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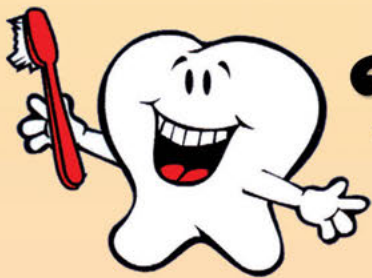
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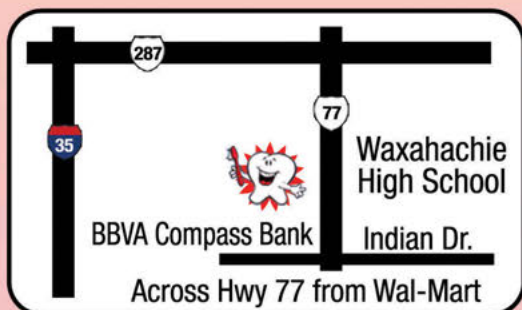
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ON THE COVER

Small robots are the big craze at Sims Library.

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EDITOR'S NOTE



Sandra

Sandra Strong
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Flowers in bloom ...

I woke up the other day and was pleasantly surprised to see the sun shining. I jumped out of bed, donned yard-working clothes and hightailed it to the storage shed. I was going to work in the yard — more specifically the flowerbeds and the landscaping. I had purchased all my plants the week before. They had just been sitting there for a week waiting for my green thumb to reappear.

As the day progressed, I was able to see the fruits of my labor. The potato vine was hanging over the edge of the stone retaining wall. The fountain grass was fountaining. Thankfully, the Mexican heather came back after the dormancy of winter with its purple floral blooms. The red petunias are sitting up nice and tall as they line the front flowerbed. All in all, I'd have to say I had a very productive day.

Here I am two weeks later with a back that still hurts, knees that are still bruised and fingernails that still show the telltale signs of digging in the dirt. As I sit in my lawn chair with my ice water in hand, I can't help but feel good about all I was able to accomplish during one long weekend.

What are your plans for summer?

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The *Ozobots* Invasion!

— By Virginia Riddle





If you are wondering what an Ozobot is, you aren't alone. Have you ever wanted to explore the world of computer programming and coding? Then getting to know the cute little black Ozobots that scoot across the colored marks you've designed on paper is just your ticket into the computer code world. "Each Ozobot is a robot that looks like a pill bug rolling on wheels," Holly Russell, Nicholas P. Sims Library's community liaison and children's librarian, said. "They back walk and turn like they are moon walking!"

Tucked neatly into the U.T. Buckner Room of the library is the brightly colored children's library full of books, stuffed animals, American Girl dolls, a shell collection and a computer lab. A puppet stage, a LEGO



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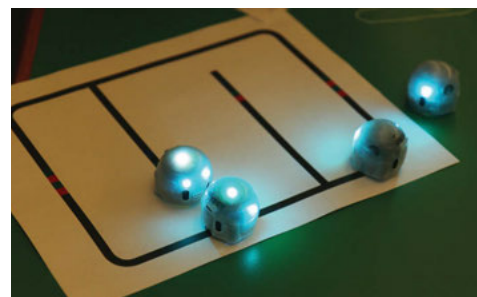
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table and rocking chair allow for relaxation and play. Adults can check out parenting and child development books. “We had a naming contest when we first received the Ozobots,” Holly explained. Some of the names chosen are Eco, Sonny, Ozzy, Nick and Oscar. The Ozobot backpacks can be checked out with a parent’s library card for one-week periods.”



The backpacks contain everything needed, including charging cables. “The Ozobots become fussy and die after about two hours of use and must rest and be recharged,” Holly explained. The backpacks are age appropriate. Children, ages 4-7, start with simple code patterns and markers, and age 8 through 12th grade can build codes with a coding app to upload to the Ozobot. (Backpacks are available in the children’s library only.) “Even adults like the Ozobots!”

Kids can go to a website, log in and build code that programs

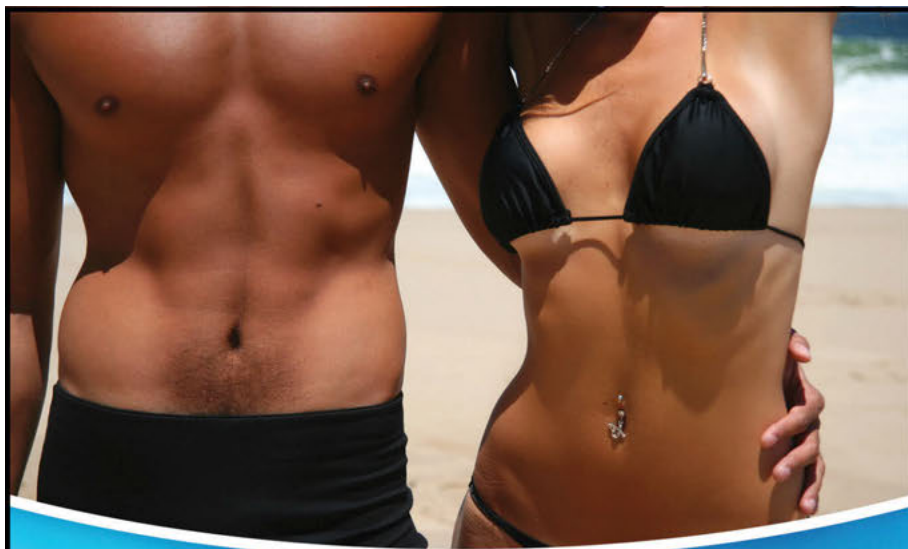


the Ozobots. “The program is Bluetooth compatible and will work on a computer screen or tablet,” Holly explained. Kids can use home computers or the library’s computers and tablets or both.

The Ozobot Backpack Program was made possible through a grant the library received from Ecolab, Incorporated’s Corsicana location. “One of our parent patrons works there and let us know about their grant program for area nonprofits. We only had about a week to write the grant proposal, but we received full funding for this program,” Holly said.

Mrs. Liset, Miss Erika and Mrs. Paige, all of whom work in the library’s children’s section, can help guide children and adults through the Ozobot program. “There are step-by-step instructions that are pretty easy to follow, and adult family members are supposed to be involved and help their children. However, anyone is welcome to stop in for extra help. There are also instructional videos available on YouTube,” Holly said.

The library’s active teen volunteer group will be available to help with coding instruction on Saturdays and during summer months. “We couldn’t do this job and offer so many programs and materials without our teens and other volunteers,” Holly



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stated. "Some people think there's no need for libraries in this Internet world, but it's just the opposite. Our library's a place to share passions and ideas whether one is a 2-year-old or is 100 years old. It answers this community's large need for an informational gathering place."



Holly Russell and Erika Maldonado are here to help.

Other offerings to come in the Simspiration Program are materials targeting interest areas such as yoga. "These interest packets and backpacks of tools and materials are designed to let library patrons explore possible interests and ideas and get inspired, thus the name, Simspiration," Holly said.

A self-proclaimed U.S. Air Force brat, Miss Holly has lived in Ellis County for the past four years and is surrounded by family in the area, including her husband and kids. She attended Texas Woman's University, studying public relations and then transferred to Baylor University where she earned a bachelor's degree in museum studies and archaeology. Holly returned to TWU for a master's degree in library information science.

Previously, Holly was the curator of collections and interpretation for Historic Waco Foundation and was employed by the Lancaster Veterans Memorial Library. Since October 2014, she's called Sims Library home. "I'm surrounded by all-around happiness here," she said. "The 'littles' are so happy and excited to come to the library, and it's so much



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fun to build that librarian and child relationship with each one of them.”

Holly serves on the social media committee for the Texas Library Association and Historic Waxahachie's programs committee. She's also on the community engagement task force for TLA. “We encourage adults to make each library trip an inviting adventure for kids,” she said. Holly also serves as a children's Sunday school teacher at Harvest Hill Church in Midlothian. She earned recognition as an Ellis County 40 Under 40 Business Professional in 2007. When not working, she enjoys reading children's literature, cooking and baking and spending time with family.



The Sims Library staff presents many opportunities for learning and exploring other than the Ozobot Backpack Program. “We have Reading to a Therapy Dog; activities for teens, preteens and children, including Storytime and our summer reading program; and we're not just books. There are DVDs and audio books available,” Holly noted. “If you have a need, come in and communicate it to us. We're here to serve. If we can't help you, we'll find someone who can. Librarians are no longer ‘shushers.’”

Since 1905, Sims Library has served Waxahachie residents as a fully-funded, nonprofit organization. Holly concluded, “The Ozobots are only our latest acquisition and offering. It's amazing the things that can be accomplished when this community comes together.” **NOW**

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BIG THINGS, SMALL

At Home With Dario and Sheila Gonzalez



A little yellow, Tudor house of about 1,200 square feet serves as the place Dario and Sheila Gonzalez call home. Every square foot of this space is utilized to serve as the base of a family who lives large and invests in others in so many ways.

One signature of the home is the way Sheila has maximized the space to make it feel large and be a sufficient refuge for a family of four. "IKEA has helped me get so much out of so little," she said. After intricately painting the interior of the home herself, she bought one BILLY bookcase and began there. It was just what the home needed. Now there are shelves, storage units, decor items and much more throughout the house, giving it a modern appeal.

The exterior of the house keeps with the historic home tradition of Waxahachie. Built in 1920, it is almost 100 years old. It has survived a fire and was refurbished by the former owner. The entry is the only place with flooring that is original to the house. Everything else was too damaged to preserve.

Sheila has saved her favorite childhood collections, which are showcased within glass units she purchased. Strawberry Shortcake and collections from Barbie look like new because



SPACES

— By Debbie Durling

she has taken such good care of them over the years. “My brothers and I were very careful with our toys growing up and have all of the ones that were special to us,” Sheila commented.

Dario and Sheila met while attending Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas. Dario is from Panama and won the Walton Scholarship, funded by Wal-Mart, to study at a university in the United States. They were in the same group of friends because she was a Spanish major. “While at the movies with a group one night, I ended up separated from them and saw him sitting by himself,” Sheila recalled. “I knew him by sight. So, I asked him if I could sit with him. He agreed, and we watched the movie together. After the movie, he mentioned that he liked the movie and would like to come see it again the next day.”

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Sheila quickly replied that she was going to come back to the show with him. “Isn’t it me who should be asking you out?” he questioned. The rest is history. They got married after his third year of college. The Walton Scholarship required the recipient to return home to Panama to live and work for at least two years. So, after college, they packed up, and she began her new marriage and life in a foreign land.

Dario’s family lives on a group of islands off the Caribbean coast of Panama. There are 365 islands which are solely inhabited by his people, the Kuna. The islands are handed down



to the next generation and never sold. Dario and Sheila lived there part of the time and went back and forth to Panama City. His family owns a hotel on the islands, so when they were there, they worked as tour guides to the guests of the hotel. “We enjoyed this season of our lives and met people from everywhere,” she said. “Some would come in by yacht and

cruise ships, and others would fly in.”

Sheila is originally from DeSoto. When they returned from Panama, they moved in with her parents for a while. They finally landed in Waxahachie. This house became their home 13 years ago. “We really haven’t done anything structural to the house except add a closet to the master bedroom. Otherwise, we have only

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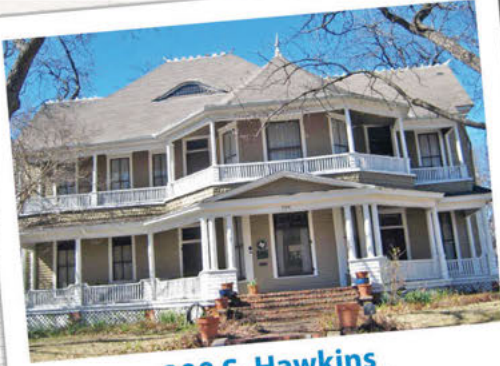
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updated or created space by using furniture,” she explained.

Upon entering the hallway, pictures of the family line the walls and shelves making it easy for visitors to see how important family is to those who reside in this home. They are very close, and Dario and Sheila spend much of their time getting their two daughters, Sofia and Isa, to tennis and swim events, singing competitions and traveling each day all the way up to Bishop Dunne, where their oldest daughter attends school. Both parents have served as teachers, administrators, coaches and all-around support for the schools in which they have been involved.



To the right of the entry is a room that could easily be set up as an additional bedroom, but instead, shelves line the walls, making this the perfect spot for the family's home library. “Once, a friend of my daughter came for a party and when she went back to school, she was telling her friends how cool the house was. The girl's friends asked what was so cool about the house,” Sheila remembered. “The reply of our daughter's friend was that it was cool because we lived in a library!” Because of their love of learning and books, Sheila felt that was one of the greatest compliments she could have received about their home.

The house is painted relaxing shades of yellow and tan. The living area is large and open to the kitchen and dining area. A very modern, flat

style of cabinetry lines the wall of the kitchen giving it a clean look.

The decor of the great room again points to family as the girls' award-winning art is displayed very nicely on the walls, grouped by each girl. The art collection is made up of unique and beautiful masterpieces. One of



those is a bunny that was painted on the back of a clear piece of glass. It won an award at the State Fair of Texas. Others are just as unique, and some have the blue ribbon they won hanging with the framed art. Through the back door, a playhouse that matches the main home waits for playtime, while a wooden deck serves any need for gathering and fellowship.

Because of the creative way Dario and Sheila have decorated and defined the spaces in their home, it feels much bigger than it really is. This is also true of their lives. They live much bigger than the outsider would guess. "We travel internationally," Dario shared. "We have experienced parts of the world unsuspecting neighbors would never guess."

They are also all about providing experiences to their girls that broaden their horizons and develop the talents stored within them. They pack all the experiences they can into every day and organize their lives to get the most out of living. This tiny little home holds a family with large experiences and large hearts that give back to others, while living out their own dreams. **NOW**

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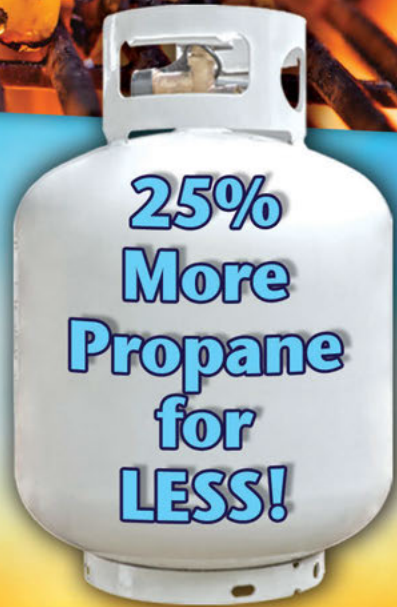
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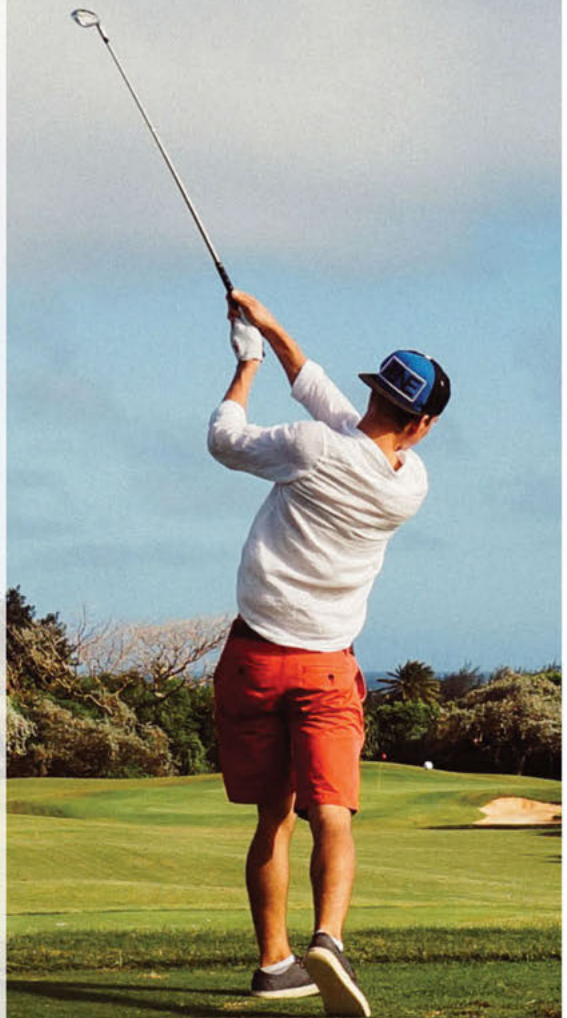
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Splashing Into Fun

— By Virginia Riddle

The cool, inviting blue pool water is being readied this month for another summer at the Waxahachie Family YMCA. “Learning to swim is a major part in a child’s life because it’s a skill that one uses a lifetime for fun and recreation,” Logan Houser, pool manager, said. “Knowing how to swim can also save lives.”

Sara Calvillo, assistant pool manager, and Logan will be leading 26-30 part-time lifeguards. Training for lifeguards is offered at the YMCA during two sessions this month. Registration for those lifeguard training sessions and all group swim classes and private and semi-private swim classes that begin in June and go through August is open and available online at www.waxahachieymca.org.

Swim lessons are offered to children as young as 6 months of age, with a parent. Ages 3-12 are taught water acclimation, movement and stamina, and more advanced 5- to 12-year-olds are taught strokes. Lessons are offered

to adults of any age. “We’ve seen a steady increase in adults wanting to learn to swim in recent years. This year, we will also teach swim lessons and safety around water classes in cooperation with the city of Waxahachie and Lee Penn Park pool,” Jon McLaughlin, Waxahachie YMCA executive director, explained.

Once children complete stroke mechanics, they may inquire about joining the YMCA-sponsored swim team, Ellis County Swim, which competes in a Dallas league with other area YMCA swim teams and at state competitions. An additional swim team, the Angel League Stingrays, is offered for ages 6-19 for children with mental or physical challenges. “The Stingrays are part of the Special Olympics competition. It’s amazing to see these kids when the light bulb comes on. They are pretty remarkable,” Jon said.

“It’s exciting to move kids to the next swim level and telling the parents the news,” Sara added. “I get to experience their joy and excitement!”

Payments vary with the different lessons, programs and whether the person registering is a YMCA member or nonmember. Financial assistance and income-based memberships are available.

For members looking for a workout, there are options. Water aerobics classes are free with membership and are open to ages 10-14 with a parent or guardian and to ages 15 and over unaccompanied. Morning and evening times are reserved for lap swimming.

With varying time and day offerings, the YMCA makes the pool available to fit most folks' schedules, expertise and fitness goals. Open swim times, when everyone can enjoy the pool, are scheduled daily, too. Pool schedules can be accessed on the YMCA's website, and copies are available at the YMCA during the swim season, which lasts from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

Logan learned to swim at age 8 and was a member of Ellis County Swim while in high school when they were the 2013-2014 district champions. "My biggest mentor in swimming would definitely be Mrs. Pruitt, the swim team coach. She let me be on the team and made me so much better than I ever thought I could be," Logan recalled. He's currently a biology major at Stephen F. Austin State University, where he participates on the track and field team. "I love to swim and do so regularly, but my true passion is track and field," he said.

Sara's a product of the YMCA swim lesson program. "I remember when I learned to swim at age 5, the lifeguard told me if I would come back, they would hire me," she recalled. "I came back." Logan and lifeguard, Billy Luco, have encouraged her. She's attending Navarro College, both on the Waxahachie and Corsicana campuses, working toward a bachelor's degree in sports management. An all-around athlete, Sara has played soccer, volleyball, tennis and participated in track.

"There are challenges in teaching someone to swim," Logan concluded. "But whether I'm teaching a child or an adult, it's a joy because I know I've improved a life." **NOW**

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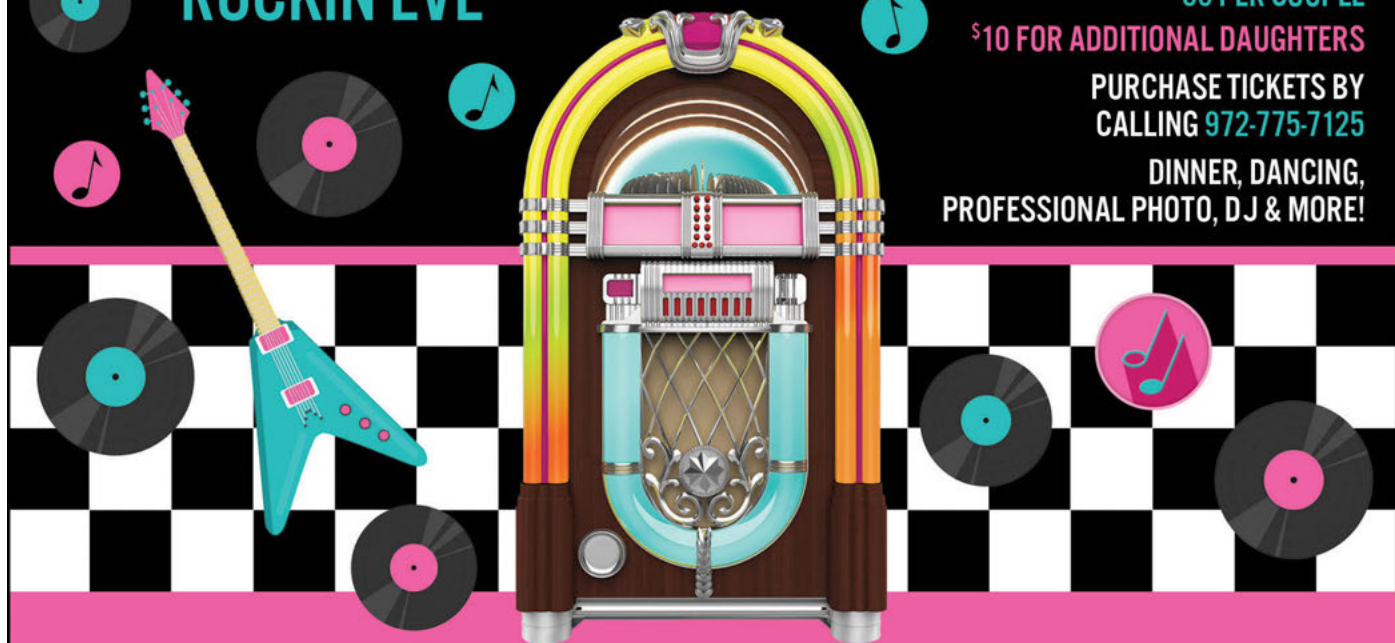
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A full-page photograph of a young man, Nick Henderson, in mid-air as he jumps over a hurdle on a red running track. He is wearing a green and white striped singlet with 'HACHIE' on it, green shorts, and green sneakers. His right leg is extended forward, and his left leg is bent. The hurdle is white with 'INDIANS' and a logo on it. In the background, there are bleachers and a clear blue sky. The text 'LEAVE HIS MARK' is overlaid in the top right corner.

LEAVE His *MARK*

Nick Henderson lives for the speed of the sprint and the exhilaration of crossing the finish line. A senior at Waxahachie High School, he has run on the track team and played football for the last four years and is anticipating the upcoming high school track season. Nick is already accomplished on the track and has his sights set on even greater things this year. As to why he continues to push himself in sprints, Nick stated, "I just love running. I love the speed."

A passion for running has always been part of the Henderson family. Nick's dad, Rod, shared, "We have a history of track stars in our family, so it is only natural that Nick would develop that same spirit for running and racing."

WAXAHACHIE

— By Derek Jones



Rod coached Nick during his formative years playing pee-wee football. "As his dad, it was hard not to be a little too hard on Nick sometimes," Rod said. "It did not take long before I knew I needed to turn the coaching responsibilities over to someone else, but I am glad I had that coaching experience with Nick when he was young."

These days, Rod and Nikki draw pleasure from watching their son fly down the track, modeling what it means to be a competitor and champion. Rod stated, "I just tell him to practice, keep his head in his books and stay humble." It only takes a few minutes with Nick to realize he is the type of person who lets his accomplishments on the track speak for themselves, and

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these days his accomplishments are speaking clearly. Nick is here to win.

Last year, as a junior running for WHS, Nick had a successful track season. His greatest accomplishment came running the 300-meter hurdles. At the regional meet, Nick came in third, only missing going to state by one place. He was, however, chosen as an alternate for the state meet. "It was tough to miss going to state by so little," Nick said. "But it has made me even more driven this year to earn a spot to compete at state." His regional meet time of 39.45 and 39.78 is lightning fast. With the help of his current coach, Ronald Jones, along with his commitment to being even faster, Nick is more determined than ever to improve and become a state qualifier this spring.



Nick competes in other track events as well, such as the 4x1 and 4x4 relay, but his passion is hurdles. It takes a specific skill set to be a successful hurdler. Nick explained, "The key to speed is to stay as low as possible over the hurdle while



still clearing it.” Nick smiled as he explained the most important element in running hurdles, “Don’t trip over the hurdle and fall.” When asked if he had ever tripped, Nick laughed, “Oh yes, but not in a long time.” Nick offered one of his secrets to his running success. “I spend a lot of time practicing the start of the race. How well you start the race determines how you finish.” Apparently, Nick has been getting off the starting blocks quickly in his races.

He faces competition other than in the lanes next to him. His mom, Nikki, shared, “His sister, Madyson, is a freshman this year. She competes at the same distances as her brother and loves to compare her placings at the meets with Nick’s.”

The Henderson family enjoys a little healthy competition from within. Madyson keeps her brother motivated, and Nick provides a positive influence for his sister. Family influence, however, does not stop there. “Nick’s grandparents, David and Wanda Terry, and Connie Rice have been instrumental in his development as an athlete and person,” Nikki reflected.

When it comes to giving credit to others for their support, Coach Todd Alexander and elementary P.E. teacher Erica Fritz come to mind. “Cynthia Williams, the assistant principal at Wedgeworth Elementary in Waxahachie, has also done so much over the years to support Nick,” Nikki shared.



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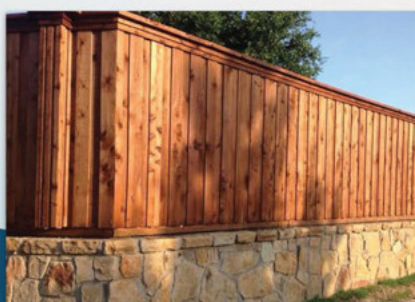
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Although the Henderson family values the help and friendship of others when it comes to raising their children, his mom holds the title of Nick's biggest fan. "He, along with his sister, are my heartbeats," she shared.

Nick is fast and determined. Whatever happens this season, he will leave his mark on the track. Nick has worked hard to be the best on the football field and track while in high school, but he has no intention of stopping there. His next goal is college.

Although Nick is not sure where he will attend, he is excited about what the future will bring. "I am looking at several different college options, but I know I want to continue playing football and running track," Nick revealed. "I just want to continue improving and pushing myself to be better."

Nick suggests advice to those who think their dreams may be unattainable: "You have to chase the lion," he said. With Nick's speed on the track, there is no doubt he will, indeed, catch his lion. **NOW**

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In the Kitchen With

SUE COOLEY

— By Lindsay L. Allen



When you raise and feed five children and then become a grandmother to 12 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren, you learn your way around the kitchen. For Sue Cooley, holidays are her favorite time to cook. “I love to have fun and be creative, and I have the big task of trying to make everyone’s favorite foods and desserts,” she said. “Cakes and pies are always at the top of the list.”

In fact, a chocolate cake with chocolate icing was the first thing Sue ever baked on her own. It was a surprise for her mom when she got home from work that day. “From that point on, I had full reign of the kitchen,” she remembered. **NOW**

Oriental Cabbage Slaw

Slaw:

- 1/4 cup slivered almonds**
- 1/4 cup cocktail peanuts, chopped and shelled**
- 2 Tbsp. sesame seeds**
- 1/4 cup shelled sunflower seeds**
- 3 Tbsp. butter**
- 1 6-oz. pkg. Ramen noodles, uncooked**
- 1 head Napa cabbage**
- 8 green onions, chopped**

Vinaigrette:

- 1/2 cup sesame oil**
- 1/4 cup white wine vinegar**
- 1/2 cup sugar**
- 3 Tbsp. low-sodium soy sauce**
- 1 tsp. crushed red pepper**
- 4 cloves garlic, minced**

1. For slaw: Sauté the nuts and seeds in butter, until lightly toasted; add crushed noodles.

2. Add the spice packets from the noodles;

toss to coat. Let mixture cool.

3. Cut cabbage and onions; mix together.

4. For vinaigrette: Mix all ingredients together in a glass jar. Shake vigorously; refrigerate.

5. Mix together the sliced cabbage, green onions and sautéed noodle and nut mixture in a large bowl.

6. Shake vinaigrette. Toss the desired amount of dressing with the slaw; serve immediately.

Cha Cha Chicken Salad

4 grilled chicken breasts, sliced or cubed
Tony Chachere’s Creole Seasoning, to taste

1 16-oz. bag coleslaw (to include both red and green cabbage and carrots)

1 1/2 cups red seedless grapes, halved

1 1/2 cups celery, thinly sliced

1 cup walnuts, chopped medium

1 cup Asian pears, unpeeled

1 12-oz. bottle Briannas Home Style Rich Poppy Seed Dressing

Salt and pepper, to taste

1. Sprinkle chicken breasts with creole seasoning before grilling. Grill chicken; let cool.

2. Mix cubed or sliced breasts with other ingredients if serving immediately.

3. If not serving immediately, add all the ingredients together, except the pears and nuts, which can be added at serving time.

Mexican Chicken Delight

12-15 corn tortillas

3 cups cooked chicken

1 onion, chopped

3 Tbsp. butter

1 10.75-oz. can cream of chicken soup

1 cup chicken broth

1 10-oz. can Ro-Tel Diced Tomatoes and Green Chilies

1 7-oz. can chopped green chiles, drained

2 cups cheddar cheese, grated

1. Cut tortillas into 1-inch strips.

2. Boil chicken; clean from the bone, or use boneless chicken breasts that have been grilled, boiled or microwaved.

3. Sauté onion in butter. Add soup, broth, Ro-Tel, onions and green chiles to the chicken.

4. In a 9x13-inch casserole dish, layer tortillas, chicken mixture and cheese.

5. Bake at 325 F for 40 minutes covered, and an additional 15 minutes uncovered. Let cool slightly.

Sue's Delicious Pasta Shells

- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 Tbsp. salt
- 1/2 pkg. frozen spinach, chopped
- 1 cup ricotta cheese
- 4 oz. cream cheese
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1/2 box jumbo pasta shells
- 3 cups pasta sauce
- 2 cups Alfredo sauce

1. In a large skillet, sauté the onions in oil until translucent; add garlic and cook for 1 minute.
2. Add ground beef; cook until crumbly texture. Season with salt; set aside.
3. Combine spinach and cheeses; mix well. Add eggs; set aside for later use.
4. Parboil the pasta shells; drain and allow to cool before filling shells.
5. Add spinach, cheeses and egg mixture to the ground beef mixture.
6. Use cookie scoop to fill the pasta shells. Cover with pasta sauce and Alfredo sauce; allow the red sauce to be visible, as well.
7. Bake at 350 F for 35 minutes. Allow to cool; serve.

Mandarin Orange and Pineapple Cake

Cake:

- 1 11-oz. can mandarin oranges, plus juice
- 1 8-oz. can crushed pineapple, drained
- 1 yellow cake mix
- 3/4 cups vegetable oil
- 4 eggs
- 1 tsp. vanilla

Icing:

- 1 16-oz. tub Cool Whip
- 1 8-oz. tub Cool Whip
- 1 15.25-oz. can crushed pineapple, with juices
- 1 3.4-oz. pkg. vanilla instant pudding
- Coconut (optional)

1. For cake: Mix all ingredients; divide into two 8-inch cake pans. Bake at 350 F for 30 minutes, or until done.
2. For icing: Mix all ingredients together; spread between layers and on cake. Keep refrigerated and take out 1 hour prior to serving.

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McDonnell Richardson CPA, PC

— By Virginia Riddle

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Starting a business? Or own a business that's drowning in financial record-keeping and legal requirements while facing ever-changing tax codes? Following a passion and being one's own boss are part of the American dream, but finding time to grow that business can be difficult. Kevin McDonnell, CPA, JD and Jim Richardson, CPA, CGMA, partners in McDonnell Richardson CPA, PC, are experts in handling administrative tasks so business owners can focus on their business.

"We listen, so we know what the client's needs are," Jim said. "We're proactive."

"We want to establish the client's objectives and determine how we can meet their needs effectively," Kevin added.

In 2003, Kevin realized his dream and grew his business from a shared office with one employee. Today, Kevin and Jim employ 30 people in their Waxahachie and Ennis locations.

The team at McDonnell Richardson assists Jim and Kevin in tax preparation and filing, general accounting, payroll, controller services, income tax audits, IRS disputes and commercial property disputes. Jennifer McDonnell, CPA; Destiny De Leon; Craig Fenton; Ava Willard, MBA; and Greg McElroy, EA, help manage the accounting practice of McDonnell Richardson. Dustin Coates, JD, is Kevin's law partner in the legal practice of McDonnell Coates, LLP.

The legal and accounting services have recently been brought under one roof in the firm's newly renovated


Waxahachie office. "Bringing everything together allows us to operate with efficiency and effectiveness, which results in additional benefits to our clients," Kevin explained. "It's an honor, and we enjoy helping clients and employing people. We're making lives better."

Kevin and Jim meet the challenges of staying knowledgeable in employee benefits including health care, tax and accounting laws and changes in retirement. "We keep up with clients' business growth," Jim said. "It's a full-time job for us and a burden that we're releasing for clients. Our mission is to always stay proactive and provide a better experience." The firm provides a free mobile app with beneficial tools that are downloadable to iPhone, iPad and Android devices.

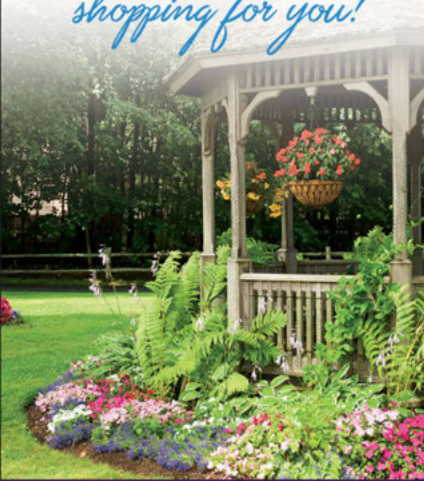
A native of New Orleans, Kevin earned his Bachelor of Science in accounting with a minor in management and a Doctor of Jurisprudence from Tulane University. He lives in Midlothian with his wife, Jennifer, who is also a CPA, and their two children, Alex (11) and John (9). Kevin is an instrument rated pilot and academic. "I love learning," he said. A founding member of Ellis County CASA, Kevin is also a St. Joseph Catholic Church advisory board member. He holds memberships in the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, Texas Society of Certified Public Accountants and the State Bar of Texas.

Jim grew up in Arlington, Texas. He earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from The University of Texas at Arlington. Jim also holds memberships in AICPA and TSCPA and has recently earned his property casualty insurance license. He lives in Waxahachie with his wife, Paige, and their three children, Caitlin (15), Allan (13) and Carson (10). Jim served as band booster treasurer and as a select soccer team board member. He's on the finance committee at First Baptist Church Waxahachie.

McDonnell Richardson CPA, PC and McDonnell Coates, LLP are members of the chambers of commerce in Waxahachie, Midlothian, Ennis and Red Oak. Kevin said, "We love the Ellis County environment and people." **NOW**



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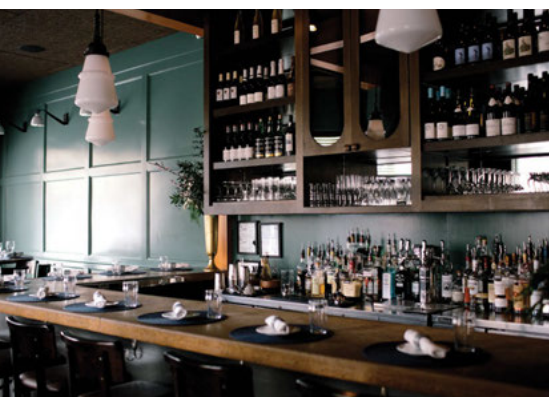
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TravelNOW

Awakening in Charleston

— By Amanda Hollinger

A rich and colorful painting by acclaimed artist and South Carolina Lowcountry native Jonathan Green depicts a vibrant sunrise spreading across a tidal creek and marsh grass that is Charleston’s iconic landscape. Entitled *Awakening in Charleston*, the painting captures more than the fiery beauty of sunrise. It also evokes the spirit of awakening Charleston experiences as it tells its story to the world — not just the postcard-ready version of cobblestone streets and historic plantations, but also the realities of enslaved people whose skills and labor built Charleston. Once a sleepy coastal port, today Charleston draws visitors to discover a vibrant, modern city examining its roots and teeming with high-tech job growth, a vibrant arts and culture scene and an award-winning culinary destination.

Charleston boasts more than its share of award-winning “get-your-reservation-in-advance” dining experiences but

also entices with off-the-radar offerings. Felix, a hip and modern French café at the north end of the King Street Historic District, tempts visitors with small, savory plates of lobster deviled eggs and crab croquettes with crispy okra. For a quieter, more sophisticated dining experience, reserve your spot at the James Beard award-winning restaurant, FIG. Chef Mike Lata’s cuisine is a simple, yet innovative, approach to Lowcountry food, such as baked golden tilefish with spring shallots. For something casual, yet no less mouthwatering, venture to the diverse North Central neighborhood. Strap on your appetite for James Beard-nominated Chef Rodney Scott’s legendary whole hog BBQ or sit outside at Leon’s Oyster Shop and dine on charred oysters and spicy fried chicken.

After getting your fill, explore downtown Charleston by foot. Founded in 1670, Charleston offers unparalleled

opportunities to experience history. At the Old Exchange and Provost Dungeon, completed in 1771, walk the same floors where George Washington was received, and learn about the site's tragic role in the history of the slave trade.

While downtown, take a walk down historic Broad Street — slowly — so as not to miss the reasons why this street is ranked one of the nation's "Great Streets" by the American Planning Association. Bluestone sidewalks, gas streetlights and palmetto trees frame structures dating back to 1715. Near Broad Street, you will find The Gibbes Museum of Art, home to the foremost collection of American art that incorporates Charleston. The collection includes something for everyone, from 18th century portrait miniatures to modern sculptor Patrick Dougherty's twig and branch structure (a kid favorite).

Visitors are likely to encounter one of Charleston's many popular festivals, such as Charleston Wine + Food, Southeastern Wildlife Exposition, Charleston Fashion Week, Festival of Houses and Gardens or, if you're lucky enough to visit during the 18-day period beginning Memorial Day weekend, Spoleto Festival USA. Every year since 1977, the festival has transformed Charleston, filling its historic venues with opera, symphonic music, theater, dance, chamber music and jazz from across the globe.

No visit to downtown Charleston would be complete without a visit to the Battery, the southernmost tip of the historic district and the Charleston peninsula. This promenade provides sweeping views of Charleston Harbor, Fort Sumter, the convergence of the Ashley and Cooper Rivers and the Atlantic Ocean beyond. Awakening couldn't be more romantic. **NOW**

For more information or to plan your visit to Charleston, visit www.explorecharleston.com. Photos courtesy of ExploreCharleston.com.

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Your Style, Your Palette

— By Zachary R. Urquhart

Home improvement can be an unavoidable hassle. When a garbage disposal goes out or you have a leaky faucet costing you money, you take action. Sometimes, though, home improvement can mean fixing up an old piece of furniture or giving a decorative coat of paint to your accent pieces. Here are some tips for sprucing up your house this summer.

Finding Your Canvas

- *Use your own furniture.* Fixing up your house does not have to mean buying all new things. Your old couch can get new padding or a new cover, either from a professional or as a do-it-yourself project. A worn tabletop might be sitting on a solid foundation or vice versa. You can incorporate some of the parts of an old piece to make something unique and new.

- *There are simple bathroom solutions.* Replacing faucets and towel hangers is a relatively inexpensive way to give your bathroom a facelift. And if your marble tub is starting to seem outdated, consider replacing only the sides with sleek wood painted to match your cabinets. It is an easy way to get a very different look without too much effort.



Looking Outside Your Home

- *Drive slowly and look both ways.*

One of the best ways to find furniture ripe for redoing is just by driving through neighborhoods the day before trash collection. People often have old furniture they just need to get rid of, and they will stick it by the curb to be taken by their garbage service. If you want a piece for aesthetics alone, a cursory once-over can determine if someone else's trash really could be your treasure. If you are using something that needs to bear weight, like a dining table, check all joints and tighten all screws before you even load it in your car.



- *Be safe, not scared.* Getting things online might make you a little anxious, but it can be a great way to start a project. If a seller is too vague with details, or they will not send ample photos, beware. Try to have someone go with you for added safety and avoid making plans to pick something up at night in a remote location. When things are free or too cheap, it might be a sign that the item needs more work than you want to put into it.

Painting Like a Pro

- *Pick the right paint.* Once you have cut, remade and sanded the perfect piece, a good coat of paint is the perfect final touch. Based on what you are covering, you might need a nicer paint to ensure a good, smooth finish. The paint experts at your local store can be invaluable



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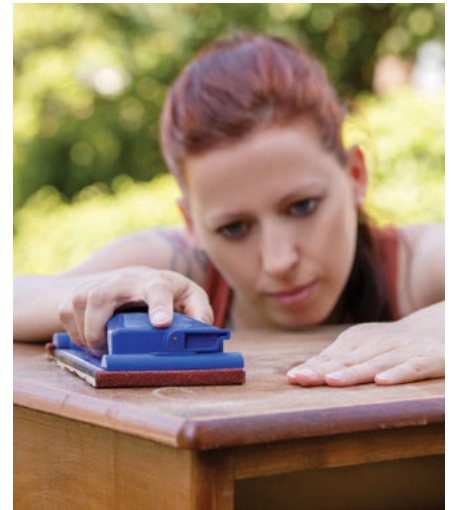
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when selecting the right paint for your project.

• *Chalk it up.* If you want to give a piece the fresh but distressed look that is so popular right now, there are a few things to keep in mind. Chalk paint is versatile. You can thin it or thicken it to change the look a bit. Distress the wood after painting, but before waxing, which is a step you cannot skip. One benefit is that you cannot really mess it up, since nicks and scrapes are a part of this style.



Whatever you decide to tackle this summer, take your time and be creative. Remember, these projects should be a fun way to spruce up the most important space you have — your home. **NOW**



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Scarlett Hajovsky may only be in eighth grade, but she is determined to learn all she can to help others. In May, she will graduate from Pettigrew Academy, before enrolling in ninth grade at Heritage High School in Midlothian. This is a milestone for Scarlett and Pettigrew Academy. Although other students have graduated from Pettigrew in the past 13 years, Scarlett is the first to graduate after attending all eight grade levels. Daphne Hajovsky, Scarlett's mom, explained it best. "We have had children in private and public school with positive results, but after hearing about Pettigrew Academy, we decided to try it out with Scarlett. It has been an incredible fit."

HERITAGE

— By Derek Jones



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Even though the school does not offer a program past the eighth grade, Scarlett is thankful for the last eight years. "I just love it here," she exclaimed with a smile.

Scarlett has many interests and enjoys learning new things. For example, she has been taking China painting lessons for the last six years. "China painting is a lost art," Scarlett said. "I love drawing and sketching, but China painting is my favorite." She is excited because she plans to submit her work to a China painting convention to be put on display. She is adamant that her painting is something she does for pleasure and not competition. "China painting is





a hobby that I really enjoy because it takes my mind off other pressures,” she admitted. Among her artwork is a plate with a delicate cardinal painted on it — a perfect symbol for the calmness painting provides for her.

Over spring break, Scarlett had the opportunity to take an education-based trip to Ireland, London, Wales and Paris. “Last year, I did a research paper on artist Mary Cassatt,” she explained. “This year, I was able to view her works on display in Paris.”

The trip, however, provided many more learning opportunities. “One of the amazing things about the trip was viewing the castles in Ireland,” she said. “The pictures in books do not do them justice.” For Scarlett, the trip was a chance to see and experience many of the things she had only previously read about. “The Eiffel Tower was one of my favorite things,” she related. “Seeing it lit up at night was an incredible sight.” This trip represents the type of experience-based education Scarlett has participated in since enrolling in first grade.

Among her other activities, Scarlett is involved in 4-H. Currently, she is raising a goat named Stella to show. Scarlett shared her responsibilities. “I feed her here at school and walk and train her for the show. She is young, and I am still trying to bond with her.”

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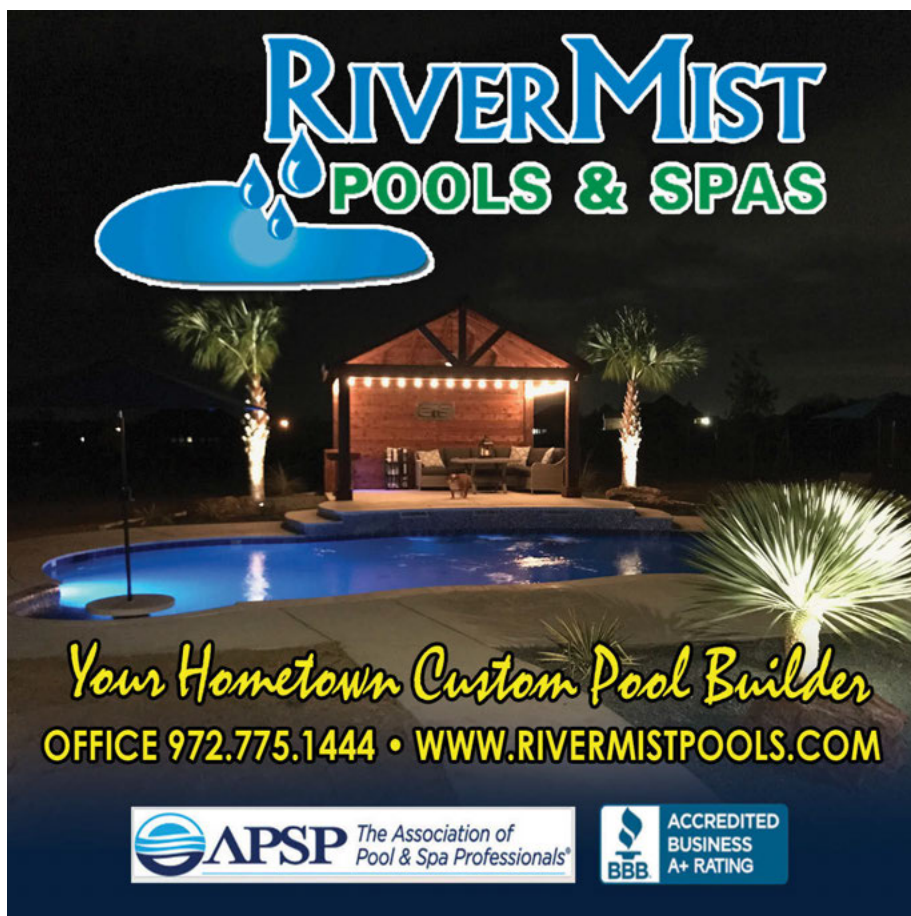
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Scarlett is also serving as 4-H president for her school this year. "Scarlett is a shining example of work ethic, character and leadership for her peers here at school," her teacher, Kim Bauman, acknowledged.

Not only is Scarlett involved with showing animals, but she has been riding horses for the last seven years. "My horse's name is Independence," Scarlett stated. "But I call him Indy for short." Working with animals is just another one of her passions.

Scarlett has her sights set firmly on the future. "One day," she said, "I want to work as a speech therapist for toddlers and young children." Her time in school has afforded her many opportunities to put her interest in speech therapy into practice. "I get to work with the younger children here at school on their speech," Scarlett relayed. "I sometimes work with students on a single word over and over, and when they finally get it, it's the best feeling in the world."

Since Pettigrew Academy has students enrolled ranging from first grade to eighth grade, Scarlett has many opportunities to read to the younger students and work one-on-one with them. She also loves





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spending time with her five young nephews. It is clear, investing in children is something Scarlett cares deeply about.

Beginning with her ninth-grade year, Scarlett will enroll at Heritage High School in Midlothian. Fear of the unknown, however, will not hold her back. She is thankful for her experience at Pettigrew Academy, but she is excited about what the future holds. "I already have some friends who go to school there, so that makes it easier," she explained. "This will be an exciting new chapter."

Scarlett is quick to give thanks to the people who have supported her. "My parents and my teachers support me no matter what," she shared. "My teachers, Mrs. Bauman and Mrs. Guerra, have taught me so much these past eight years. They have been my role models." Whether she is serving at her church, First United Methodist in Midlothian, riding her horse, painting, studying or teaching younger students, Scarlett is looking ahead to a bright future. **NOW**



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Zoomed In: Jerry and Janice Bradshaw

By Sandra Strong

Jerry Bradshaw is from Eula, a small suburb outside Abilene. Janice has called Waxahachie home for most of her life. The couple has resided in Forreston since 2004. One thing Jerry and Janice enjoy doing is coming to Showbiz Cinemas to see the latest movies. “We couldn’t wait to see *I Can Only Imagine*,” Janice said. “Jerry plays the guitar, and he sings this song quite often at our church. He really wanted to see the movie, so he could learn the history behind the song.”

As a couple, they enjoy viewing inspirational movies, as well as those with a western theme. “I have mother/daughter times at the movies,” Janice shared, “and I also spend a lot of time here with my grandkids.”



Gail Talley loves her new job as front-end supervisor at Atwood's Ranch & Home.



Autumn Jones, 10 months old, is ready for Easter with her pink bunny ears.



Atwoods Ranch & Home celebrates its Grand Opening in Waxahachie.



Ethan Davies and Carter Steenbakker with iKids Pediatric Dentistry hand out toothbrushes, while also teaching hygiene safety.



Emma and Hallie Hunter, 4-year-old twins, smile for the camera after a fun ballet class at Danceworks.



Michael Hamilton and his 2-year-old son, Micah, show their smiles after eating a yummy meal at El Mexicano Grill.



Anna Belle Lee spends a beautiful spring day swinging at Getzendaner Park.



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Calendar

May

4, 5

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

First United Methodist Church Shred-it Document Disposal: 4:00-5:30 p.m., **May 4**; 10:00 a.m.-noon, **May 5**, 505 W. Marvin St., Waxahachie. On-site shredding of any paper documents for minimal donations. Suggested donations are \$20 for a 13-gallon bag and \$10 for smaller containers. Proceeds benefit mission work.

5, 6, 12, 13, 19, 20, 26, 28

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



8, 15, 22

In the Music Room Studio & Listening Room Radio Show Tappings: 7:00 p.m., **May 8**, Bobby Smith & Dorinda Duncan; **May 15**, Alex Harvey; **May 22**, Elizabeth Lockhart, 3103 Sanger Creek Way. For more information or to make reservations, call (972) 938-9990 or email rsvp@inthemusicroom.com.

12

In the Music Room Studio & Listening Room Live Performances: 6:00 p.m., Ken Gaines & Bud Bierhaus, 3103 Sanger Creek Way. For more information or to make reservations, call (972) 938-9990 or email rsvp@inthemusicroom.com.

19

20th Annual Corsicana AirSho: 8:30 a.m., gates open; noon, show begins, Corsicana Municipal Airport. \$10 per person or \$20 per carload. Veterans and military personnel and their families are free.



25 — 27

National Polka Festival: visit NationalPolkaFestival.com for a full list of event details.

June

2

Annual Pancake Breakfast Fly-in: 8:00-11:00 a.m., Mid-Way Regional Airport. The event includes classic airplanes and fighters, helicopter rides, CAF vintage airplane rides, fly-overs, Midlothian Classic Wheels, Gold Wing Road Riders, live music, children's activities and more. Breakfast tickets are \$6 for adults and children 8 and above. Children under 8 are \$3. Parking is free. For more information, call (972) 923-0080 or visit www.mid-wayregional.com.

4 — 8

Twilight Cub Scout Camp: 6:00-9:00

p.m., Ellis County Expo Center. \$79 for early signup, \$89 for late signup. For more information, contact Neil Sims at (817) 271-2054.

Ongoing:

Mondays

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

English as a Second Language class: 6:30-8:00 p.m., Sims Library. Learn English or come to brush up on your English-speaking skills. Free to the public.

First Mondays

Friends of Sims Library meeting: 10:00-11:00 a.m., library meeting room, 515 W. Main St. Newcomers are always welcome.

Third Mondays

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

Fourth Mondays

Texas Master Naturalists Indian Trails Chapter: 6:00 p.m., First United Methodist Church, Waxahachie. The program begins at 7:00 p.m. For more information about the group, visit www.txmn.org/indiantrail.



Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis County meeting: 6:30-7:00 p.m., social time; 7:00-8:00 p.m., program, Waxahachie Bible Church, 621 Grand Ave. Visit www.elliscountyquilters.com for more information.



Tuesdays

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

Thursdays

Junior Master Gardeners Club: 3:45-4:45 p.m., Sims Library. Club is for children ages 5-12. If you have an interest in gardening, come for gardening related activities and help maintain the Sims Library garden.

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

Second Thursdays

Crackpots meetings: 6:30 p.m., Cowboy Church of Ennis. Call Vicki Bell at (469) 285-4845 or Myra Morrissey at (972) 998-5868 for more information.

Saturdays

Waxahachie Downtown Farmers Market: 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., 410 S. Rogers St. Applications

and information is available at www.waxahachie.com. Every Saturday through **October 27**.



Fourth Saturdays

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

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



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The Beat Goes On

— By Sandra Strong

Erica Pointer-Wilcox, WHS Cherokee Charmer director, was living life to its fullest, when suddenly things began to change. While in her late 20s, she was diagnosed with congestive heart failure, which prompted the need for a pacemaker.

In December 2015, she underwent her first open-heart surgery. In January 2016, she began experiencing blackouts, which led to a stroke later that same year. Erica was put on the national heart transplant list in January 2017, and by May 2017, at the age of 32, she underwent a full heart transplant. “I never felt sorry for myself,” she said, remembering back on all she went through to get where she is today. “I believe that everything happens for a reason.”

Nothing, not even a bad heart, stopped Erica from doing what she loves to do — dance and teach, teach and dance. While waiting on a new heart, she wore an IV in her arm that gave her ailing heart the extra squeeze it needed to keep her out of the hospital and on the Waxahachie ISD campus. In fact, the time she missed away from the high school was minimal. “My health was not going to stop me from doing the job I was hired to do,” she explained. “I

had very little down time. I came right back to work.”

Work, for Erica, was by far the best medicine. It gave her the purpose she needed to keep moving in a forward direction. Just two short months after receiving her new heart, Erica showed up for Cherokee Charmer summer camp. “Working was and still is my coping mechanism,” she confessed. “To stop would have meant giving in to my illness, and that’s not going to happen. I refused to give up.”

Before the transplant, Erica would put in a full day at work, return home to shower and collapse in her weariness. That is no longer the case. As she gets ready to celebrate her one-year transplant anniversary, she finds she has more energy than ever before. After many hours in the gym, her chest muscles are strong. Her quality of life is better than it’s been in a very long time. “I have fewer restrictions now,” she explained. “And I’m not nearly as tired as I used to be.” She now goes to the gym following a full day “at the office.” Then it’s home to fix supper for her family. “And I even have energy to clean house and do some laundry without getting exhausted,” she said.

Erica hopes to one day meet the donor family. She realizes that the beat goes on for her because of their selfless gift, and for that she will be forever grateful. “Because of that gift,” she said, “I’m breathing easy.” **NOW**

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