether this will be a good day or a bad day for you. Your mental health can lift you up or hang around your neck like a wet blanket. It is just as important as your physical health, and the month of May is designated as National Mental Health Month in the United States. This month, advocates for good mental health hope to raise the awareness of its importance and the realities and challenges of mental illness.

Your mental health is defined as your overall approach to life. Those who enjoy a good sense of mental health generally boast positive feelings of well-being and are able to appreciate their life and enjoy other people. The challenges that come with day-to-day living can be handled in an appropriate and satisfying manner if you have a positive outlook. Many factors determine your mental health. How you are physically is one factor. If you are suffering from a chronic, debilitating disease, the stress associated with the disease will negatively impact your mental outlook. Stress is unavoidable in life, but an overload of it can literally kill you. Sometimes, in addition to your physician, a mental health care professional can offer just as much in the area of treatment.

Your mental health status reaches into every corner of your life. For example, it can affect how you eat. Many times, food is used for comfort. Overeating can lead to obesity and a host of complications. Having an unhealthy self-image and a lack of self-confidence can lead to destructive eating patterns. A teenager experiencing this may engage in bingeing or become anorexic.

There are many things you can do to improve your mental mood. Sometimes, it helps to get a fresh perspective: take a walk in the fresh air, chat with a trusted friend, avoid the company of those who have a negative outlook, watch an upbeat and positive movie, exercise, get a good night's sleep, take the time to work on something that brings you pleasure. If you need help, do not hesitate to contact a mental health professional. Contacting one no longer has the stigma it did in the past. Because of the efforts of those who diligently work in the field of mental health, attitudes have changed for the better. People are more open to help and are more accepting of mental illnesses. Just as you guard your physical health, your mental health needs attention, too. **NOW**

This article is for general information only and does not constitute medical advice. Consult with your physician for questions regarding this topic.

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May 4

Second Annual Race for the King: 8:00 a.m., Ferris Yellowjacket Stadium, Ferris. Event includes 5K Run/Walk and Kid's Fun Run, benefiting the Kyle King Scholarship Fund. For further details, contact Traci Rodriguez at (972) 544-2279 or tdrodrig@ferrisisd.org.

May 5

Cinco de Mayo: 10:00 a.m., Texas Motorplex, 7500 Hwy. 287. The event will feature five musical acts, headlined by the Tejano band Intocable, as well as food, vendors and kid-friendly entertainment. Tickets available at www.texasmotorplex.com.

May 11

Pancake Breakfast benefiting Tails of Hope Pet Rescue: 8:00-10:00 a.m., Applebee's, 601 U.S. 77, Waxahachie. Tickets are \$7 a person and can be purchased in advance or at the door. Raffle will be held and adoptable dogs will be on site. For more information, e-mail Paula Davia at Paula@txtailsofhope.org.

Ennis Opry & Dance: 7:00-9:30 p.m., Ennis VFW Post 7106, 3100 N. I-45. The event features the Gatlin Band, playing classic country, bluegrass, polka and gospel. Admission \$5 for ages 16 and up. Proceeds benefit the VFW. Doors open at 6:30. Concessions available. For more information call (972) 846-2014 or (972) 846-2211.

Bristol Volunteer Fire Department Annual Barbeque and Barn Dance: 6:00 p.m., Bristol Fire Station, 101 S. Walnut Rd., Bristol. The event will feature Ira Bradford and Bustin' Loose and a live auction. All proceeds benefit the Bristol Volunteer Fire Department.

May 17

American Cancer Society's Relay for Life of Ennis: 6:00 p.m., Texas Motorplex, 7500 U.S. 287.

May 18

First Annual Heroes of Midlothian Benefit 5K Run: honoring the families of Chris Kyle and Chad Littlefield and the Heroes of Midlothian Foundation. For more information, visit www.heroesofmidlothian.org or call (214) 395-0143.

May 24-26

47th Annual National Polka Festival.

Participating venues include KJT Hall, KC Hall and Sokol Hall. For information, visit www.nationalpolkafestival.com.

May 24

National Polka Fest King and Queen Dance Contest: 7:00 p.m., Knights of Columbus (KC) Hall, 850 S. I-45. Participants and non-participants are encouraged to wear traditional Czech kroj (costumes). Admission is \$7. Children under 13 admitted free.

May 25

47th Annual National Polka Festival Parade: 10:00 a.m., downtown Ennis. The parade will include many private and corporate floats, The Shriners and the Ennis High School Marching Band. Parade starts at N. Clay St and W. Ennis Ave., traveling east on W. Ennis Ave, then north on NW. Main St.

4th Annual Kolache Eating Contest: 1:00 p.m., downtown Ennis. Prizes will be awarded. Participants may register at the Ennis Chamber of Commerce until noon on **Friday, May 24**, or at the contest booth until noon on **Saturday**.

Country Concert: 9:00 p.m., Sokol Hall, 2622 E. Hwy 34. Event features recording artist Kyle Park. Singer Mat Slovacek opens for Kyle Park. Admission is \$15 advanced/\$20 at door.

15th Annual PolkaFest Run: 10K Race, 7:00 a.m.; 1 Mile FunRun/Walk, 7:10 a.m.; 5K Race, 7:30 a.m., Lonestar Fitness Center, 2405 Yorkstown Dr. For more information, call the Ennis Chamber of Commerce at (972) 878-2525. The PolkaFest Run is sponsored by the Ennis Rotary Club.

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.

May 25 — 26

Traditional Polka Street Dance: **Saturday**, 12:30-4:00 p.m.; **Sunday**, Noon-4:00 p.m., downtown Ennis. The Czechaholics and other polka bands will perform.

June 1

Annual Pancake Breakfast Fly-in: 8:00-11:00 a.m., Mid-Way Regional Airport, Midlothian. Event includes classic airplanes and fighters; helicopter, open cockpit bi-plane and DC-3 rides; full

motion simulator instructional flights; skydivers; fly-overs; Midlothian Classic Wheels; Gold Wing Road Riders; live music and activities for the children. Breakfast tickets: 8 and over \$7, 7 and under \$3. Parking is free. For more information, call (972) 923-0080 or visit www.mid-wayregional.com.

June 1 — July 31

Desoto Art League Annual Art Show: City Center, City of DeSoto, 211 E. Pleasant Run Rd., DeSoto. Artwork will be exhibited in the atrium during regular business hours. **Entries will be accepted on May 29 only.** Visit www.desotoartleague.com for further details on the types of artwork accepted or contact Bryan Reynolds at (469) 337-8367 or at dalspringshow@gmail.com. Open to all artists.

Ongoing:

Mondays and Wednesdays

Sign Language Class: 4:00-5:15 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 Aggie Moms meetings: 7:00 p.m., Waxahachie First United Methodist Church, 505 W. Marvin St., Waxahachie. For more information, visit www.elliscountyyaggiemoms.org.

Fourth Mondays

Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis County meetings: 6:30-8:30 p.m., Waxahachie Bible Church, 621 Grand Avenue.

Second Tuesdays

Ennis Masonic Lodge No. 369 meetings: 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.

Third Tuesdays

Veterans Networking Group: 5:00 p.m., Ryan's Steak House, Hwy 287 Bypass and 77. Call Mike Lamb at (214) 763-0378 for more information.

Skyblazers of Waxahachie R/C Club: 7:30 p.m., Parks and Recreation Building in downtown Waxahachie.

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



In the Kitchen With Mary Macalik

— *By Randy Bigham*

Culture and family collide with delicious results for Mary Macalik. Since she was a little girl, joining her mother, sister and grandmother in the kitchen, she has loved cooking. “I’m Czech on both sides,” Mary explained, “so my heritage has influenced me. One of my fondest memories is making kolaches with my granny.”

Mary eagerly tries out new recipes and adds twists to old ones. She has no fear of flubs because she was taught by her mother and grandmother that you can never really mess up. “It’s all fixable,” she admitted.

Whether she’s baking strudels or cooking a full-on meal, Mary enjoys the homemade touch. “That way, it’s from the heart, and I think you enjoy what you’re making more when it’s from scratch.” **NOW**

Italian Chicken Fingers

- 1 14-oz. pkg. chicken breast tenders**
- 1 egg, beaten**
- 1 1/4 cups Bisquick mix**
- 1 tsp. Italian seasoning**
- 3 Tbsp. butter or margarine, melted**
- 1 cup tomato pasta sauce, heated (optional)**

- 1.** Heat oven to 450° F. Spray 15x10x1-inch pan with cooking spray. In medium bowl, toss chicken and egg.
- 2.** In plastic storage plastic bag, place Bisquick mix and Italian seasoning, seal bag and shake to mix. Add chicken, seal bag and shake to coat chicken. Place chicken in single layer in pan. Drizzle with butter.
- 3.** Bake uncovered 14 to 16 minutes, turning chicken after 6 minutes, until chicken is brown and crisp on the outside and no longer pink in center. Serve with pasta sauce for dipping.

Cheeseburger Soup

Yields 8 servings.

- 1/2 lb. ground beef**
- 3/4 cup onion, chopped**
- 3/4 cup carrots, shredded**
- 4 Tbsp. butter, divided**
- 3 cups chicken broth**
- 4 cups potatoes, peeled and diced**
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour**
- 16 oz. Velveeta, cubed**
- 1 1/2 cups milk**
- 3/4 tsp. salt**
- 1/4 to 1/2 tsp. pepper**
- 1/4 cup sour cream**

- 1.** Brown ground beef in 3-quart saucepan. Drain; set aside.
- 2.** Place 1 Tbsp. butter in same saucepan; sauté onion, shredded carrots, parsley flakes, basil and celery until tender.
- 3.** Add broth, potatoes and beef; bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer 10-12

minutes or until potatoes are tender.

- 4.** In small skillet melt remaining butter; add flour. Cook and stir 3-5 minutes or until bubbly. Add to soup and bring to boil. Cook and stir for 2 minutes. Reduce heat to low.
- 5.** Stir in cheese, milk, salt and pepper. Cook and stir until cheese melts. Remove from heat and blend in sour cream.

Cheesy Bacon Biscuits

- 2 Tbsp. melted butter**
- 1 8-count roll refrigerated biscuit dough**
- 6 thin (1/4-inch) slices fresh mozzarella (optional)**
- 1 cup cooked bacon, crumpled**
- 1 cup cheddar cheese, shredded**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 350 F. Brush 9-inch cast iron skillet with melted butter.
- 2.** Unroll biscuits; place in bottom of skillet. Top with slices of mozzarella cheese, bacon crumbles and cheddar. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes, until cheese is melted and biscuits are cooked through. Serve warm.

Tater Tot Casserole

- 1 lb. ground beef**
- 1 onion, finely chopped**
- Garlic salt and pepper (or other seasonings) to taste**
- 1 pkg. frozen tater tots**
- 1 10 3/4-oz. cream of mushroom soup**
- 1/2 cup milk**
- 1 1/2 cups cheddar cheese, shredded**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 350 F.
- 2.** In a large skillet over medium-high heat, brown ground beef with onions. Drain. Season meat to taste with seasonings.
- 3.** Spread beef mixture evenly over bottom of a 2-quart casserole dish. Place tater tots evenly over meat.
- 4.** In small bowl, mix soup and milk until smooth. Pour mixture over tater tots; sprinkle cheese evenly over top.
- 5.** Bake for 30 to 40 minutes, until cheese is bubbly and slightly brown. Let stand for 10 minutes before serving.

To view recipes from current and previous issues, visit www.nowmagazines.com.

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