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Publisher, Connie Poirier | General Manager, Rick Hensley

EDITORIAL

*Managing Editor, Becky Walker | Burleson Editor, Melissa Rawlins
Editorial Coordinator, Sandra Strong
Editorial Assistant, Rachel Smith | Writers, Amber D. Browne
Sean Doerre . Rick Mauch . Zachary R. Urquhart
Editor/Proofreader, Angel Morris*

GRAPHICS AND DESIGN

*Creative Director, Chris McCalla | Artists, Kristin Bato . Morgan
Christensen . Martha Macias . Brande Morgan . Anthony Sarmienta*

PHOTOGRAPHY

*Photography Directors, Chris McCalla . Brande Morgan
Photographers, Joy Elmore . SRC Photography*

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ON THE COVER

*Dr. Michael McFarland helps
Crowley ISD students see
themselves in multiple ways.*

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Melissa

Melissa Rawlins
BurlesonNOW Editor
melissa.rawlins@nowmagazines.com
(817) 629-3888

EDITOR'S NOTE

Don't you love it when dreams come true?

Many a student going back to school this month dreams of finding friends, fun and a future maybe a bit more prosperous than the life they currently live. For those whose families need help procuring all the required school supplies, there are citizens all over our area contributing to backpack programs, so every returning student will have the opportunity to fit in and fill their minds with the lessons their teachers work so hard to give.

One well-known project benefiting children is operating in the strength of more than 20 years' history. Little Red Schoolhouse collection stations were open for business all summer long, and on the 7th of this month, the giveaways begin. Families who have already registered will go to Harvest House, where they'll be "shopping" for the supplies they need according to their child's grade level and school district. At least 600 kids from around Burleson, Crowley and Joshua will be served. According to Jennifer Woods, executive director of Harvest House, this kind of support wouldn't be possible without donations from multiple businesses throughout Johnson County.

Here's to many more back-to-school dreams!



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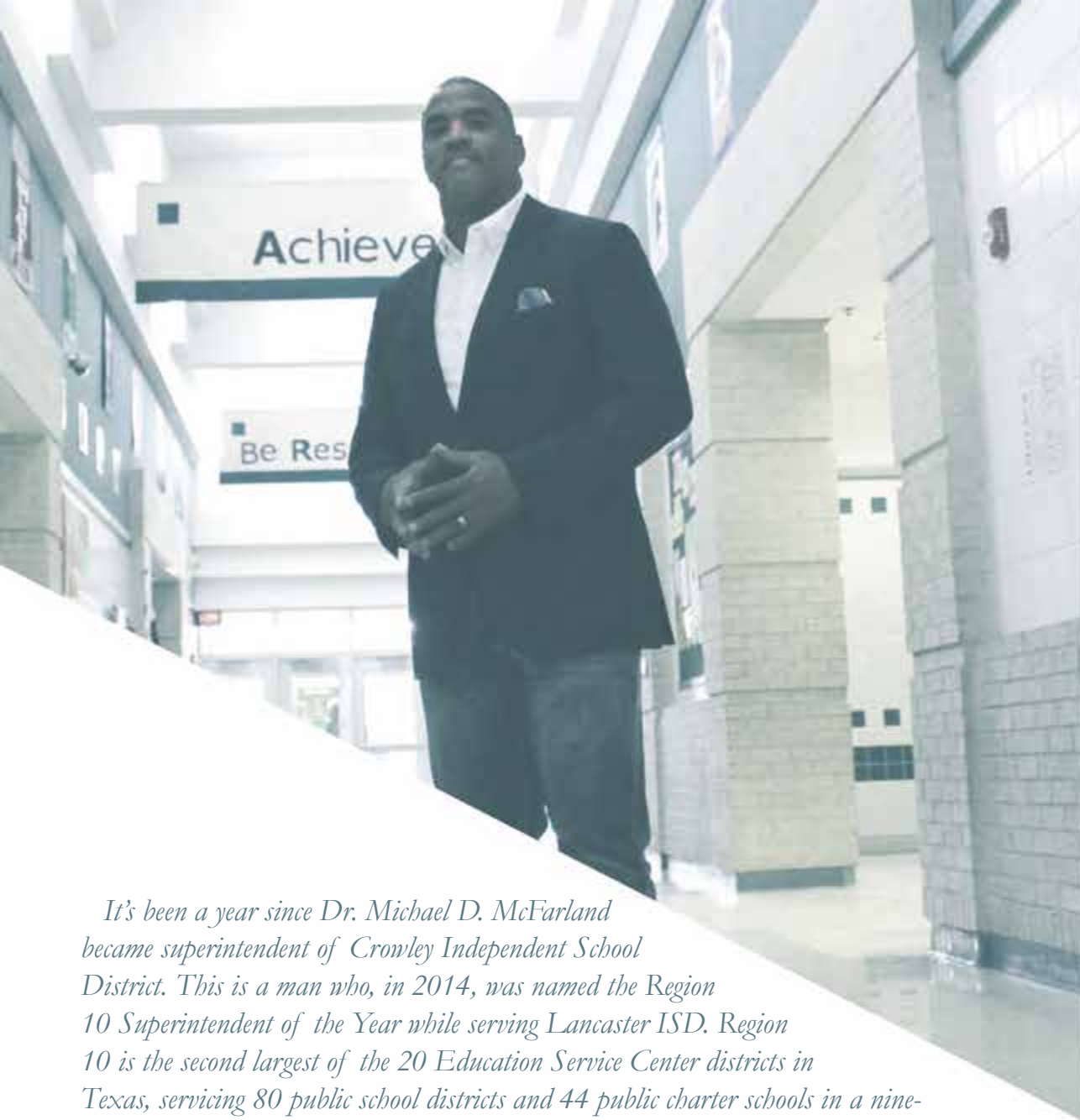
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It's been a year since Dr. Michael D. McFarland became superintendent of Crowley Independent School District. This is a man who, in 2014, was named the Region 10 Superintendent of the Year while serving Lancaster ISD. Region 10 is the second largest of the 20 Education Service Center districts in Texas, servicing 80 public school districts and 44 public charter schools in a nine-county region, which includes the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. In the past year, Dr. McFarland propelled forward this district's Blueprint for Excellence, while listening to parents, students, teachers, civic leaders and business people in an effort to stay ahead of the game.

Coaching basketball gave Dr. McFarland experiential evidence that listening and learning must be integrated with leading. The YMCA team he coached included his daughter. She and her teammates preferred listening to the other coach, a younger student from the high school. "Being a father, your children are not always listening," Dr. McFarland said, with a wise chuckle. "Fatherhood is harder than being an educator. In my position as superintendent I'm meeting with adults, oftentimes, and people are listening to what I say partly because of the position."

CASTING A VI



— By Melissa Rawlins

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Understanding it's a weighty task to make decisions for other people's children, Dr. McFarland took the opportunity during the first convocation he led to encourage every teacher in Crowley ISD. "If you treat every child as you want your child treated, you're going to be fine," he told them. "Ask yourself the question, 'Would I want someone to give my child another chance, to help my child learn a different way?' When you get into the gray area, say, 'Hey, is this what I'd want for my child?'"

While serving as a middle school principal, Dr. McFarland encouraged teachers to ask students about their career aspirations. "A couple teachers were frustrated because most of





our kids either wanted to be a professional athlete or a musician. I listened, and said, 'It's hard for a person to want to be someone they have not seen.' Our job is to make sure they can see themselves in multiple ways. The earlier we do that, the earlier they realize they could be, for example, an orthopedic surgeon or a teacher. They're grabbing at straws unless we are intentional within our school system."

Blessed with fine role models and an intentional high school teacher, the future superintendent grasped a vision for his future just before entering Baylor University on an athletic scholarship. Early on, he understood the value of education and that a high school diploma was only one step along his path.

"My mom was a teacher and my dad was a barber in a small East Texas town, Jasper. My reality was not all my friends' reality. They were probably more intelligent than I, but they did not have the same opportunities," Dr. McFarland recalled. "In my community, if you graduated, you could go work at any of three major corporations. You could have a nice life, buy land, buy a home, take care of your family. None of those plants exist any more, though, and so people with skills and knowledge, but not higher education, were not able to adapt and move forward."

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In 1988, while he was a senior, his typing and business law instructor, Mrs. Marva Cauley, discerned that young Michael did not know what he wanted to do after college. “She was a cross between Oprah Winfrey and a mean aunt, who really loved me but wouldn’t ever let it be known. She sat me down and forced me to make a decision,” he said. “She just kept on me, saying, ‘Michael! You are all over the place. You need to sit up in your chair, sit at the front and stop giving me excuses.’ I kept saying, ‘I don’t know, I’ll figure it out.’ She said, ‘No, you’re not leaving out of here until you tell me what you like to do.’ She asked me questions until I realized, *I really want to do what she’s doing.*”

“I had 56 teachers from kindergarten all the way up, and one that made the entire difference,” Dr. McFarland said. At Crowley ISD, he is challenging every teacher to be a difference maker. “When you talk about teachers’ power to change a person’s life with a conversation, of course, you have to have a relationship,” he advises teachers. Then he adds, “Don’t let them off the hook.”

Similar concern is communicated districtwide as part of the overall strategic plan. Over the summer, Dr. McFarland and the school board spent a lot of time talking about their vision for 2025. That involves



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developing more choice options within every school, so that students in every neighborhood will have an emphasis on a specific pathway.

This year, choices are broadening as 10 more elementary schools provide very specific learning opportunities on their campuses. "From health science to fine arts, engineering to aviation, leadership to law, we're working with private partners to help make these pathways happen. Corporations like Alcon and Huguley are right here in our neighborhood and can partner with us, so as kids move through our system, they develop an understanding of what's available to them," Dr. McFarland said.

At Oakmont Elementary School, for example, the campus focus is environmental science. A two-year grant from REAL School Gardens engaged community partners like Sprouts, Target and Mercedes Benz, and community organizations like BRIT (Botanical Research Institute of Texas), together with Crowley ISD to bring hands-on learning to life for students. "From a financial standpoint, it was beyond something we could do 25 different times in our district," Dr. McFarland said. "But with partners, we could build one really stellar garden that sends the message that what we're doing in the schools is important."

Dr. McFarland is confident each student can achieve his or her full potential. As Crowley ISD focuses on the people who matter, it's only a matter of time before the district achieves its goal of sustainable, long-term improvement. **NOW**



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COLOR

Psychological studies show that colors can affect mood. Warm colors such as orange and red are said to have energizing effects on mood, while cool colors of blue and green are considered to invoke rest and relaxation. For Esther Brothers, teal is her color of choice, but many shades brighten rooms and moods inside her home in Old Town Burleson.

Esther and her late husband, John Brothers, moved into the cozy one-story home with her mother-in-law in 2003. Esther purchased the home following the deaths of her husband and mother-in-law in 2012. She and her daughters, Amber and Courtney, put a lot of effort into renovating the home, which was built in the 1960s. “The girls and I just wanted to make it our own,” Esther shared.

With help from the Kingdom Men at her Baptist church in Burleson, Esther and her daughters remodeled the home. “When I bought the house, I decided to tear up the carpet,” she said. “The Kingdom Men put in the laminate, and they did all the tile.”

She hired a handyman to update the kitchen. The honey-colored paneling remains in the dining area, but it was replaced with drywall in the kitchen. A church parishioner suggested Navajo White for the kitchen paint color, so Esther and Amber worked together with paint brushes and rollers to brighten the area.

The built-in china cabinet was removed, and the bar was relocated to open up the kitchen. French doors were added to gain entry into the backyard. Teal-colored fruit baskets and knickknacks add pops of color throughout the kitchen. “Anything I could, I spray painted,” she stated. The carpenter cut down the cabinets that once extended to the ceiling and added cubbies, which now house woven baskets for storage. A local artist hand-painted several tiles with various shades of teal for installation in the backsplash above the counter and stove tops. On the windowsill above the kitchen sink sits Esther’s colorful, solar-powered “flower garden,” adding more color to the room.

Humor is abundant on the dining room wall where framed caricatures from the State Fair of Texas depict seven years of growth for Amber and Courtney. “It’s fun

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— By Amber D. Browne

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to see how the girls have changed.” Amber is a student at The University of Texas at Arlington and recently married Derek Mannan. Courtney graduated from Centennial High School in May.

Family is very important to Esther. She takes pride in family photographs

of her eldest daughter and grandchildren displayed on a room divider in the living room. Additional photos include trips to amusement parks, prom and graduation events, and John at golf tournaments.

The living area houses a taupe couch and a collection of videos.

“When the girls were growing up, we watched a lot of movies.”

Esther improved a wooden storage bench that sits near the front door by adding a reversible cushion. She also sewed colorful curtains and pillows. Her go-to color of teal adds to the ambiance of the room including painted panels on the doors. “We spray painted anything we could to match,” she admitted.

Dozens of crosses hang on the entry wall. Esther began collecting the crosses about four years ago after Amber purchased one for her as a Christmas gift. “We’re very faith driven,” Esther shared.



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Esther framed a colorful spray-painted unicorn T-shirt of Courtney's and displayed it on one wall to resemble a painting. "I couldn't see getting rid of that," she shared. "It's amazing what you can do."

Courtney's collections of snow globes and painted rocks are on display, and her love of horses is apparent. The closet doors in her current and old room were removed to add sheer curtains in vibrant colors. In Courtney's old bedroom, walls sparkle with glitter paint. Esther recently replaced the furniture with white wicker and a metal bed frame.

During the remodel, the bathrooms were also updated. The guest bathroom and Courtney's bathroom received new tile and paint. "Every room in this house, had to have something done with it," Esther said, and changes may be coming again soon to include new colors. "I get tired of looking at the same thing."

Esther is headed into a whole new season. The past year was focused upon planning Amber's wedding, volunteering with Courtney's Centennial Choir at school and preparing for her graduation. Esther will continue working part time babysitting for a neighbor. In her free time, she keeps herself busy with crafting, crocheting and volunteering at her church. "God's put me through a lot, but He's taken care of me." She also enjoys walking the trails around Burleson. "I love it here. It's very peaceful." **NOW**

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Each bedroom and the Circle Room showcase vibrant color schemes, lifting the mood of anyone who enters. The master bedroom is painted a deep magenta with teal as the accent color. Framed photos of Esther's late husband catch the eye. She found John's Burleson High School football pictures in a shed out back after he passed and decided to frame and display them.

The Circle Room, converted from a smaller bedroom, provides a space for Courtney to relax and watch TV on one of the plush round chairs. Esther and Amber painted the walls gray and dark teal by using a venetian blinds box to measure from the ceiling and draw a horizontal line around the room. Each side was painted, and circle appliques were added along the line as accents. Pillows, lamps and storage boxes continue the circle theme throughout the room. Esther used her decades of sewing experience for the curtains, cutting the bottoms off and transforming them into valances for the window.

Courtney recently moved into Amber's old room, where Amber's bubbly personality is mimicked with her color choices: two walls are hot pink, and two others are gray. The trim is painted light pink. Courtney's room is the original master bedroom and includes a bathroom, which is also pink.





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Dream Job

— By Rick Mauch

Andy Pickens recently celebrated a year in paradise — his paradise. As president of the Burleson Area Chamber of Commerce, he is working his dream job. “I have loved every minute of it. There has been a learning curve,” he said, with a laugh. “There’s no training program for Chamber presidents, but I have a great staff and a great board of directors. They’ve made it a lot easier.”

Andy and his family have lived in Burleson since 1995. His wife, Cindy, is a reading intervention specialist at Hughes Middle School, and their 14-year-old son, Drew, will be a freshman at Burleson High School this fall.

Andy, who took the job on June 26, 2017, said the biggest challenge in his first year has been the learning processes, such as planning, getting new members in place, and, of course, financials. In the first four months of 2018, more than 50 businesses joined the Chamber as new members. “As I’ve been out and about

in the community, there’s been a great buzz about the Chamber,” he said. “I’m a real people-oriented person. I believe that distinguished me as an attractive candidate to the board of directors. I think it was very helpful to have a president come in who had those relationships established in the community. And I love Burleson. I want to see the best for it.”

This is also proven in his community work. Andy is currently president of the Burleson ISD Board of Trustees and has served on the board since 2011. He is a member of the Burleson Early Morning Rotary Club, volunteers with Meals on Wheels and coaches baseball and basketball in the Burleson Youth Association and in Upward sports. “Andy remains steadfast in his support of course offerings and programs that spark curiosity and advance lifelong learning,” said Burleson ISD Superintendent Dr. Bret Jimerson. “Andy is a true champion of education for all children in Burleson.”

Andy came to Burleson after serving for nearly eight years in the police department in his hometown of Charleston, West Virginia. He attended Southwestern

Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth before working almost four years as minister of music at First Baptist Church in Burleson, followed by eight years at University Baptist Church in Fort Worth. He was a claims representative for Cincinnati Insurance before taking the Chamber position. "I look back at all of my life experience thus far, and I know it's prepared me for this position," he said. "It's something I'm passionate about."

Apparently, the Chamber board feels the same way. Andy didn't seek the job — he was approached. "Andy's dedication to the Burleson community is apparent in all that he does, and it is one of the many reasons we selected him to lead the Burleson Chamber of Commerce," said Board Member Craig Couch. "Using his passion for seeing Burleson become the best place to live, learn, work and play, Andy strives to meet the needs of our Chamber members."

Andy knew early in life he wanted to serve. "Particularly, when I became a police officer, it gave me an insight on how to deal with people."

His future goals include keeping the Chamber relevant in these ever-changing times. "We have to continue to help advocate for our small businesses who work out of their homes, as well as the larger businesses moving to the Burleson area."

Doing this will include partnering with other Chambers, along with such things as attending the American Chamber of Commerce Executives Conference in Des Moines this summer. By helping develop programs like the Ambassadors, Diplomats, Power of Heels and the Burleson Young Executives Alliance, among others, Andy is achieving his goal of making the Burleson Area Chamber of Commerce more visible. **NOW**



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In the Kitchen With

TOM HELFRICH

— By Melissa Rawlins

Grilling burgers for 200 happy-to-be-fed Burleson High School band students, instructors and parent volunteers makes Tom Helfrich happy. His own family members are grateful recipients of his outdoor — and indoor — food preparations at home. When his wife, Danielle, isn't cooking for him, he cooks for her and their three children — John, Adam and Ema — who often bring their friends to gather 'round the kitchen table.

He appreciates receiving their wholehearted thumbs-up approval of the dishes he makes. The first time that happened was when Tom was about 10 years old, and his father was genuinely impressed with Tom's presentation of Tuna Burgers. With initial tutelage from his mother and nonstop inspiration from Danielle, Tom's now a gourmet and has put together a cookbook called *Dad's Grub*. **NOW**

Crispy Pork Carnitas (Mexican Slow-cooked Pulled Pork)

This recipe from Cafe Delites serves 12.

- 4 lbs. skinless, boneless pork butt or shoulder
- 3-4 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. pepper
- 1 Tbsp. dried oregano (or Mexican oregano)
- 1 Tbsp. ground cumin
- 1 large brown or white onion, cut into wedges
- 8 cloves garlic, smashed
- 2 limes, juiced
- 2 large oranges, juiced, or 3/4 cup natural orange juice
- 3/4 cup Original or Mexican Coca-Cola
- 2 bay leaves
- 1/2 cup olive oil (divided use)
- 1 avocado, sliced
- 1 white onion, thinly sliced
- 1 jalapeño, thinly sliced lengthwise
- 1 bunch cilantro, chopped

- 1 cup cotija cheese
- 12 corn/flour tortillas, warmed

1. Rinse and pat pork dry with a paper towel.
2. In the bowl of a 6-quart slow cooker, add pork, salt, pepper, oregano, cumin, onion, garlic, lime juice, orange juice, Coca-Cola and bay leaves.
3. Cover and cook on low heat for 8-10 hours, or high heat for 5-6 hours, until the meat falls apart.
4. Remove pork and shred with two forks. Do not discard liquid.
5. *To crisp in the oven:* Transfer the pork to a baking sheet lightly sprayed with cooking oil (or lined with aluminum foil or parchment paper). Pour 1 ladle full, or about 1 cup, of the liquid from the slow cooker over the pork to season. Broil for 5-10 minutes on high heat, until the meat becomes golden brown and crispy on the edges.
6. *To crisp on the stovetop:* Heat about 1 Tbsp. oil in a nonstick pan or cast-iron skillet over high heat. When pan is hot, add pork

in batches of two or three, and sear until just beginning to crisp. (Heat 1 Tbsp. oil per batch, until all oil is gone.) Ladle about 1/2 cup of leftover liquid over meat; continue cooking until the juices begin to reduce down and the meat is nice and crispy.

7. To serve: Make a platter with slices of avocado, onion and jalapeño, as well as chopped cilantro, cotija cheese and warmed tortillas.

Grilled Chili Lime Chicken Fajita Salad

Marinade:

- 3 Tbsp. olive oil
- 100 ml (just over 1/3 cup) freshly squeezed lime juice
- 2 Tbsp. cilantro, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 tsp. brown sugar
- 3/4 tsp. red chili flakes or red pepper flakes
- 1/2 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 tsp. salt

Salad:

- 2 lbs. chicken breasts, skinless, boneless and sliced into 1/2 inch-long fajita strips
- 1/2 yellow bell pepper, deseeded and sliced
- 1/2 red bell pepper, deseeded and sliced
- 1/2 onion, sliced
- 5 cups Romaine lettuce leaves, washed and dried

2 avocados, sliced
Extra cilantro leaves to garnish (optional)
Sour cream (optional)
Brianna's Home Style Chipotle Ranch Dressing (optional)

1. Whisk marinade ingredients together; pour into a shallow dish or freezer bag.
2. Place chicken into the marinade for at least two hours.
3. Spray a grilling pan or basket with olive- or canola-oil spray. Grill chicken strips over medium-high heat until golden, crispy and cooked through. Use the marinade to baste the chicken as it cooks.
4. In a separate grilling pan or basket, spray the pan with olive oil or canola oil spray. Grill the peppers and onions over medium heat until they reach desired tenderness.
5. Prepare lettuce leaves by cutting them into small pieces, making a bed in a large salad bowl. Slice the avocados and place on top of the lettuce, taking up 1/3 of the bed. Place the grilled peppers and onions on another third and the grilled chicken on the last third.
6. Serve with your favorite dressing, toppings or garnishes.

Tuna Burgers

1 6-oz. can tuna fish
1/4 cup Italian salad dressing
1 onion, chopped
1/2 cup cheese, cut into small pieces
Salt and pepper
1 stick butter, melted
3 hamburger buns

1. Preheat oven to 350 F. Open can of tuna fish. Pour off liquid.
2. Mix together tuna, salad dressing, onion, cheese, salt and pepper.
3. Spread butter on hamburger buns.
4. Fill buns with tuna, and then wrap them in aluminum foil.
5. Bake in oven at 350 F for 15 minutes. Serve hot.

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BusinessNOW

Texas Health Huguley Hospital

— By Melissa Rawlins

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Throughout Burleson, Crowley and Joshua, people seeking quality, customer-oriented and cost-effective health services find help from Texas Health Huguley Hospital. Its community outreach — via the faith community, educational institutions, legislative and appointed officials, the business and nonprofit sectors, community-based organizations and other groups — promotes wellness and a healthier lifestyle for all community residents.

Its fabulously expanded hospital, licensed for more than 350 beds, includes a medical intensive care unit, a cardiovascular

critical care unit, a progressive care unit, open-heart surgery center and behavioral health. The campus also includes a fitness center, imaging center, center for wound care and hyperbaric medicine and an ambulatory surgery center. It hosts accredited programs in orthopedics, chest pain and inpatient diabetes, as well as an award-winning emergency department.

“Our hospital’s favorite service is providing whole-patient care,” President and CEO Ken Finch said. “We are people from many faiths and cultures, united to relieve suffering and bring healing to people. Our mission is to extend the healing ministry of Christ, to care for the whole person, body, mind and spirit.”

Treating patients, their families and staff with dignity and respect, Texas Health Huguley’s more than 350 primary care and specialty physicians provide a wide range of inpatient and outpatient services.

At Texas Health Huguley, the public is welcomed for free monthly health seminars and health screenings. Its Mobile Health Services Unit provides free and reduced cost health services all

around Tarrant and Johnson counties. “We identify and meet the health needs of our community by routinely conducting a community health needs assessment and establishing programs to address opportunities identified,” Ken said.

The organization he leads has evolved with the community. “Texas Health Huguley Hospital Fort Worth South opened in 1977 as a member of Adventist Health System, the largest not-for-profit Protestant health care organization in the U.S. In 2012, Texas Health Resources and Adventist Health System formed a partnership to own Texas Health Huguley Hospital, with Adventist Health System managing the daily operations of the hospital. And in 2016, Texas Health Huguley opened a beautiful new hospital,” Ken said.

Patients and visitors to Texas Health Huguley are treated like family. “We act ethically, fairly and honestly, recognizing the value of individual diversity and our role as a Christ-centered organization, while proactively bringing the latest medical technologies and advancements to serve our community,” Ken said.

Texas Health Huguley’s investment in advanced systems provides state-of-the-art care for a growing number of patients. Most recently, Texas Health Huguley acquired three key technologies. The Mako Robotic-Arm assisted surgical system allows for patients to experience less pain and faster recovery times during joint replacement. The Genius™ 3D Mammography™ exam, with the addition of Clarity HD High Resolution technology and the SmartCurve™ Breast Stabilization System, provides the most accurate and comfortable mammogram experience possible. And the da Vinci Xi® utilizes advanced robotic, computer and optical technologies to assist surgeons during complex procedures.

If you’re looking for compassion while improving your physical, spiritual and emotional wellness, take advantage of the outstretched arm offered by Texas Health Huguley. As Ken likes to say, “Texas Health Huguley aims to be our community’s most trusted health care partner for life.” **NOW**



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TravelNOW Peach Perfect

— By Sean Doerre

It's impossible to visit Gillespie County, Texas, without getting directly to the heart of the Texas Hill Country. Its focal point is Fredericksburg, a place founded in 1846 by German settlers. This small-town Texas community continues to provide a unique blend of Texan hospitality and German tradition.

Fredericksburg is well-known for award-winning wine. In fact, the Texas Hill Country was designated one of the 10 Best Wine Travel Destinations in 2014 by *Wine Enthusiast Magazine*. With more than 40 wineries and tasting rooms in the Fredericksburg area, numerous wine tour companies and special wine events like the Fredericksburg Food & Wine Festival, Fredericksburg is at the center of Texas Wine Country.

With more than 150 shops, boutiques and art galleries lining historic Main Street, Fredericksburg is also a premier shopping

destination, offering the best of home decor, Western wear, fine art, kitchen wares, linens, antiques and more. On the weekend of the third Saturday of every month, Fredericksburg Trade Days features more than 400 vendors in seven barns and acres of shopping opportunities, along with great eats and live music in the Biergarten. Great food and wonderful dining is a fixture in Fredericksburg with more than 80 restaurants that feature everything from regional Texas Hill Country cuisine to German and Bavarian, to Tex-Mex and Italian, as well as numerous fine dining restaurants.

Gillespie County is one of the top peach-producing counties in Texas, and from mid-May through early August the town is filled with roadside stands selling peaches and other seasonal produce. Fredericksburg is also home to Wildseed Farms, the largest working

wildflower farm in the United States and a destination for any nature enthusiast.

Enchanted Rock, the second largest granite dome in the United States and a designated International Dark Sky Park, is located just outside of Fredericksburg and offers miles of hiking trails, rock climbing and a 360-degree view of the Texas Hill Country from the top of the Summit Trail.

With more than 700 historically significant structures preserved in the Fredericksburg historic district, history surrounds the city. The Pioneer Museum Complex provides a glimpse of early life in Fredericksburg through historic homes, a log cabin, an authentic Sunday House, a one-room schoolhouse and more.

The National Museum of the Pacific War, dedicated to all who served in the Pacific during World War II, also honors hometown favorite Navy Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz. The 6-acre museum complex includes the George H.W. Bush Gallery, the Japanese Garden of Peace, the Memorial Courtyard and the Plaza of Presidents. Just down the street, is the Pacific Combat Zone, which recently underwent an \$8 million renovation and hosts living history demonstrations eight times each year.

In addition to historic attractions, Fredericksburg is always brimming with activity from more than 400 special events, concerts and festivals held annually. Typical Fredericksburg events and activities include Oktoberfest, live music at Luckenbach Texas, Fredericksburg's Fourth of July Parade, summer horse racing, the Hill Country Food Truck Festival, the Stonewall Peach JAMboree, First Friday Art Walk, the Gillespie County Fair and more. Fredericksburg has more than 1,100 hotel and motel rooms, more than 1,200 bed-and-breakfasts/guesthouses, and several RV parks and campsites ready to welcome travelers with plenty of warm, Texan hospitality. **NOW**

To plan a trip to Fredericksburg and the Texas Hill Country, or request a free visitor information packet, visit www.VisitFredericksburgTX.com. Photo Credit: Fredericksburg Convention & Visitor Bureau.

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Where Comes the Bride?

— By Zachary R. Urquhart

In a time gone by, most weddings tended to be at one of a few locations: churches, the courthouse or the family's backyard. Today, though, almost anywhere could be a wedding venue. If you are getting ready to plan a wedding, there are some new and unique locales to consider.

Something Old

- *Barns are back in style.* Trending with the popularity of house remodeling shows over the last decade or so, weddings in rustic farmhouses and barns are becoming more and more common. You can look for places online or reach out to friends who live in rural areas. You might be surprised how easy it is to find a barn you can use. With some old-world style lighting, a simple large shed can become an idyllic wedding sight.

- *Church is in session.* A unique spin on the tradition of a religious setting is to have your ceremony in an old church building. There are churches that are no longer functioning for local congregations, but that are available for special events. And if you are willing to host a destination wedding, you can find such buildings across the country.



Something New

- *Trendy restaurants make great wedding sites.* If you live close enough to a big town with cool restaurants that are only busy in the evening, you might be able to reserve the place for an early wedding time. What is even better, you will have a place for a ceremony and reception all-in-one.

- *Find a venue near you.* People are sometimes surprised to learn how many beautiful venues are hidden just around the corner. With anything from simple buildings that have the necessary amenities to locations providing outdoor wedding scenes, there are often myriad options within a short drive. Many wedding venues offer an all-inclusive package, with much of the planning provided with this option.

Something Borrowed

- *Public spaces can be great for private events.* Local parks have gazebos or pavilions available to rent for private events. If you are expecting a smaller wedding party, this can be a cute, quaint way to have an inexpensive wedding. Some more recently built parks even have spaces built with events in mind, so a wedding at a park does not have to feel like a wedding at a park.



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Something You

• *Somewhere that defines the couple.* Anything from a golf course to the outdoor chapel at a church camp from your childhood is perfect if you both think it is perfect. If you and your spouse-to-be are the adventurous types, maybe a bridge spanning the gap between two mountain peaks is the location for you. People may question your choice, but it is just that, your choice, so have fun deciding where to host the big day.

Whatever you decide, remember that the day of your nuptials should be one of the happiest days of your life. As long as you are marrying the person you love, surrounded by the friends and family you want supporting you, no place is the wrong choice to ring your wedding bells. **NOW**

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Analise Gallimore, 7, practices climbing the giant rock at The BRiCK.

Zoomed In: Vernus Green and Nathan Hopper

By Melissa Rawlins

For Vernus Green and Nathan Hopper, singing the birthday song to Olive Garden customers feels totally natural. Kind of like moving to Burleson from Pennsylvania. Six months ago, friends Vernus and Nathan heeded the age-old call, “Go West, Young Men!” They drove in a two-door, white Hyundai Genesis Coupe, thinking they would find more people their age and would go to college here. “We’ve always been good friends, so we decided to come down together. There seems to be a lot of opportunity,” Vernus said.

When you’re 19 and 20, respectively, it’s easy to find the good in a place. “It’s much more modern,” Nathan said. “I think a big thing down here is how different people act, they’re definitely a lot more friendly to people they don’t know.”



The Rev. Kent Heimbigner lifts a toast with Rick Hazen and his staff at Old Texas Brewery, where their first three original brews have been unveiled for public enjoyment.



Cassandra Leberta buys workclothes and some dressy items from Linda Hutchings at Crowley House Of Hope.



Myrna Moss, Louise Bodiford and Dolores Stewart perk up the Burleson Lions Club's Fourth of July Parade.



American National Bank's Kurt Logan and James McCroskey welcome Edward Jones' Michael Smith and Joanna Winston to the free coffee party they hosted at Dwell.



Lisa Herrin introduces her daughter, Evelyn, and very curious grand baby to guests at an Old Town Burleson Association mixer.



Burleson kids join other local actors and Kids Who Care alumni on stage for Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat.

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Kindness mattered to Camille Bransom well before the citywide campaign started a decade ago. When her daughter, Grace, was an elementary student, her school sold the signs, and families put them on their lawns. "Then the signs disappeared," recalled Camille, who wondered last year why the signs were gone and decided people need to be reminded. "It's important to have a simple, direct message — like a 133-by-13-foot mural." One year later, through a collaboration with Bernardo Vallerino, a vibrantly painted set of 133-foot-long cattle horns, displaying the English words KINDNESS MATTERS, ensures the message will be heard by anybody walking or driving past the western wall of City Market in Old Town Burleson.

"It's not for me," Camille said. "It's for everyone. And she's hearing all sorts of positive feedback. Since the community was invited to help paint the mural last fall, art students from local schools came alongside Camille and Bernardo with their paintbrushes in hand. They told her the message was important to them. People have told her stories about bullying, too, and the way the Kindness Matters message reminds them to put a stop to the phenomenon.

Taking the time to hear people, Camille learned stories that brought the project full circle. "While out painting one day, some ladies came up to Bernardo, asking about the mural and its background," she said. "He said the background was the fingerprint of Richard Bransom, who owned the grocery store at one time. One lady started crying, and said, 'When we did not have food, he gave us food.' I was thinking, *This couldn't be more fitting.*" When Bernardo introduced Camille as Richard Bransom's daughter, and the lady hugged her and asked about her brother, the message of the mural got very personal for Camille.

Hundreds of distantly related Bransom cousins live in and around Burleson. Camille hails from the line of her grandfather, Loy Bransom, who was born in Johnson County and lived in Burleson most of his life. He got his start working at a grocery store as a teenager, and in 1942 partnered with Walton Clampit to establish Clampit and Bransom Grocery in Fort Worth. They opened a second store in Burleson



in 1959. Loy was named Citizen of the Year by the Chamber in 1970. His son, Richard, Camille's dad, won the Humanitarian Award in 1988. "He hated winning any kind of award," Camille recalled, as she read the announcement in a yellowed newspaper clipping, which said Richard's name was synonymous with "honesty, integrity and going the extra mile or, as was often the case, two or three extra miles."

Camille's favorite thing to do with her dad was ride horses or work. "He would fish with my brother. Those were the things we did on Sundays, the days he got up earlier than everybody else to go work at the store before church," Camille said.

"Holidays were big for us. For Father's Day we were probably down here moving stuff out of one freezer to another or feeding cows or fixing fences. It was always a day to respect him, and he showed the same respect to my mother," Camille remembered.

Her father died in 2001, and her family kept the store until 6 months after her brother passed away in 2003. The fact that local citizens remembered both men simply encouraged Camille to keep on painting.

She applied the colors of the mural in chunks, a plan developed early on with help from Bernardo. She met him after opening The Hub on June 6, 2017, in what used to be her father's office. "It's also the place where our store family

IT'S FOR

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celebrated birthday parties, and where my brother and I grew up,” Camille said. “We would roller skate and ride our bikes in the store, because we wanted to be here where my dad was. Now, The Hub is a venue for creativity and energy to flow in and out of.” As a specialist in business development, Camille loves coming across people who have great ideas but don’t know how to execute them.

As it turns out, she needed just that. “I love to paint, and over the years have collected designs of murals I wanted to paint because I knew I had all these buildings to paint on. The theme of them all was the world holding hands in harmony,” recalled Camille, who knew she had all the tools but not the confidence to move forward. She needed someone else who was excited about the project and had talent and time.

Along came Bernardo, a Realtor and art teacher, and their talk turned to her mural concept. “He wanted to get on board. Boom! It happened,” Camille said. They designed the mural but did not start painting until they had her father’s fingerprint. “I asked my mom if we could have my dad’s wallet and look for a fingerprint. We very carefully went through those things with a policeman friend, and we finally got a fingerprint from my dad’s Chevron gas card. That was like finding gold.”

The first layer of paint Bernardo applied to the raw brick walls was the black background, which was the actual fingerprint. “We blocked the fingerprint into 3-by-3-foot squares,” Camille said. “After that, we came back in with the color.” Sunbelt Rentals donated the scissor lift to the muralists for over a month. “We left space to the left and the right of the message, and I’m hoping to fill both sides with donors’ names. Everything we’re collecting is going back to a local nonprofit.”

Camille hopes this mural reminds everyone not to lose the vision of human kindness. “Being of service is the heart of everything we do,” she said, “just as it was with my dad.” **NOW**



— By Melissa Rawlins

NE

Calendar

3

Round-Up for Riders: 6:00-11:00 p.m., Historic Hilton Hotel, Fort Worth. Patti Pace and Margaret Dickens co-chair this boots-up event benefiting the equine therapy partners and equestrians with disabilities served at Wings of Hope Equitherapy in Egan. Sip-and-shop, dinner and entertainment by Jesse Jennings. (817) 790-8810 or RoundUp@WingsofHopeHorses.org.

4

Silver Star Gala: 7:00-11:00 p.m., Villagio Resorts, 9001 CR 528, Burleson. Put on your denim and diamonds for cocktails, dinner, live music by Run for Cover plus live and silent auctions, all in support of All Star Equestrian Foundation. RSVP to (817) 477-1437 or marie@allstarequestrian.org.

7

BISD New Employee Luncheon: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Burleson High School cafeteria. The Burleson Area Chamber of Commerce is asking for donations to include in the BISD New Employee Goody Bags, to welcome new teachers and show community support of the BISD. (817) 295-6121.



8

Joshua Area Chamber Quarterly Luncheon: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Cypress Creek & Mariposa Apartment Homes, 1006 Joshua

Station Blvd., Joshua. Register: (817) 556-2480 or online at www.joshuachamber.com.

10

Senior Dance: 7:00-9:30 p.m., Burleson Senior Center, 216 S.W. Johnson Ave. The Dusty Hat Band plays. \$5 per person. (817) 295-6611.

11

Market on Main: 8:00 a.m.-noon, 104 N. Main St. Joshua Farmers Market invites your family to support local artisans, crafters, musicians, bakers, canners and farmers. marketonmain@joshuachamber.com.

Second Saturday: 9:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m., Old Town Burleson. Find special discounts throughout the shopping district in historic Burleson. For details, see Facebook or contact (817) 426-9638.



14

Business After Hours: 5:30-7:00 p.m., 437 S.W. Wilshire Blvd. Three hosts and sponsors, Morning Rotary, Service First Mortgage and Woolard's Custom Jewelers, invite you to enjoy relaxed networking and find out whose business you can help grow. (817) 295-6121.

Roots & Branches Genealogy Club meeting: 6:30-8:00 p.m., Burleson Senior Activity Center. Expert researcher Eric Jelle leads the

discussion, and there will be a Q&A as well. Free. Call (817) 426-9550 for details.

20

Burleson ISD first day of school.

Joshua ISD first day of school.

21

Crowley ISD first day of school.

25

Masonic Lodge Pancake Breakfast: 7:00-10:00 a.m., 209 N. Magnolia St., Crowley. For more information, contact Jim Hirth, (817) 297-1942.

Ongoing:

Mondays

Crocheting class: 1:00 p.m., Burleson Senior Activity Center, 216 S.W. Johnson Ave. Free. For more details, call (817) 295-6611.



Toastmasters: 6:30-7:30 p.m., Burleson Area Chamber of Commerce. Contact Gary Miller, (817) 919-3243.

Tuesdays

Widowed Persons Service meeting: 8:00-11:00 a.m., Our Place Restaurant, 950 N. Burleson Blvd. Enjoy breakfast, fellowship and sharing your helpful heart. Contact Don Jordan, (817) 483-5458.

Tinker Tuesday: 10:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m., Crowley Public Library, 409 S. Oak St. This is a drop-in program with no advance registration required. For information, call the Crowley Public Library, (817) 297-6707, ext. 2090.

Wednesdays

Burleson Business Connections: 7:30-9:00 a.m., Burleson Police Department Community Room. Contact Ruth Moor, (817) 517-9808.

Thursdays

Take Off Pounds Sensibly: 5:30 p.m., United Methodist Church, Room 203, Education Building, 114 Paula, Joshua. TOPS support group for maintaining health and controlling weight. Contact Kay Gray, (817) 239-8307.

Second Thursdays

American Legion Post 235 meeting: 6:00 p.m., Community Room,

Burleson Police Department. Eligible Veterans welcome. (609) 220-2721.

Third Thursdays

Burleson Breast Cancer Support Group: 6:00 p.m., Pathway Care Ministries, 250 N.W. Tarrant Ave., Suite L. Contact Nedra Lamar, (817) 915-5529.



Saturdays

Burleson Farmers Market: 8:00 a.m.-noon, 217 W. Renfro St. Bring your family and support your local producers of fruits, vegetables, meats,

dairy, baked and canned goods and crafts. For more information, visit www.burlesonfarmersmarket.com.

Widowed Persons Fellowship: 3:30-8:00 p.m., Senior Center, 216 S.W. Johnson. Join WPS members for potluck meal and games. For more details, call (817) 447-0775.

Third Saturdays

VFW Post 6872 Breakfast: 9:00 a.m., 3409 CR 920, Crowley. Join the Ladies Auxiliary for good food and fellowship. (817) 645-2436.

Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your event details to melissa.rawlins@nowmagazines.com.

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Living History

— By Rick Mauch

Barry Phillips' home for the past 29 years, the Renfro-Clark House, has been recognized as a significant part of the state's history by receiving the honor of a Texas Historical Marker from the Texas Historic Commission. Actually, it already had one marker, but now it has a larger one, which was celebrated in a ceremony in early April at the home, which was built in 1894.

"My day, on April 7, was 45 degrees and windy. It was 84 the day before," Barry said with a laugh. "But we had people from all over come — some from California and my nephew from Philadelphia. We had about 200 people, some very notable people like Ruth Buzzi from *Laugh-In*, who's also a friend of mine; 20 members of the Clark family; and my family. We had a local singer, Craig Murphy. We had tour guides in each room dressed in Victorian outfits."

The house is of architectural significance, being a Queen Anne Victorian model. Contributing greatly to its being honored is its architectural integrity and what its history has meant to the community. It was once the public library for the city of Burleson, and it caught Barry's attention as a youngster.

"During that time, as a teenager, I painted a picture of the

house. I donated that painting to the city, and they made copies of it into Christmas cards," he said.

A subject qualifies for a marker if two basic criteria are met: historical significance and age. The first is established by reviewing the role in local history, and the second speaks for itself.

Barry left Burleson after graduating from Texas Christian University to work as an illustrator in Los Angeles for 10 years. He has two Emmy awards on display in the home. He returned to the Metroplex, and in 1989, bought the home to be closer to his mother.

"The city, unbeknownst to me, decided they wanted a new, larger plaque," said Barry, who was pleasantly surprised and happy to partner in promoting awareness of the city's history. "This house is important to a lot of people. It's the only historic landmark home in Burleson. Many things make it special. One man, who doesn't even live here anymore, brought his kids because he wanted them to see 'the house that was magic.'"

Barry understands folks want to see the home, but he requests they not do so without permission. It has a burglar alarm and security cameras.

And, as Burleson grows, he hopes the growth respects the legacy. "Sometimes, I feel like I'm in the parking lot at Hulen Mall at Christmas," he said. "I hope this house is standing long after I'm gone, but that's up to the people in Burleson. This house has been more than a home, it's a great part of history, and it deserves the special attention I hope it gets for as long as it stands." **NOW**



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