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ON THE COVER



Alex Webber is just as talented playing the piano as he is singing.

Photo by Amy Dishman.

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Subscriptions are available at the rate of \$35 per year or \$3.50 per issue. Subscriptions should be sent to: NOW Magazines, P.O. Box 1071, Waxahachie, TX 75168. For advertising rates or editorial correspondence, call (972) 937-8447 or visit www.nowmagazines.com.



Editor's Note

Hello, Midlothian!

Over the course of our sojourn in Arizona before returning to Texas, we lived in five homes. Only one had that "wow" factor. How do I know? Everyone who walked in the front door would stop and say, "Wow!" The floor covering was this beautiful polished Spanish Saltillo tile. It led across the entryway directly to double glass doors that opened to the pool architecturally designed to look as if you would step straight into the glistening water. Even though the wow factor stopped at the entryway, the interior of the house was what made it our home. The kids put their individual stamp on their rooms, and I tried my best to keep everything on this side of health inspections.

Some of the homes *MidlothianNOW Magazine* features take your breath away, and others bring comfort as you read about a family in a home that's just like yours. We would love to feature your home, whether it's fancy or cozy. If you have a home to recommend, contact me through my email listed below.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Betty

Betty Tryon
MidlothianNOW Editor
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A close-up photograph of three hands of different skin tones (dark brown, medium brown, and light skin) clasped together in a supportive grip. The hands are resting on a dark, textured, and slightly mossy rock surface. The lighting is natural, highlighting the textures of the skin and the rock.

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TO JUST SING

— By Betty Tryon

When 16-year-old Alex Webber opens his mouth to sing, you know you are going to hear something special. Performing a Latin tune flawlessly, he demonstrated why he received the honor of singing with The New York Pops at Carnegie Hall two years in a row. This incredible experience might never have happened without the insight of a teacher.

Missy Webber, Alex's mom, decided that part of his homeschool experience was to take piano lessons and hired Jeannine Kessinger. "She has worked with Alex since he was 7 years old. He started out taking piano lessons from her and would sing every time he hit the key. He was like tone perfect, even then. She's really a vocalist and kept telling me he could sing. I kept saying, 'No one in my family can sing,'" she laughed.

"I would hum along to the song I was playing, and Mrs. Kessinger picked it up," Alex shared. "If it hadn't been for her, we never would've pursued singing." The first time Alex performed in front of others was during a Christmas recital, in which he sang a song from Alvin and the Chipmunks. "I learned that I liked being in front of crowds," he confessed. "It was very comfortable to me." Alex's ease in performing opened the way for him to begin singing at church events and competitions and in the





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church choir. The first time he sang in front of his church, at age 13, was during a talent show, which he won. It was also the first time he sang in Latin. "I loved it! I remember everyone was surprised that I could sing that well," he enthused. "I can sing Italian, German, Latin and English. It's easier for me to sing foreign languages than English, and I prefer it. It only takes about a couple of months to learn how to pronounce the words. My teacher understands all of the ways to sing foreign languages."

Alex typically spends hours every day practicing his music. But when his brother, Ethan, was born with reticular dysgenesis — an extremely rare condition in which a child is born with no white blood cells — Alex took a break from music. His brother needed a bone marrow transplant. "Siblings are almost never a match," Missy enlightened. "Alex was found to be a perfect match — 100 percent. He donated his marrow to his brother, who was only 23 days old." Today, Ethan is a very active and happy little boy.

When Alex resumed his pursuit of music, he continued to gain experience in performing. Every Sunday, he can be found singing in the adult choir of St. Joseph Catholic Church. He participated and received a 1, which is the highest number you can score, in his last two solo/ensemble competitions. He did numerous plays and musical theater at Artisan Center Theater, in Hurst, and at Mansfield Community Theatre, in Mansfield. "My first main role was



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Winnie the Pooh. I had the best time, but I see participating in the theater as a hobby. I prefer to just sing," he admitted. Alex also competed in the homeschool organization Texas Private Schools Music Educators Association, which services the musical needs of private school students but allows homeschooled students to participate. "I made All-State Region 6th chair," he shared.

An opportunity for him to expand his horizons by auditioning with Camp Broadway was presented by Mrs. Kissinger. "Camp Broadway is an organization that helps and promotes children who want to learn more about music theater," Missy explained. "Alex was one of 60 Camp Broadway kids from around the U.S., ages 12 to 16, chosen to perform with the New York Pops at



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Carnegie Hall in New York City. He got to go up there for a week. Last year, he auditioned for the show and was chosen. This year, he was invited back, so he did not need to try out again."

Alex's tryout for Camp Broadway was in the form of an audition tape. "We went to a film studio to have it taped for a professional video submission," he said. When he arrived in New York for the camp, Alex had rehearsals from 8:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m. every day. The composers for the show brought in the music, and the kids had the chance to meet them. The kids met with the choreographer who trained them in all of their dance routines. They had two days to learn the dance and two days to learn the songs. They were kept so busy that after the first day of rehearsal, Alex had blisters on his feet. "It was very strenuous, but it was fun, also," he added. All of the week's



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preparation and practice climaxed in a performance with The New York Pops.

"This is really all about the kids being incorporated into this type of environment and learning what all the people do in the different career choices in theater — costumers, lighting, directors and writers," Missy stated. "This gave the kids exposure to all the different things they can do. It's not just singing and being on stage. It opens their eyes to a whole new world. It was an expensive venture for our family, but my husband and I felt like we couldn't say no to such an experience. If this is where Alex's passion lies, then he needed to see what it's really about."



Being accepted into Camp Broadway and performing with The New York Pops is not the only achievement for Alex. Presently, he is very excited about having auditioned for the very select Children's Chorus of Greater Dallas and being accepted. He will join the Youth Chorus for the next two years. "We are beyond excited for this opportunity and the experience Alex will receive working with them," Missy enthused. "He will get to travel and perform at the Meyerson Symphony Center numerous times over the next few years."

In looking to the future, the homeschool sophomore wants to double major in vocal performance and computer science after graduation. "TCU would be my dream school, and there's also Baylor. I want to stay close to home." The year 2015 was a great year for Alex with his performances in the solo ensemble and at Camp Broadway and All-State Region. This year promises to be just as busy for him. He will participate in all of the events he did in 2015, with the addition of the Children's Chorus to his list. His passion for singing guarantees that whatever road he chooses, he will handle it in song. **NOW**

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— By Zachary R. Urquhart

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For some people, there is no sound as heavenly as the roar of an engine and no smell as sweet as oil and gasoline. For more than a century, young boys have made a hobby out of their love for classic cars and pickups, but college, the draft and getting married ended that hobby decades ago for many of the guys in Midlothian Classic Wheels. Nothing, though, could end their love for classic cars and hot rods. Today, Alan Krohn is part of a group that has turned this passion for classics into one of the most generous charities in Ellis County.

Midlothian Classic Wheels was born out of several people's common love of hot rods. "A group of us got together almost 15 years ago, and we just picked the name 'Midlothian Classic Wheels,'" he explained. "We had a great time bringing our cars together and letting people see what we had." Right away, though, they knew that just showing off their cars wasn't enough, so they included charitable giving in their charter. "We have three things in common," he explained. "That's our love for our families, love for our cars and our willingness to help children who cannot help themselves." Beginning in February 2004, Midlothian Classic Wheels started showing their cars and raising money for charity.

"We like to say there are really only two requirements," Alan quipped. "You have to have \$25, and you have to be breathing! But we might be willing to overlook that second one." There were fewer than 10 members when they started the club, not knowing how big it would grow or how much money they would raise. "We are an open club, which means you can have any year and make of car. We're up to about 140 members," Alan said. "We do events most weekends, and we have three big shows a year." The club generally hosts events for charities that target children, specifically,

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commonly working with St. Jude Medical Center, several local adoption homes and the area Special Olympics.

Every month, the club does cruise-ins at Brookshire's and Texas Best Smokehouse. "We ride into the parking lots and set up cars for people to see," he explained. "We'll set up the sound system and have music and just hang out. We don't make money with those though. That's more about having fun and promoting goodwill for the club. The money mainly comes from our shows at Getzendaner Park in Waxahachie and El Chico in DeSoto." Every year, the club hosts car shows in June, September and October. They charge an entrance fee, and some people donate money, all of which goes to the organizations the club supports. "We give every cent we make away," Alan emphasized. "We don't spend club money on candy for Trunk or Treat at Halloween or presents for Christmas. That's all donated by club members. At the end of each year, the club itself is broke, and that's on purpose."

Midlothian Classic Wheels started their first Waxahachie show, Cars in the Park, almost 10 years ago. They took over a car show that had been at the park for 20 years but needed help. "Another car club





used to host the Waxahachie Fun Run that benefits Texas Baptist Home, but their club folded, so we stepped in," Alan mentioned. "We've added a few shows over the years that way. If someone asks for help with something, and it involves hot rods and helping kids, we usually say yes." They have sent the proceeds from Cars in the Park to several various charities in Ellis County, but in recent years, the biggest event has been the show benefiting St. Jude Medical Center every September. "We sell sponsorships to dozens of companies to pay for all of the awards, and last year, we had about 20 big raffle items," he continued. "They



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used to send us shirts and hats as a thank you, and we would sell those to raise more money. But then we learned they were actually spending money getting that stuff. We told them to keep their shirts and hats to save the money they were spending on us."

In the last several years, the club has raised almost \$35,000 for St. Jude, and they have given just under \$140,000 to all their charities since 2011. "I hadn't realized until recently how much we have raised," he admitted. "It's not about us being so great, so we don't really list out what we've solicited, usually." Other than St. Jude, all of the money they raise goes to charities in Ellis County, specifically, and they are always paying attention to new giving opportunities. "A few years ago, we started supporting Campfire Creek, a special-needs therapeutic horse riding center in Waxahachie," he continued.

While the money is impressive, the club is just as proud of the contact it makes with many of the kids they are trying to help. "One of the kids at the St. Jude's show told a member he hoped this would be our



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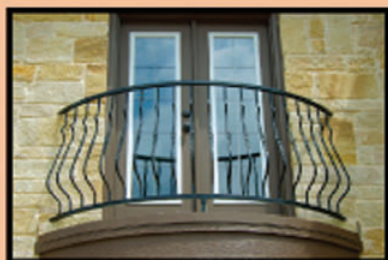
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last show," Alan said. "I was confused, but then he said he hoped we were raising enough money to cure everyone's sickness." Occasionally, they stop in at the children's homes they support to spend time with the kids, something they started after one of their first car shows in 2004. At Christmas, they help families who are experiencing hard times. "One year, there was a family where the dad had just left, so we made some calls, and our members put together presents for the kids, gas money for the mom and food for several weeks," he remembered.

The club cherishes the visits the club used to make to Children's Medical Center in Dallas. "The hospital keeps toys to give as presents when kids finish treatments. When we heard that, we brought all the toys we could," he explained. "One year, there was a young man who was supposed to go into hospice on a Tuesday," he detailed. "But the boy wanted to stay because we were bringing our cars the next day. They let him wait to go to hospice until our cruise-in, and, sadly, he passed away that weekend. We were sad, but we also knew he had one last happy day."

Alan admits it takes a lot of work to plan events, find sponsors and take care of classic cars. "If we drive the car one day, it takes two days to clean it back up for a show," he laughed. "But seeing those smiles on kids' faces makes it worth it every time." **NOW**

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Lacey grew up in the small town of Orange Grove, near Corpus Christi. "I had the same 70 classmates from kindergarten through 12th grade," she explained. She went to nursing school at The University of Texas at Arlington and has worked for a pharmaceutical company for the last 15 years, moving to Midlothian in 1998. She moved to Midlothian because of the small-town feel and great schools, similar to what she had grown up in.



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"Lacey moved into the same neighborhood that I had previously lived in four doors down from me, but it was when I didn't live here," Mike laughed. Mike came back to Midlothian a few years later and started a hotel remodeling company. "I got a transfer back here, but eventually left the travel agency," he recounted. "Then I went into business for myself." Mike has two adult children from a previous marriage. Morgan lives in Keller with his family and Miranda lives with her family in town.

Mutual friends decided to set Mike and Lacey up on a date, even if they were not aware of it. "My friends got a big group together," Lacey remembered. "And after we had hung out, one of them asked what I thought about Mike. I didn't know it was

supposed to be a date." They kept dating for a while, and they were married in 2009. Their family is complete with Lacey's teenage daughter, Karsyn, and their twin boys, Cole and Conner, who will soon start kindergarten.

When Mike and Lacey got married, Mike moved into Lacey's house just down the street from his old one, and they lived there for a few years. Three years ago, they decided to move. "We wanted to build, and after the twins, we really needed the extra space," he said. They settled on an area on the south side of town and have built a beautiful home where their love story continues to write itself.

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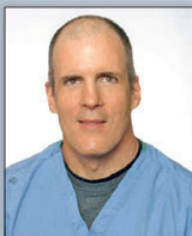


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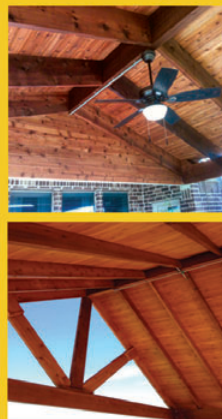
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house. Inside, the wood theme continues with hardwood floors from the entryway throughout most of the home. Just inside, they have a dining room with more color than the typical dark, formal offering. The space has a sturdy table that blends nicely with the china hutch. Family photos complete the decor.

Moving into the living room, plush seating with plenty of pillows is focused into the center of the room, perfect for family gatherings or get-togethers with friends. The television is almost an afterthought, contrasting many homes today that tend to make the TV the room's focal point. The open floor plan looks into a great kitchen with counters that have a deep grayish hue. Gray cabinets and a copper sink highlight the space they have made their own. Mike and Lacey included a huge island that is both elegant and functional in its purpose. "We use the island for meals, since there is no dining nook," Mike said.

On the side of the kitchen, where a nook would typically be, they have opted for a coffee bar and sitting area. "We decided when we were building to include lots of livable space," Lacey described. Using other people's ideas is a big part of Mike and Lacey's style. "I love *Fixer Upper*, and we try to do some of what they do," she admitted. "With us both working at home a lot, I found a home office renovation on Pinterest, and we copied it." The office features an exquisite marble desk that wraps around three of the walls. A carpenter built custom cabinets in the room, and Texas chic decor adorns the walls. "If you've gotta work, work in a beautiful space you love," Lacey said.



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The boys' area is a fun, colorful palette of many hues. Mike and Lacey included two rooms with a bathroom in between, assuming that at some point the boys will separate. "Someday, they'll want their own rooms," Mike said. "We've asked them if they want to move, but they still love sharing a room." The playroom's toy of the day is LEGOs, and the bedroom has vintage-looking toys both as play things and as decoration on the walls.

Upstairs, Karsyn's room represents an older style. "She got to decide how to decorate her room, and she loved the vintage look," Lacey said. Decorative mirrors, a chicken wire photo collage frame and a vintage color scheme give the room its distinct, almost shabby chic feel. Karsyn's room is next to an upstairs living room, perfect for having her friends over for a slumber party. "Right now, the living room is nice and calm," Lacey described. "And when Karsyn goes to college, the boys will move up here and they can be rowdy with their friends in this space."

Back downstairs, the master bedroom has a calming effect. "We gave it a spa feel," Lacey said. Mirrors on every wall make the room both a real and metaphoric reflective space, and blue and gray colors offer a soothing peace that extends into the tranquil bathroom. "Mike can build anything, so he made the shelves himself," Lacey doted. The room also has large bay windows looking out onto the wonderful backyard.

"We were moving from a bigger plot," Mike explained. "We wanted a smaller backyard with a pool." The result is an oasis with outdoor kitchen and multiple patio seating areas overlooking a beautiful swimming pool with a natural look. Though their story did not start in a typical way, Mike and Lacey have built the perfect home to live happily ever after. **NOW**

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FIRE!

— By Zachary R. Urquhart

It's that time of year, again! Get out your camo, start cleaning your rifle and head to the store to stock up for your hunting expeditions. While most seasoned hunters have their routines down to an exact science, there are some simple things any new or novice hunter should know before heading out to get this year's limit.

HAVE A PLAN

- *Get Your Papers in Order*

Before you do anything else, make sure your licenses are up to date. You may purchase licenses at most sporting goods outfitters or large superstores. You can also now purchase licenses online through the Texas Parks and Wildlife website.

- *Know the Calendar*

Texas has outlined specific seasons for different animals. This area, called the North Zone, has start dates as early as September 1 for doves. The most anticipated season — white-tail deer — starts November 5, and there are dates for various game and fowl

starting everywhere in between. There are several animals with multiple or split seasons, so be sure you are hunting your prey legally, as the penalties include loss of license, hefty fines and can even involve jail time. If you want to try your hand at bow-hunting, your season will start about a month before rifle hunters.

- *Pick Your Spot*

There are several options when choosing a hunting spot. You may try to find a friend who has a hunting lease, allowing them to hunt on someone else's property. Or, you can opt for one of the many public hunting lands nearby. There are plenty of options within an hour or so, but if you are willing to travel a little farther, the Texas Hill Country is known to have the largest number of white-tail deer.

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GET READY

• Before You Load and Load

You'll want to have your guns and ammunition ready before your trip. Cleaning your shotgun or rifle takes a little time, so you do not want to wait until the big weekend to take your gun out of the safe. Be sure to bring enough ammunition. If you have a great hunt, you may only need a few shots to reach your limit, but you should plan on a few misses just to be safe. If you have never hunted, you will want to spend some time practicing your shot, which means you should plan a weekend to go shoot targets or clays. This will also help you get familiar with your weapon. It is also very important to know your surroundings. You especially need to know if other hunters are nearby.

• Blend In and Stand Out

The right camouflage can be paramount in keeping your game from spotting you



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before you pull the trigger. Make sure your gear is right for the natural environment that will surround you. On the other hand, there are clear laws requiring hunters on public lands to wear at least 400 square inches of hunter orange, in addition to orange headgear. So, when you are packing your camouflage, do not forget your orange vest and hat.

• *Bring Your V'ittles*

You will probably be in the field for a while, so be sure to pack some food and drinks. Avoid odorous things like garlic, as



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well as fibrous foods like beans or broccoli that may lead to discomfort while you are trying to hunt. The best options are foods that have carbs, protein and a little fat. A peanut butter sandwich is easy and will keep your body ready when that deer or bird comes into view.



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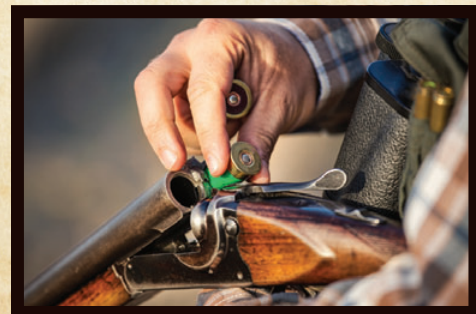
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• *Staying the Night*

If you are planning on making an entire weekend of your hunting trip, you will have to add another level of preparation. Research what camp grounds are available. If you are planning to go on the season's opening weekend, you will want to reserve a spot ahead of time. If you are pulling your tent from a pile of things you rarely use, set it up and check it for leaks before your trip. Bring a flashlight and extra batteries, and be sure to bring a warm enough sleeping bag for potentially cold temperatures. Lastly, be mindful of local wildlife. If bears or other animals are a potential threat, take precautions to keep food and trash sealed and out of reach from such critters.



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• Fire When Ready

Guns can be dangerous if not handled correctly. The state of Texas requires a hunter's education course for every hunter, which is good for life, after completion. You can get a one-time deferral good for a year, but it is highly recommended that you go through safety courses before operating a gun.

• Beware of Snakes

Most likely, your hunting site will be home to slithery critters, as well as the prey you are there to hunt. Only about 10 percent of Texas' snakes are dangerous for humans, so the first step to safety is identification. Bring a field guide, and be on the lookout for copperheads, cottonmouths and rattlesnakes. If you or a companion are bitten, the best solution is to get to a nearby hospital. Do not try to cut around the puncture or try to suck out the venom. Instead, clean around the wound with disinfectant soap, take off jewelry or items that may restrict the area, and try to limit movement of the extremity until you can get to a doctor.

Whether you are hoping to bag meat for the winter, or you want a 16-point buck over the mantel, a great trip starts with the right equipment and preparation. Staying safe while you are out will ensure a successful hunt is not overshadowed by injury or tragedy. With these tips, you are ready to aim and fire. **NOW**

Editor's Note: License purchasing, laws and general hunting information are available on the Texas Parks & Wildlife Hunting Page at www.tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/hunt/.

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Dental Center of Midlothian specializes in creating beautiful smiles.



Construction to Perfection

Travis Spillman, D.D.S., of Dental Center of Midlothian, offers general dentistry to the community. — By Betty Tryon

As a general dentist, Dr. Travis Spillman has provided preventative, restorative and cosmetic dentistry to patients in Midlothian and the surrounding areas since 2011. He specializes in mouth reconstruction and treating facial pain. He strives to provide his patients with the highest quality dental care and has been named a “Best Dentist” in *D Magazine*.

Originally from Rockwall, Texas, Dr. Spillman chose dentistry as a career in part because he had a baseball coach who was also a dentist. “That appealed to me,” he said. “I saw that as a dentist, he had the freedom to really participate in his kids’ lives, and he could be his own boss.” Dr. Spillman has, in a sense, come full circle, since now he coaches his own 7-year-old son.

In 1999, he graduated from Baylor University in Waco and went to The University of Texas Health Science Center at

Houston Dental Branch, where he earned his Doctor of Dental Surgery degree in 2003. He opened his first solo practice in 2007, and he opened Dental Center of Midlothian in 2011.

Eight years ago, he studied at the Center for Aesthetic Restorative Dentistry, a premier postdoctoral center where dentists from all over the world come for comprehensive, hands-on education in advanced restorative and cosmetic dentistry. In 2009, he began to serve as part of the teaching faculty and gave lectures on implant-retained dentures. He also supervised the hands-on course and presented cases. “CARD is an opportunity for peers to expand their horizons,” Dr. Spillman stated.

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all of my patients. However, I'm also known for creating beautiful smiles. From porcelain veneers to implants to teeth whitening, Dental Center of Midlothian offers a variety of cosmetic dental services."

"I'm in the business of saving teeth and providing good, quality dental care, and I have fun doing it."

The reconstruction procedures he performs in his office include: implants, bridges, crowns, cosmetic work with veneers and bonding and whitening. The state of your teeth and overall health of your mouth are some of the factors used to determine which procedures are best for you.

Working to alleviate mouth pain is another specialty Dental Center of Midlothian offers its patients. "Dental pain can come from trauma, malocclusion, inflammation in joints and simple grinding of teeth," Dr. Spillman explained. He can work with all of these difficulties to achieve your optimum level of comfort.

During his spare time, Dr. Spillman enjoys fishing, boating and spending time with his wife and their three children. He is an active member of his church and also volunteers with Texas Mission of Mercy, which provides free dental care to the underserved urban areas of Texas. Helping people is one of the reasons he became a dentist. "I get to work with people and develop relationships," he shared. "I'm in the business of saving teeth and providing good, quality dental care, and I have fun doing it. I am a blessed man for being in such a special place." **NOW**



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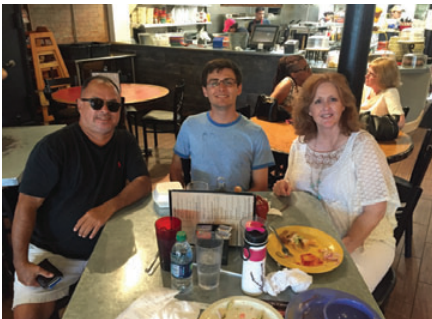
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Downtown Midlothian Market: 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Heritage Park.

September 5

Crescent Yoga Studio Community Partner of the 10th Annual DFW Free Day of Yoga: Yoga exercises throughout the day, open house potluck party from Noon-1:00 p.m. with door prizes, chair massages, and other specials. For more information, go to CrescentYogaStudio.com/communityevents.

September 17

Wildflower Walk: 9:00 a.m., Mockingbird Nature Park, 1361 Onward Rd. Will identify wildflowers and take flora and fauna survey on half-mile stroll along the trail. In the event of rain, the walk will be cancelled.

14th Annual Oktoberfest hosted by St. Joseph Catholic School: 10:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center, 2000 Civic Center Ln., Waxahachie. Free admission and parking. For

more information, visit www.facebook.com/stjosephoktoberfest.

September 22

North Texas Annual Giving Day: 6:00 a.m.-midnight. This is an online giving event for people across the nation (and the world) to come together to raise as much money as possible for North Texas nonprofits on one day. For more information, visit www.northtexasgivingday.org.

September 24

Bridges Training Foundation BBQ Bands & Brew: 10:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m., Ellis County Expo Center, 2300 W. Hwy. 287 Bypass. CTBA sanctioned BBQ chili cook-off, car show, silent auctions, raffle and door prizes. For more information, call McLissa Boler at (817) 996-8793 or email melissa.boler@bridgestf.org.

September 30

Midlothian ISD Education Foundation 12th Annual Golf Tournament Fundraiser: lunch and registration, 11:00 a.m.; shotgun start, 1:00 p.m., Mansfield National Golf, 3750 National Pkwy. For more information, call (972) 775- 8296.

Necessity Closet at One Way Church: Noon-3:00 p.m., One Way Church, 716 W. Main. The Necessity Closet is to help people on food stamps

or who have a low income by giving them paper products and cleaning supplies. They are open the last Friday of each month. For more information, contact Jean Burns at (972) 978-7210 or by email at mybrokee@aol.com.

October 1

4th Annual Roundup Fundraising Event: 6:30 p.m., Paws for Reflection Ranch, 5431 Montgomery Rd. Purchase tickets early and save. \$35 by **Sept. 15** and \$45 after **Sept. 15**. Dinner, drinks, live music, dancing and silent auction. For more information, call (972) 775-8966 or email PawsForReflection@att.net.

October 8

4th Annual Dentistry From the Heart: 7:30 a.m., official registration begins, Waxahachie Family Dentistry. For more information, call the dental office at (972) 937-4370.

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




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In the Kitchen With Jennifer Barrett

— By Betty Tryon

Jennifer Barrett has learned what is truly important and how to celebrate it regularly. “It’s a super busy world, but we all have to eat. Sitting down over a good meal makes us pause and remember to cherish our families and friends,” she said.

Jennifer’s grandmothers were great role models for showing her how to make others feel special in the kitchen. “I have many wonderful memories around their supper tables but also on a stool pulled up to their counter shelling fresh peas from the garden or helping chop pecans for a favorite dessert,” she said. “I hope one day my children will gather their families around my kitchen and feel every bit as special as I did!” **NOW**

Grilled Mahi Mahi Tacos

Fish:

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1 lime, juiced
- 1 Tbsp. ancho chili powder
- 1 jalapeño, minced
- 1/4 cup cilantro, chopped
- 1 lb. Mahi Mahi

Baja Sauce:

- 1 cup good quality mayonnaise, like Dukes or Hellman’s
- 1/4 cup milk
- 4 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp. garlic salt

Garnishes (Optional):

- Red and green cabbage, finely shredded
- Pico de gallo
- Cilantro, chopped
- Cotija cheese
- Lime wedges
- Corn tortillas, warmed

1. *For fish:* Mix all ingredients except Mahi Mahi in a shallow baking dish. Marinate fish in mixture for at least 15 minutes but no longer than 20. Grill at moderate heat for several minutes per side, until flakey.
2. *For Baja sauce:* Add all ingredients to a mason jar and shake until thoroughly combined; set aside.
3. Serve fish topped with sauce and garnishes of your preference.

Texas Caviar

- 3 15-oz. cans black beans, rinsed and drained
- 2 11-oz. cans small white corn, drained
- 2 10-oz. cans Ro-Tel tomatoes with green chilies
- 1 bunch green onions, chopped
- 1 each red, yellow and green bell pepper, deseeded and diced
- 1 bunch cilantro, chopped
- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- 1 lemon, juiced

3 cloves garlic, finely minced
Cumin, cayenne pepper, chili powder
and garlic salt, to taste

1. Mix all ingredients well in a very large bowl. Cover and refrigerate for several hours before serving with chips.

Grilled Corn

5 ears farm fresh corn, cleaned
1/2 cup mayonnaise
1 tsp. chili powder
1 tsp. kosher salt
1 tsp. black pepper
1 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
Pam cooking spray
Lime wedges

1. Brush corn with mayonnaise. Sprinkle on spices and Parmesan. Wrap individually in foil sprayed with Pam. Grill for 10 minutes or until kernels begin to brown.
2. Remove from grill and let steam for several minutes inside foil. Remove from foil and serve with lime wedges.

Lemon Shortbread Bars

Crust:

- 1/2 cup powdered sugar
- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup butter, cubed and chilled

Filling:

- 4 eggs, well beaten
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
- 2 cups sugar
- 1/2 cup flour
- 1/2 tsp. salt

Icing:

- 3/4 cup powdered sugar
- 2 Tbsp. lemon juice
- 2 Tbsp. butter, melted

1. *For crust:* Combine powdered sugar and flour in a mixing bowl and cut in butter until mixture resembles coarse breadcrumbs.
2. Press mixture into a 13x9-inch baking pan and bake at 350 F for 25 minutes. Set aside to cool.
3. *For filling:* Mix all filling ingredients together well; pour over cooled crust. Bake at 350 F for 25 more minutes; set aside.
4. *For icing:* Mix all icing ingredients together well; pour over baked bars while still hot. Let cool thoroughly before serving.

A man with short brown hair, smiling, wearing a blue short-sleeved button-down shirt and khaki pants. He is standing outdoors with a body of water and a cloudy sky in the background. His hands are in his pockets, and he is wearing a watch on his left wrist.

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