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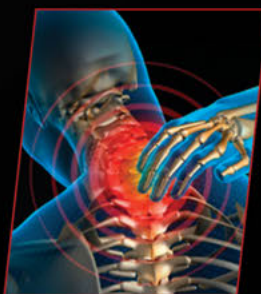
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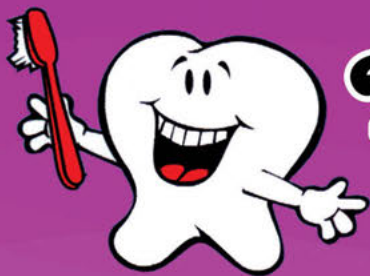
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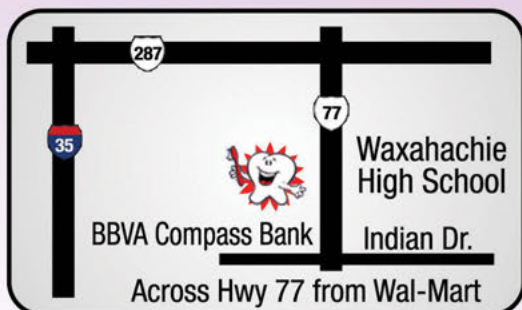
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ON THE COVER



Hachie Crew 32 allows young people who have aged out of Boy Scouts to continue in scouting activities.

Photo by Amy Ramirez.

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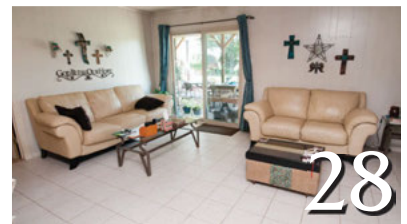
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Editor's Note

Marching into May!

May is the month for two celebrations that are very close to my heart — Mother's Day and Memorial Day. On the second Sunday of the month, I will honor my mom for putting up with me all these years, and, yes, I can honestly say I've been a handful at times. Mom will tell you that a handful is "putting it mildly." Spending quality time with my mom will be the first thing on the agenda. I promise there will be lots of laughter. It will be a day I honor the most important woman in my life, because she really is "all that and a bag of chips."

When I wake up on the last Monday of the month, I will think about the freedoms I have and so often take for granted. My thoughts during my devotion time will be on the men and women I've never met who gave their lives, so I could enjoy life to the fullest here in America. May they rest in peace!

Celebrating is good — remembering is better!

Sandra

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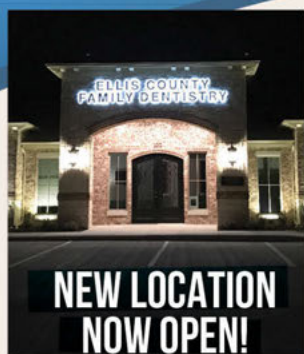
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VENTURING



For Philip Vroman, life is one big adventure. But then, when you're part of a group that specializes in "venturing," what else could it be? Philip, an 18-year-old junior at Waxahachie High School, recently concluded his year term as president of Hachie Crew 32, a group of students ages 14-21, who regularly get together for activities, such as repelling, canoeing, camping and even mountain climbing. "It's cool when I'm asked, 'What'd you do this weekend?' I went repelling or I climbed the tallest mountain in New Mexico," Philip said with a smile. "My favorite thing is hiking

AHEAD

— By Rick Mauch



the mountains. One of the rules is we leave the cell phones in the car. We're there as a crew. We are together spending time and building trust."

The name, Hachie Crew 32, is derived from several sources. Hachie, of course, comes from Waxahachie High School. Crew because, as Philip said, they are a crew, and 32 is the district number for the Boy Scouts. "We wanted a name that would make people stop and ask a question," Philip explained. "When people hear our name, they go, 'What's Hachie?' And that opens up the door for us to explain to them who we are and what we do."

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When a young man turns 18, his time in Boy Scouts is over. However, the Crew does allow them to continue in scouting activities — and it's co-ed. Mid-year, the Crew had four boys and four girls. They were working on bringing another student into the fold, a female. "Our former district commissioner, Chris Overbey, told me we have a crew that needs help in Midlothian," Philip recalled. "He said we could either join that one or start a new one in Waxahachie. I said I'd like to start one in Waxahachie. We started with five members, and now we are at eight, working on nine."

That was in March 2016. Not only has the crew almost doubled in size, they have entrenched themselves in the Waxahachie community. Among the numerous projects on which they've helped are cleaning up the city sidewalks, cleaning up at the end of the day in the farmers' market, manning a water station for a Southwestern Assemblies of God University 5K run and collecting food for a local food bank in the national Scouting for Food event. "We're taught to leave it better than we found it," Philip said. "We want to be out in the community, to be the first ones they call on for help."

The Crew does more than adventure outings. Sometimes they will get together

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Philip and his mother, Tamara Vroman, share a love for scouting.

for a movie night, enjoy some pizza, swim, fish, play Frisbee, etc. "They do a big variety of activities," said Tamara Vroman, Philip's mother and an assistant advisor to the group, "but they do all the planning. They put it all together. They make the overall decisions."

Philip joined Cub Scouts at the age of 9, just to see if he'd like it. He did, and two years later, he joined Boy Scouts. "I saw a poster that said, 'Come join Cub Scouts,'" Philip recalled. "My mom signed me up. After I got my Arrow of Light [the highest award in the Cub Scouts], I joined Boy Scout Troop 1880."

He spent the next five years working toward his Eagle Scout Award, which he received in 2016. However, he knew his time in the Boy Scouts was running out, and he wanted to remain active. It was then that he was contacted by his friend. "Philip has done a great job with Hachie Crew 32. Membership has increased, and the members of the crew are having a great time," Chris said. "In scouting, Philip has a hard time saying no, so he stays really busy. He is now the president of the Southern Star District Venturing Officers Association that I have recently started, so we are looking for great things from Philip's leadership at the district level."



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Philip said, though the venture program is more laid-back than Scouts, when it comes to awards, participants can still receive them. For example, he has already received the Venturing Award, is pursuing the Discovery Award, with the Pathfinder Award ahead, and his goal is to get the Summit Award, venturing’s equivalent to an Eagle Scout honor. “If you focus, you can basically get the entire award (the main four) in two years,” he said, noting there are additional, specialized awards, such as the Quest Award (sports), Trust Award (religion and culture) and the Ranger Award (outdoors).

When he’s not involved in venturing, Philip is active at WHS. He sings bass in the choir, earning district honors as a freshman and sophomore, and he’s on the choir council to help organize events. However, despite his many accomplishments in scouting and venturing, Philip has refrained from participating in sports. He said he’s not coordinated enough. “I do these things, but I still trip,” he said with a laugh. “I always keep track of myself, or I’d get hurt.”

Philip has experienced no major injury. That’s all a part of the trust the Crew builds with each other. After all, participation in many of their activities relies on knowing that someone is going to be there with a helping hand.

He has two older sisters, Victoria and Treasa, who live in San Antonio and Waxahachie, respectively. Victoria was

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a Daisy Scout when she was younger. His father was also in Cub Scouts and the ROTC. Philip wants to get his Emergency Medical Technician and firefighting certification after high school. He also wants to study history in college.

The Hachie Crew 32 is planning a trip to Washington, D.C., in mid-August. They are in the process of doing all of their own fundraising, with events such as a coffee-selling promotion, selling discount cards to area businesses, selling goods at the farmers market, garage sales and a pancake breakfast. "We are all history buffs," he said. "I've never actually seen it up close. My dad's a truck driver, and I could see the White House as we were driving over a bridge at just the right angle. I was 6."

The Crew is also preparing for the second Hachie Crew 32 Barbecue. It's an awareness event to promote themselves to prospective new members, set for the end of July. Last year's event was held at Waxahachie Lake's Cedar Park, with the location for this year still being decided. "We have canoes, horseshoes — a lot of fun activities," Philip said. "Me and our new president, Ben Rice, take people across the lake in a canoe."

For Philip, it's more than recruiting. It's making new friends. "The friends I've made through scouting and Crew will always be there," he said. "They're like family, and family is always there for each other." **NOW**

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Growing Together

— By Virginia Riddle



Why would a college-bound student leave his roots, which were sunk deep in the Boston suburb of Framingham, Massachusetts, and travel to Texas for his university experience? For Pete Havel, Waxahachie Chamber of Commerce's president and CEO, Baylor University in Waco was an easy choice. "I was 18, had no grand plan, was looking forward to seeing a new part of the country and loved the idea of no snow," Pete explained.

Pete earned his bachelor's degree in business administration from Baylor, but his career led him back to Massachusetts and the snow when he became the deputy chief of staff to that state's house minority whip. "Following my graduation, I was very active in politics and the legislative process. I found that I enjoyed working with successful people and liked hanging out with them," Pete said. "Years later, that eventually led me into Chamber work."

Following getting his feet wet in politics, Pete worked as a television producer at WABU-Boston University, regional political manager and legislative director at the Associated Builders



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and Contractors and the National Federation of Independent Business, respectively. Both these positions brought Pete back to Dallas, where he eventually formed Havel and Associates as a government relations and political consultant. Pete experienced Chamber work at the national level during his role as the regional executive director for congressional and public affairs for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

By 2010, Pete had joined Burson-Marsteller, a global public relations and communications firm, as the director of public affairs practice. Pete then became the senior vice president of government relations and marketing for The Wolf Group, another public relations and communications firm. Just prior to becoming Waxahachie Chamber of Commerce president and CEO, Pete was director of legislative affairs for the North Dallas Tollway Authority. With a résumé that involves public relations, communications, working with leaders of business and organizations, as well as becoming a favored speaker and consultant, Pete is uniquely qualified to help guide Waxahachie well into the coming years.

"Over the years, I've developed a very wise group of friends spread over 15 states in which I've worked. I've been blessed to know some amazing people, and I've worked this side of the Chamber world for the last 20

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Pete Havel poses with his daughter, Reagan.



Victoria Martinelli, Pete Havel and Sandy King are excited about what the future holds for Waxahachie.

years.” Pete continued his education by graduating from the Institute for Organizational Management.

Since his tenure began with the Waxahachie Chamber last June, Pete has been busy getting to know the community, area, businesses and residents. With approximately 700 members, that’s a tall order. “I have over 700 different bosses, each with different needs, so I have to understand our members, learn what their needs are and fill those needs,” he explained.

From the beginning, he worked with the Chamber’s leadership to identify its strengths and opportunities for growth by focusing on providing value to members. “We’ve developed new tools and ways of communicating on issues that show tangible steps to growing this city and making it a premier place to live, work and play,” Pete said. Key to this year’s success are these changes: a benefits-based dues structure, increased involvement of members at the committee level, communication avenues to keep members apprised of changes in priority legislation and regulatory requirements and a newly enhanced website. “Many other Chambers have moved from charging dues based on the number of employees a business has to our type of dues structure that is based on the benefits a member would like to receive. With multiple membership categories, there’s one that will fit everyone’s needs,” Pete said.



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New to the website is a job posting tab and members only tab so members can better communicate their needs and services to each other. "Together with CFO/Director of Membership Engagement Sandy King and Director of Communications and Office Administrator Victoria Martinelli, we have a great team," Pete said. "Our leadership and our staff are focused on making the Chamber stronger and more effective — a place where business owners feel they can get involved and get help with whatever problems they might have. We have the satisfaction of helping folks start-up businesses locally, but we also get to help businesses relocate into this area."

Pete describes himself as a jack-of-all-trades and master-of-none. "I'm also a recovering lobbyist," he quipped. "Because of that, I know how to listen, persuade and work with all different kinds of people to bring about coalitions."

Known as the Crossroads of Texas, Movie Capital of Texas, The Gingerbread City and the Crepe Myrtle Capital of Texas, Waxahachie has been, for a number of years, rapidly growing in the number of businesses and industries and resulting population. "Waxahachie has so much going for it — the great schools, the friendliness of the community and the strong community ties," Pete said. "Waxahachie's close proximity to Dallas via Interstate 35, and the openness of city and county officials to work together to get problems solved quickly, makes for a good foundation and partnership to attract business and industry to this city."

With so many Chamber events to coordinate and attend, Pete finds some time to get involved in volunteer efforts. He and his family, which includes his wife, Janie, and their 13-year-old daughter, Reagan, help



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their church's homeless ministry. "That is very rewarding," Pete said. Pete is involved in his daughter's many activities. He also maintains memberships in several Chamber-related professional organizations at the local, state and national levels.



When Pete does get a free moment, it's usually spent traveling. "My family went to President Trump's inauguration. It was an experience watching the peaceful transition of power. Our country is blessed," he said. The Boston area is another favorite destination. "I have family scattered from there to all parts of the U.S.," Pete said. "We have been to Disney World — and then there are the Baylor games. We go whenever we can, depending on budget, school nights and break schedules."

And what does Pete envision as Waxahachie Chamber of Commerce goes into the future? "We have lots of opportunities to grow our membership, which will make us a stronger organization in public service, public policy, economic development and advocacy for business, networking and community involvement. The city has a great foundation of people who have called Waxahachie home for generations, but we also have newcomers who are adding a lot to the community. It's a great blend of long-time traditions and new ideas that will make Waxahachie even stronger." Pete and the staff, board, committees and members of the Waxahachie Chamber of Commerce are ready to be at the forefront of the continued growth and these ever-changing times. **NOW**



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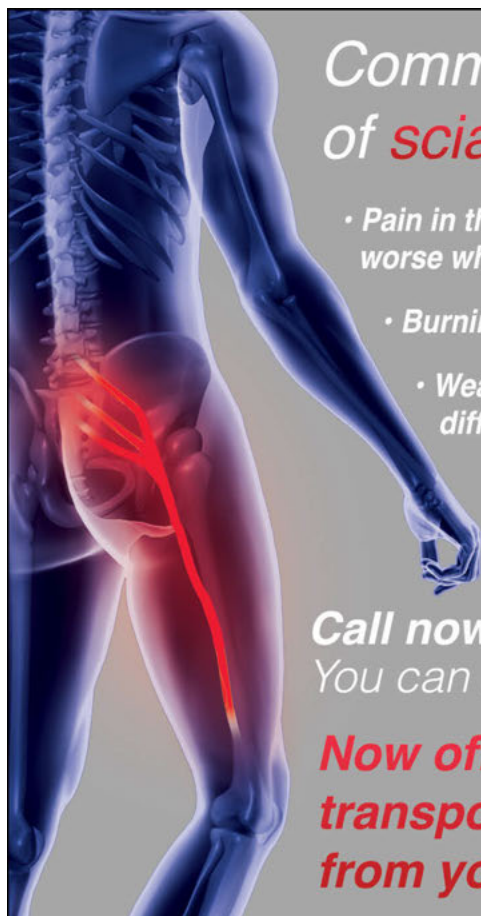
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*At Home With
Larry and Robin
Donaldson*

A Texas Prairie Paradise

— By Debbie Durling



“Our house is a home because my best friend lives here,” Robin said as she looked lovingly over at Larry. The Donaldsons were married in 2006. They went to church on Sunday morning. The pastor and his wife stayed after to marry them. They went home, raked leaves and went back to the Christmas party at the church that night. Robin remembered thinking to herself, Who does this? They have built a life together that exemplifies mutual respect and love. “We are so blessed,” Robin shared. “We didn’t know marriage could be so good.”



A custom path made of red rock, inlaid with stepping stones and bordered with wooden posts, meets the driveway to welcome friends and family. Carefully landscaped, the front yard is like a miniature Texas prairie, complete with native plants, shrubs and a windmill. Beside the front door is an iron plaque with a cross in the center surrounded by the words, *Trust in the Lord*. It is just a small clue that inside abide people of joy and faith.

Larry is a native of Oregon. He moved here in 1970 when oil was booming. Seeking to get out into the country, he found this 1,600-square-foot, ranch-style home in 1977. It was two years old at the time. Robin, a native of the area, joined

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him later, and together they have made every square inch a warm place to dwell. "We love to do things together," Larry said. The original home had a very small patio and an ordinary yard. They have worked together and turned the outside of the home into a sight to behold. Flower gardens filled with Texas plants provide a lush landscape in which the couple entertains. A patio that houses a rustic table, grill and more rustic decor waits to be filled with laughter and fellowship, just outside the double glass

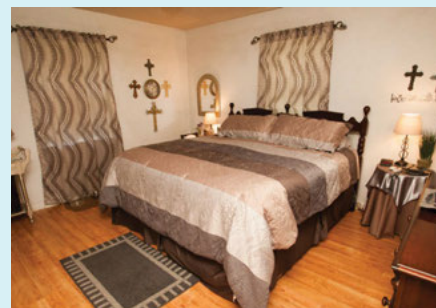
door overlooking the backyard.

Another stepping stone path like the one in the front yard leads through the back gate to a small cottage — a 400-square-foot bungalow for the grandkids to enjoy. A television, bed, loft and an area to play make this cozy, rustic building the

place to be. Part of the yard decor by the cottage includes an authentic privy or outhouse, which adds to the rustic landscape and natural scenes of Texas prairie beauty.

The main house has been updated so well that it is easy to forget it is over 40 years old. The walls are a beautiful, soft white color, adding to the impeccable feeling of cleanliness throughout. To the left of the front door is a traditional hallway, which leads to three bedrooms and two full baths. The lush, master

bedroom sits at the end of the hallway. Rich, antique cherry furniture is perfectly placed to enhance the appeal and order of the room. A medium-toned wood floor, beautiful linens and collections representing their faith create a sanctuary of rest.





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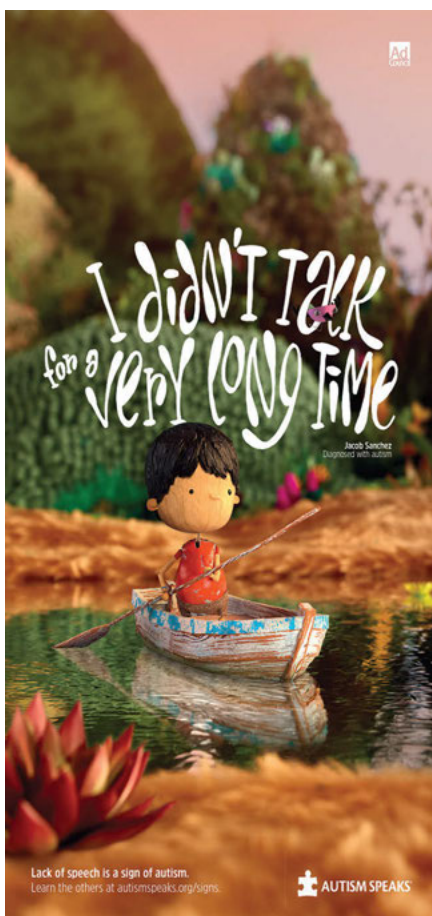
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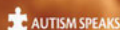
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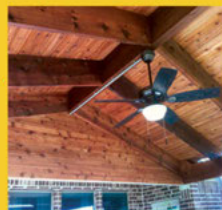


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The hallway itself is a gallery of the couple's life. Pictures of children, grandchildren and accomplishments fill the walls. One area of special interest is the section of wall between the bedroom and bathroom. The display is sobering as it holds the reminders of Larry's service to his country. Larry served in the Vietnam War. He was a tank commander of three tanks and nine personnel carriers. With a lump in his throat and tears in his eyes, he told of an ambush he and his comrades drove into. "If the visiting sergeant had not asked to ride in my seat that day, I wouldn't be here," he said. He was wounded and several men were lost, as they maneuvered a fierce battle in the forest. Hanging on the wall are pictures of his tank and crew, as well as three medals he received — a Purple Heart for being injured in battle, a Bronze Star for heroism in ground combat and a U.S. Army Commendation Medal. In the center of the display, hangs a U.S. Army Cross in recognition of God's hand in bringing Larry home.

Larry also remembers a time when he was on foot with a troupe, wading across a body of water. "All of a sudden, my legs locked together, and I went down," he recalled. A boa constrictor had him in its grasp. Fortunately, he rose to the top to yell out for help, as he was in the back. Quickly, the men turned around and used their bayonets to break Larry free of what could have been a tragic situation.

Rounding the corner of the hallway leads to the living room. Rich leather couches accented with upholstery tacks provide seating for warm conversation. A large shelf that once served as shelving for Robin's daughter when she was a

little girl has been repurposed as an entertainment center for the living room. The workmanship is so well done that it looks as if it was always meant to serve in this way. On the back wall is a pair of sliding glass doors with four beautiful Shelties looking through the glass. Ozzy, Lady, Roby and Sky are the pride and joy of this couple.



Just off the living room is the kitchen. Marble-like Formica tops the medium-toned, wooden cabinetry. An eating bar divides the rooms and completes the square kitchen that wraps around a most interesting island created by the couple. It is made of shutters for the sides, a matching countertop and shelving built down the middle. The slats in the shutters serve as places to hang magazines, ready to be read while relaxing with a snack or drink.

Nowadays, many homes have a man cave. However, Robin has her own "girl cave." Beyond the living room, a door opens to another den where she is able to get away and plan for things she needs to do, like leading worship at the First Baptist Church in Avalon.

The garage houses a treasure of which they are both very fond — a 1970 1/2 Falcon. It is refinished with Calypso Coral Orange paint and black accents. Larry rebuilt the motor himself, changing six cylinders to eight. It is a sweet reminder of Larry's drag racing days and his love of cars.

Throughout this home, over 100 crosses adorn the walls. Unique, rustic, dainty and meaningful, they seem to quietly give testimony of the sweet presence of the Lord that brings such peace, rest and joy to this couple as they live, love and serve not only each other but those they see in need around them. Together, as best friends and true loves, they have created a Texas prairie paradise in the rural countryside. **NOW**

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Summertime Is Easy

— By Zachary R Urquhart



Every year, kids excitedly await the last school bell before vacation begins. And every year, a week after school is out, kids all around can be heard saying parents' least favorite two words, "I'm bored." But using this helpful guide, you can fill your summer with new, fun and, sometimes, free activities.

Sign up for camps!

- *Dance around town.* Every summer, there are dozens of local dance, cheer and art studios that offer one-week camps. These camps often double as a trial for prospective new patrons, so they are a great way to spend a week



and, at the same time, to see if there is long-term interest. Ask your friends what weeks they are signing up for, so your child will know some people when they arrive the first day.

• *Be a good sport.* Most high schools offer sports camps for youth up through middle school. These camps are a good way for high school coaches to meet future athletes, but they are also great for kids to learn fundamental skills,

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technique and strategy. While seeing kids that may eventually play for them is a bonus, schools do not limit attendance to those in their zones, so you can get football speed training from recent state champion coaches, or technical work from some of the most esteemed soccer coaches in the state.

• *Check dates.* With the number of studios, schools and private entities offering camps for all different ages and skill levels, you will want to spend some time looking for the right fit. Whatever else you do, though, make sure you know when the registration deadlines are. While some might extend registration with an added payment up until the day of the camp, staffing and equipment considerations may make others hold to a solid deadline, so do not let missing a postmark date keep your kid from the camp they want.

VBS, by many names.

• *Look for schedules.* With so many churches offering vacation Bible schools to the public, the first step needs to be looking for a calendar of the offerings. While you will not always find one codex with every option, you might call your city hall to see if they have something consolidated. You can also reach out on social media. There are Facebook pages where people throughout the area post



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their church's activities. VBS may be in the morning, afternoon or evening and, generally, goes for four to five days, with some churches using the following Sunday service as a grand finale.



- *Ask your friends.* There are literally hundreds of programs offered by local churches throughout the summer. It is not difficult to schedule a different vacation Bible school every week for a few months, if you are so inclined. Ask friends which ones they have tried, and find out what types of activities each one offers. Some churches do simple activities in the park, and you can show up for just a few days. Others, though, will require registration ahead of time, as they have professional instructors in various fields come to make the activity portion as great as possible.



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• *Figure out the code.* These days, different churches take different philosophies when it comes to VBS. VBX typically means the kids will have one specific activity that takes a lot of their time. Kids' Camp denotes more of a camp atmosphere, with varied activities mixed with the study portions. VBS in the Park is often an outreach seeking to bring in guests from nearby areas throughout the week. And traditional VBS normally blends Bible stories with songs, crafts and large group games.



Free is a great thing.

• *Movies in different places.* While many movie theaters offer cheap summer showings once a week, usually for films that have been out for a year or longer, cities often run special movie days and nights throughout the summer, sometimes in local parks or at other outdoor venues. Most local libraries show movies as often as once a week in the afternoons. Because these city events are planned well in advance, they are advertised weeks before showings, so a quick check of your city's website will give you all the details you need.

• *Libraries have more than just books.* In addition to family-friendly movie showings, most public libraries ramp up a full slate of summer activities. From bringing in magicians and other performers, to presenting informational sessions on a variety of topics, your local library is probably a great spot for

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free family fun, while you get out of the sweltering Texas heat. If nothing else, you can grab a summer reading log and have your kids earn treats and prizes for opening books during their months off from school.

- *Free events with memberships.* If you have passes for local zoos, botanical gardens or museums, be sure and check out their catalogue of events. While they always offer exciting exhibits, most places add a few seasonal specials to entice new families. If you are not a member yet, it may be worth spending \$100 or so for a yearlong membership that lets your entire family have access to special activities, concerts and, usually, even gets you passes to bring friends along for a visit.

The summer can be a great, relaxing time to break from the routine of school and work, but it can sometimes turn into an exhausting endeavor trying to keep your kids from the doldrums of too much free time. With trips to these great local spots, you can be sure your summer is one to remember. **NOW**



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Greg and Ginger Compton built Compton's Cleaning and Restoration on customer service and strive for perfection.

Relationship Geared

It's just not clean until it's Compton's clean!

— By Sandra Strong

There are three words that best describe Compton's Cleaning & Restoration — reliable, dependable and supportive. Owners Greg and Ginger Compton possess all three traits when it comes to the work God has blessed them to do over the past 25-plus years. “We built the business on customer service,” Greg stated. “Ginger and I believe in service with a smile and a caring heart.”

Greg will readily admit that he never wanted to be self-employed, but he remembers the conversation he had that fateful day in September 1991. “I had just gotten full custody of my three sons,” Greg explained. “I asked God, ‘What am I going to do now? How am I going to take care of them?’ His reply was simple. He told me I was going to clean carpets.” So, cleaning carpets is exactly what Greg did.

He quickly learned that operating his own business allowed him the ease of making his own hours, so he could properly care for his boys. “My mission was to go from being a broken man to a successful business owner,” he admitted. “If God can use me, He can use anyone. You just have to be willing to go where He leads.”

Soon thereafter, Greg met Ginger, and after a short courtship, they married. She jumped in, hit the ground running the household and was available in the business as the boys grew into young men. Greg and Ginger are the faces of Compton's Cleaning & Restoration. “We started out cleaning carpets,” Greg said, as Ginger nodded her head in agreement, “but we've evolved into so much more.”

Compton's Cleaning & Restoration now offers drapery and upholstery cleaning; pet odor removal; fire, flood and water damage restoration; janitorial services; oriental rug cleaning; carpet repairs; chimney and dryer vent cleaning; historical cleaning; and tile and grout cleaning and sealing, along with more than 25 years of carpet-cleaning experience. "We also offer 24-hour water extraction," Greg added.

"WE STARTED OUT CLEANING CARPETS, BUT WE'VE EVOLVED INTO SO MUCH MORE."

No matter the job, big or small, Greg, Ginger and their team of 10 full- and part-time employees strive for one thing — perfection. With certification from the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration, Compton's Cleaning & Restoration has the licensing required to do all they do. "Our reputation is something we are very proud of," Greg said. "I honestly believe it's our reputation that's kept us going all these years."

Greg and Ginger are also a blessing in the way they give back to the community that has given them so much in return. They donate on a weekly basis to benefits, fundraisers and auctions. They support the youth, the fire department and all areas of law enforcement. "We also work extremely close with our area veterans," he added. "We just love Ellis County and its citizens."

In October 2015, Greg and Ginger learned firsthand how important they are to their community when Greg suffered and survived a stroke. "I was seeing three of everything," he recounted. "I just knew I was dying, but I wasn't afraid." But, he also couldn't stop thinking about his personal bucket list. "I knew I still had more to do," he added. As the owner, he can still be seen at the office doing what he's always enjoyed doing — visiting with customers. But, he's also taking time to relax and recover. Even though they realize they can't, Greg and Ginger are still finding enjoyment in trying to out-give the Lord. **NOW**



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Several members of the Partners in Education Advisory Board smile for the camera following a board meeting.



Samuel Broadus butters his popcorn before venturing off to see a movie at Showbiz.



Caitlyn, Grace and Charlie Chester enjoy the merry-go-round at A&F Thompson Park.



Lindsey Steger, Mona Teodora, Kristin Armstrong and Rachel Smith spend a fun spring break evening at Hard Rock Cafe on Hollywood Boulevard.



Zachary Garvin serves up good food with a great smile at Cotton Patch.



Charleen Johnson, owner of Crazy Girl Terrariums, shares her knowledge during the Spring Lawn & Garden Expo.



Mandy Starnater, 9, stopped by the NOW Magazines office while on an outing with her mom.

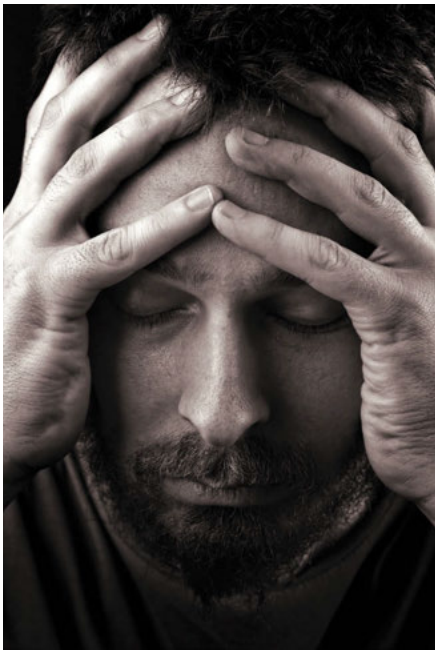


Smokey the Bear and Victoria Cruz, with the Texas A&M Forest Service, explain fire safety during the Spring Lawn & Garden Expo.



The Waxahachie Chamber of Commerce hosts the ground breaking ceremony for the new Waxahachie Police Department, soon to be located on Farley Street.

National Mental Health Awareness Month



Each year, nearly 44 million adults in America experience mental health concerns ranging from anxiety and depression to post-traumatic stress and suicidal thoughts. May is designated as National Mental Health Awareness Month, a call for helping those living with mental health conditions to get the resources and acceptance they need. Older Americans in particular are vulnerable to unrecognized and untreated forms of mental illness.

Depression is the most common mental health condition among America's seniors. Other prevalent cognitive and emotional health problems among the elderly include dementia, bipolar disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder and social phobia. More serious diagnoses, such as schizophrenia and personality disorders, persistently diminish the quality of life and daily functioning for seniors. Depressed seniors or those dealing with emotional concerns neglect eating well, getting regular exercise, maintaining the home and interacting socially.

Older adults often face a number of life stressors that heighten psychological distress. Many seniors experience chronic pain, restricted mobility, bereavement, loneliness and a loss of independence — all of which can impact mental and emotional health. Countless older military veterans carry post-war wounds

to their psychological health. In addition, medical conditions, such as diabetes and heart disease, can worsen depression and other mental health disabilities in seniors.

Warning signs of mental illness are not always easy to detect. The following behaviors are signals that something may be amiss with one's mental well-being:

- Ongoing sadness or feeling blue
- Extreme mood swings, including euphoric highs
- Intense worry or fear
- Uncontrolled, compulsive actions, such as overspending or excessive cleaning
- Heightened irritability or anger
- Confusion or lack of concentration
- Sleep difficulties
- Trouble perceiving reality, such as having delusions or hallucinations
- Marked changes in eating habits
- Several physical illnesses without obvious causes (headaches, vague aches and pains)
- Suicidal thoughts
- Withdrawal from family and friends
- Overuse of alcohol or drugs

While only about 60 percent of individuals with a mental illness receive mental health care, effective treatments are available for the majority of mental health conditions. A first step is to meet with a physician or mental health practitioner. Treatment and disease management depend on the underlying condition, but common recovery measures combine medication and psychotherapy.

National Mental Health Awareness Month is a reminder to not let illness of any type define a person. Those living with mental health conditions, and their families as well, need to know they are not alone. For additional information about National Mental Health Awareness Month and mental health resources, visit Mental Health America at www.mentalhealthamerica.net/may or MentalHealth.gov at www.mentalhealth.gov. How have mental health concerns affected your senior loved one? **NOW**

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May 5, 6

Waxahachie Cinco de Mayo Festival: downtown Waxahachie. For more information, visit www.elliscountyhispanicorg.com.

May 5 — 7

Once Upon a Mattress by Waxahachie Community Theatre: 7:30 p.m., **Friday** and **Saturday**; 2:30 p.m., **Sunday**, Chautauqua Auditorium, Getzendaner Park. \$12 for seniors/students and \$15 for adults. (972) 646-1050 or email wct.texas@gmail.com.

May 6

Arrowhead Show: 8:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Midlothian Civic Center, 224 S. 11th St., Midlothian. Admission is \$5/children 12 and under are free. For more information, contact Harold Hughes at (972) 921-8555 or at haroldhughes@skybeanmail.com.

Christ the King Lutheran Church Craft & Vendor Fair: 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., 301 W. Hwy. 287 Bypass. CTKcraftandvendorfair@yahoo.com. Space is limited.

3rd Annual Hachie 50 Marathon, Ultra & Relay: Getzendaner Park. For more information, visit www.waxahachielionsclub.org.

Waxahachie Symphony Association presents the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra "Classical Masters": 7:00 p.m., SAGU Hagee Communication Center Performance Hall, 1200 Sycamore. Visit www.waxahachiesymphony.org.

May 6 — 14

12th Annual Paint Historic Waxahachie — the Premier North Texas Paint Out: Art on the Square Gallery. Opening reception on **May 13**. www.elliscountyart.net.

May 13

Our Sunflower Friends 3rd Annual Golf Tournament: 8:00 a.m. shotgun start Country View Golf Course, 240 W. Beltline Rd., Lancaster. Vicki Grady at (469) 226-3080, Our Sunflower Friends FB page or at www.tinyurl.com/osfgolf.

Waxahachie Riding Club Playday: 2:00 p.m. Waxahachie Rodeo Complex, 704 Howard Rd. For more info, visit www.waxahachieridingclub.com.

May 19

Pettigrew Academy End of Year Event 6:50-

10:00 p.m., Woman's Building, 407 W. Jefferson St. RSVP at pettigrewacademy@aol.com.

May 19, 20

Waxahachie Old Fashioned Singing: 7:00 p.m., **Friday**; 3:00 p.m., **Saturday**, Chautauqua Auditorium. For more information, visit www.WaxaOFS.com.

May 27

Antwan Kirk-Hues Lineman Clinic: 9:00 a.m.-noon, grades 3-6; 1:00-4:00 p.m., grades 7-12, SAGU football field. \$25 per player. www.wyaatomahawks.org.

June 3

Annual Pancake Breakfast Fly-In: 8:00-11:00 a.m., Mid-Way Regional Airport. Breakfast tickets are \$6 for adults and children over the age of 8. Children under 8 are \$3. Parking is free. Call (972) 923-0080 or visit www.mid-wayregional.com.

Football Skills Camp: 9:00 a.m.-noon, grades 3-6; 1:00-4:00 p.m., grades 7-12, SAGU football field. \$25 per child, limited space. www.wyaatomahawks.org.

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

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In the Kitchen With the Ellis County 4-H Team

— *By Virginia Riddle*

Ellis County 4-H members, Rhett Newton, 16; Blain Johnson, 10; and Drew Johnson, 9, have become competent cooks and have earned two blue ribbons and one fifth place showing in competitions over the past five months. Tonya Stricker, a retired restaurateur, is the team's volunteer coach and is all three boys' grandmother, otherwise known as Nanny.

Cooking competitions are challenging. "We memorize a four-minute speech," Blain explained. Meal ideas, cooking safety and food purchasing are also covered.

"We have to come up with at least two nutritional facts about the ingredients," Rhett added. "We are learning everything about cooking. I love it."

And then the final test comes that counts most — taste. Drew offered his granola bites recipe. "It's my favorite," he said, "because everyone likes to eat them." **NOW**

Drew Johnson's Grab-and-Go Granola Bites

Nonstick cooking spray

3 Tbsp. butter

1/3 cup packed light brown sugar

1/4 cup honey

1 tsp. vanilla

3 cups quick-cooking rolled oats

1/4 cup sunflower seeds

72 milk chocolate chips

1. Coat a 24-count mini muffin pan with nonstick cooking spray.
2. In a large pot, melt butter over medium heat; add brown sugar, honey and vanilla; whisk until the sugar is dissolved; turn off heat.
3. Add oats to the pot; stir well for 5 minutes; add the sunflower seeds; stir.

4. Using a small scoop, divide the mixture into the muffin cups; use a spoon's back, sprayed with nonstick cooking spray, to pack mixture into the cups.
5. Push 3 chocolate chips, point down, into each muffin cup's mixture.
6. Refrigerate until chilled; put bites into baggies, 3 to a bag, for easy grab-and-go.

Blain Johnson's Crustless Pumpkin Pie

1 14-oz. can pumpkin

1/2 cup sugar

1/2 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. ground ginger

1 tsp. ground cinnamon

1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg

1/4 tsp. ground cloves

2 eggs, slightly beaten

1 12-oz. can evaporated skim milk
(shake before opening)

1. Preheat the oven to 400 F. In a large bowl, mix the pumpkin, sugar, salt and spices.
2. Stir in the eggs; mix well.
3. Add the evaporated skim milk; stir until mixture is smooth; pour into a lightly greased 9-inch glass pie plate.
4. Bake for about 40 minutes, or until a knife inserted near the center of the pie comes out clean.

Rhett Newton's Confetti Chicken Wraps

1 Tbsp. canola oil

1 large orange bell pepper, diced or cut into thin, 1-inch strips

1 lb. skinless, boneless chicken breast halves, sliced into thin strips

1/2 to 1 tsp. ground cumin

1/2 to 1 tsp. chili powder

1 15.5-oz. can pinto beans, drained and rinsed

1 cup frozen corn kernels, thawed

1 cup reduced-fat cheddar cheese, shredded

3/4 cup salsa

6-8 8-inch flour tortillas

1/2 cup reduced-fat sour cream
(optional)

1. In a large, nonstick skillet, heat the oil over medium-high heat; add the bell pepper; cook, stirring frequently, until tender.
2. Add the chicken, cumin and chili powder; cook until the chicken is no longer pink.
3. Stir in the beans, corn, cheese and salsa; cook until mixture is heated thoroughly and the cheese is melted.
4. Stack the tortillas on a microwave-safe plate; heat uncovered in the microwave until warmed.
5. Assemble the wraps by placing the chicken mixture down the center of each tortilla; wrap burrito-style; serve with sour cream, if desired.

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



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