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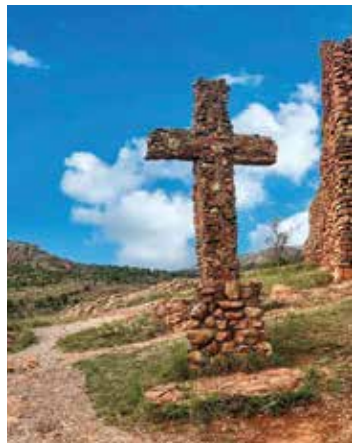


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Denton County, Area Officials Break Ground

On US 380 Improvement Project
Dawn Cobb



DENTON COUNTY, TX-Denton County Commissioner Precinct 1 Ryan Williams, along with Denton County Judge Andy Eads, Precinct 3 Commissioner Bobbie J. Mitchell, and Precinct 4 Commissioner Dianne Edmondson celebrated the groundbreaking of the U.S. 380 Improvement Project Monday.

The project, known as the “super street concept,” will improve mobility, increase ca-

capacity and reduce congestion in an area that has experienced major growth over the last decade. The project will also improve pedestrian access to businesses and schools in the corridor and bring the road-way up to current standards.

From Loop 288 to the US 377/380 intersection, raised medians with left and right lanes and improved pedestrian access will be constructed. From east of U.S. 377 to west of Country Road 26/Collin



County Line, the project will widen the road from four to six lanes with grade separations at five major intersections, add a curbed median and improve pedestrian facilities. Grade separation locations include: FM 720/Oak Grove Lane; Navo Road/Union Park Boulevard; FM 423/Gee Road; Teel Parkway/Championship Drive; and Legacy Drive.

“I began my term arguing for improvements to US 380

Continued on A2

Large, Enthusiastic Crowd Celebrates Sharon Cox at Building Dedication

Article and Images Provided by Denton ISD



DENTON COUNTY, TX-

In a beautiful outdoor setting underneath a sun-drenched sky, 250 guests celebrated the building dedication ceremony for the Sharon Cox Communications Center, a center named for a former journalist and state education advocate. Those on hand included district dignitaries, former employees and colleagues, and professional peers of the building’s namesake.

Denton ISD Board of Trustees President Doug Chadwick started the event off with a warm welcome message and thanked the attendees for being on hand to honor Mrs. Cox. He was followed in remarks by Dr. Jamie Wilson, superintendent of schools, who told a few anecdotes from his time working alongside Mrs. Cox as his director of communications.

Todd Camp, marketing and communications manager at American Airlines Credit Union, shared his admiration and being mentored by Mrs. Cox as a young journalist upon graduation from TCU. WFAA Daybreak Anchor Marc Istook credited Mrs. Cox for giving him career focus and direction after she introduced him to the newspaper series “Class Acts” in which she served as an editor while at the Fort Worth Star-Telegram in the early nineties.

Retired superintendent of schools, Dr. Ray Braswell, then shared a very influential tenure with Mrs. Cox. Dr. Braswell hired Mrs. Cox for the position in 1999. During her time in the district, Mrs. Cox was a one-person operation that was responsible for not only communicating the programs and successes of the district to families but also making sure the needs of those same families she supported were being met.

Dr. Braswell spoke of the various programs created by Mrs. Cox, not just for parents, but she also brought unique

Continued on A5

Denton ISD Honors 2022 Jostens Teacher of the Year

Dr. Victoria Serna, a fifth-grade teacher at Union Park Elementary. Article and Photos Provided by Denton ISD



DENTON COUNTY, TX- Denton ISD recognized the 2022 Jostens Teachers of the Year with

a “Drive-Thru” parade at C.H. Collins Athletic Complex on Thursday, April 21. This marks the third year in

a row the event was held in this parade-style, celebratory format.

Cheered on by their colleagues and community members, each campus winner worked through the parade route in the athletic facility parking lot. The event’s main sponsor, Jostens, presented each campus winner with a custom ring.

This year’s Denton ISD Elementary Teacher of the

Continued on A2

Operation Home Alone



COLLIN COUNTY, TX- From March 22 – 24, 2022, the Collin County Sheriff’s Office conducted “Operation Home Alone.” This undercover operation targeted suspects who utilize the internet to prey upon adolescent children.

Sheriff’s investigators, in collaboration with agents

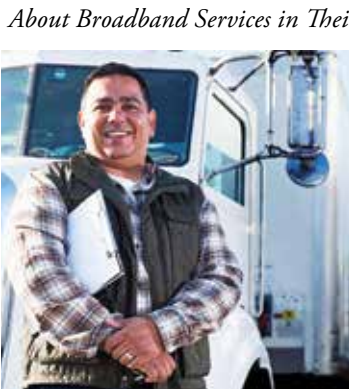
from the Texas Department of Public Safety, Texas Attorney General’s Office, Ellis County Sheriff’s Office, Mount Pleasant Police Department, and the Mississippi Bureau of Investigation, made a total of 15 arrests during Operation Home Alone. 11 individuals were charged with Online Solicitation of a Minor, 4

individuals were charged with Prostitution of a Person Less than 18 years of age, 1 individual was charged with Sexual Performance of a Child, and 1 individual was charged with Possession of Child Pornography.

During the operation, Investigators seized a large number of electronic devices that were used by these individuals to commit their crimes. These devices will undergo forensic examination which may result in additional criminal charges being filed.

Collin County Sheriff Jim Skinner: “I want to thank the investigators who participated in this operation for their hard work and dedication to bring this group of

Continued on A2



AUSTIN, TX — As Comptroller Glenn Hegar wraps up his Texas Broadband Listening Tour, the agency is reminding Texans to share their thoughts about broadband services in their communities. Your input can be shared via this online survey, or by calling 833-3-TEXBDO (839236).

The tour, which began March 1, is taking Hegar to a dozen communities across the state, helping Comptroller Hegar collect input from

Texans to develop the state’s first broadband plan. The plan is due to the state Legislature by June 15, so it is urgent that Texans respond soon to ensure their feedback can be included.

“I find that the key to good communication is to listen more than you talk, and so these town-halls have helped us hear directly from Texans,” Hegar said. “So far, the sentiment is consistent — Slow data speed, unreliable access, cost and coordination are critical areas of concern.”

The BDO was established during the regular session of the 87th Legislature to award grants, low-interest loans and other financial incentives to expand access to broadband service across the state.

For more information about the BDO, go to the Comptroller’s website.



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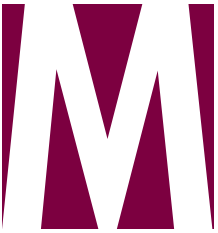


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380News is a regional publication covering local community news for Northeast Denton County and Northwest Collin County including the communities of Aubrey, Cross Roads, Krugerville, Pilot Point, Little Elm, Oak Point, Paloma Creek, Prosper, Providence, and Savannah. A direct mail newspaper, 380News has a monthly distribution of 15,000 papers including residential households, businesses, Chambers of Commerce, Master Planned Communities, and Home Owner Associations. 380News reaches almost 40,000 North Texas readers.

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The publication deadline for advertising, editorial submissions, guest editorials, and letters to the editor is the 15th day of the preceding month for each issue. Letters to the editor must be 300 words or less and include a name, address, and phone number (only name and city will be published). Content may be submitted via email to info@380news.com.

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Historic Preservation Month 2022

By Kelsey Jistel

DENTON COUNTY, TX -May is National Historic Preservation Month! The Denton County Office of History & Culture has partnered with the City of Denton to present Denton Revealed: Historic Preservation Month 2022. Throughout the month of May, free public events will take place

across downtown Denton. Some of these events include a window repair workshop presented by Hull Millwork, workshops on how to research the history of your home and how to apply for historic property designations, as well as a tour of Oakwood Cemetery.

A calendar of events can

be found at <https://www.dentoncounty.gov/1655/Denton-RevealedHistoric-Preservation-Mo> *Registration is required for the Window Repair Workshop at the Emily Fowler Library.

Capacity is limited to 50 attendees. Registration link can be found here: <https://denton.bibliocommons.com>

DENTON REVEALED PRESERVATION MONTH 2022			
Free public events throughout the month of May celebrating Historic Preservation			
05/07	Window Restoration Workshop	9 AM	Emily Fowler Library
05/10	Oakwood Cemetery Tour	7 PM	Oakwood Cemetery
05/11	Storytime w/ Denton Public Library	11 AM	Emily Fowler Library
05/14	Hunting Your House History Workshop	10 AM	Emily Fowler Library
05/14	Historic Designation: How to Designate Your Property in Denton	1:30 PM	Denton County Courthouse on the Square
05/21	Small-Scale Development Workshop	9 AM	Denton County Courthouse on the Square
05/21	Imagine the Possibilities Tour	10 AM	Downtown Denton
05/22	Historic Bar Crawl by Denton Main Street Association	2 PM	Downtown Denton

'Denton Area...' continued from front page



and I will continue to fight for those improvements for the duration of my service to the residents of Denton County," said Commissioner Williams. "That effort indicates that US 380 throughout Denton County needs to be a freeway. The best location for that freeway is along the existing alignment."

Travis Campbell, Tx-DOT's area engineer for Denton County, is excited to help convert US 380 into

an urban roadway as well.

"TxDOT, along with our regional partners, is looking forward to delivering this important safety project we believe will vastly improve safety, community access and traffic flow," Campbell said.

Judge Eads stressed how important transportation is to the Denton County Commissioners Court.

"Mobility continues to be a priority in Denton County," said Judge Eads. "You have to have good and safe transportation."

Dignitaries gathered for the event at Palio's Pizza in the 9900 block of U.S. 380, including Sen. Drew Springer, Rep. Tan Parker, Rep-elect Richard Hayes, Denton ISD Superintendent Dr. Jamie Wilson, Cross Roads Mayor T. Lynn Tompkins, Prosper Mayor Pro-Tem Meigs Miller and the Make 380 Safe group of residents led by Jessica Dunn, who have worked several years to bring traffic issues along US 380 to the forefront.

'Denton ISD Honors...' continued from front page

Year is Dr. Victoria Serna, a fifth-grade teacher at Union Park Elementary. She was selected from 25 elementary campus nominees.

Dr. Serna is finishing her third year at Union Park Elementary and her sixth year with the district. She is on her second stint with Denton ISD and has fourteen years of classroom experience overall. Dr. Serna brings a wealth of experiences to her students by incorporating formal and informal science instruction to create a space where all her students feel welcomed and included.

"It's such a huge honor and it's exciting because of what this represents for our team and our school," said Dr. Serna. "This event makes me feel like all of us are 'seen' and this helps give our students a voice too which is why we all do what we do. We get celebrated and we get to celebrate all of our village too."

This year's Secondary Teacher of the Year is Donald Place, Spanish teacher at Denton High School.

Mr. Place has taught Spanish at Denton High for the past twenty years. He is also National Honor Society Co-Advisor, Table Tennis Club Sponsor, and League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) Club Sponsor. In addition to those responsibilities, he also serves as the AP Testing Table Leader for AP Spanish Language tests given by the educational testing service.

An immigrant to the United States from Nicaragua as a fifteen-year-old, Mr. Place relies on those difficult cultural, psychological, and emotional experiences of adapting to a new culture during his teen years to shape his teaching philosophy today.

"This is such an honor, I work with such an amazing staff in our school," said Mr. Place. "To be nominated out of 150 excellent teachers at Denton High is just amazing. I'm on cloud nine right now."

'Operation Home...' continued from front page

sexual predators to justice. These predators are very sophisticated in their use of technology and exploit online forums to target and communicate with children. Parents must engage with their children

about their devices and how they use them – and please report any suspicious activity to your nearest law enforcement agency. Here in Collin County, we will continue to do what is necessary to protect our children."

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HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

Modern Day Wonder Woman

*In the Office and at Home with Dr. Mustafa
Jodie Linton-Prickett*



Today, more than ever, women balance amid their responsibilities to their careers as well as their family and home. They are continually juggling several roles of a working professional and mother, wife, friend, sister and daughter with extraordinary synchronization and effortlessness.

Women have collectively attained more higher education than ever before, they are bringing home more money than ever, and cultivating businesses that are changing their communities and even the world.

While women have come a long way, baby ... their work is not done. It is now about changing opinions and preconceived notions to safeguard gender equality for upcoming women.

380Guide met with Hala Mustafa, DDS to get her input on how to do the delicate balancing act in our busy world. She is a charismatic, young, successful businesswoman, and a hands-on mother, who is full of personality, and did I mention beautiful. One of the first questions we asked was, how do you do it? "It's a delicate balance and dynamic from day to day. I could not do it all without the support of my amazing Husband and our families," said Dr. Mustafa. While she wears many hats, she has developed an excellent support system. This gives her a break from having to be "on" all the time.

Because Dr. Mustafa has many different roles, time is her biggest commodity. She has found if it is meaningful enough, anyone can make time. All too often, time is wasted or used unwisely, so she consistently makes sure that she is making the best use of her time, she has learned how to delegate tasks and focuses on things that absolutely have to be completed by her. This helps her to get things done properly every time. Time management, taking time to refresh and recharge, having an excellent support team and being present and positive are essential in the balancing act of succeeding and being a modern-day Wonder Woman!

It is interesting to look how family dynamics can contribute

to an empowered woman. Dr. Mustafa in one of four children raised by parents that understood the balancing act of family and careers. The family lived in Sudan where there is more uncertainty than here in the United States. Her mother worked in the Ministry of Finance Treasury sector and her father was in the Public Administration sector and a part time Professor. They made balancing time between family and careers look easy in a difficult environment, a place that didn't have a promising future. It was because of their selfless parenting they left their homeland to give their children more stability and opportunities. Her parents immigrated to the U.S. when Dr. Mustafa was around nine years old to ensure a better future for her and her siblings.

380Guide asked Dr. Mustafa what she would recommend to other young women that are looking at a career in dentistry. "Dental School is becoming increasingly competitive. Balancing heavy amount learning with intense requirements of laboratory and clinical work is a challenge that every dental student will face. With that being said, prepare yourself by keeping your G.P.A as high as possible during college. Have a strong Science background. Strong academics is not the only factor admission committees look at so highlight yourself by becoming well rounded individual involved in the community, shadowing local dentists to learn more about the field. Join and take leadership roles in various organizations during your high school and undergraduate career and network," said Dr. Mustafa.

"I'm honored to be able to help the next generation of aspiring female scientists by offering a scholarship to a graduating senior pursuing a career in the STEM field each year," said Dr. Mustafa, "To learn more about our outreach and see how you can get involved, contact our office today."

We asked Dr. Mustafa to give us three main things that help

her stay focused, balanced and a continuous success story. We also asked her to give our readers some tips on oral hygiene for busy moms.

Be Present and Establish a Routine.

"Being fully present is crucial in every role you're in," said Dr. Mustafa, "You must fully show up in each role and do it to the best of your ability." Dr. Mustafa truly enjoys her profession and absolutely loves being a parent. "I am fully focused and give my full attention during my office hours to my patients', business and staff. I consider my priorities for the day and week, she said, "Once my workday is over, we give our kids all the attention in the world. Our evening routine is a special time for us. Having dinner, bath-time, playtime followed by reading or puzzles and just winding down for the night. Usually, by 8:00 our kids are asleep which gives my husband and I time to decompress, talk and reconnect."

Reset and Recharge.

"Physical and Mental exhaustion is too common because we live in a fast-paced society". Chronic physical and mental burnout will reduce performance level whether in office or caring for family members. To rejuvenate and refresh your mindset, make sure to take regularly scheduled breaks to rest and recharge. Whether we take a week-end getaway for new scenery and R&R or treating myself to a spa day in which I can unplug from everything and everyone for a few hours." Said Dr. Mustafa, "I come back well rested with more willpower and creativity to take life on! This creates my work-life balance." As a family, they also enjoy spending time outdoors, petting zoos, indoor and outdoor amusement parks, and gymnastics. Getting your mind off things and enjoying pizza night and a movie is a great way for the family to recharge. "We recently attended the 'Disney on Ice' show and the girls had blast," said Dr. Mustafa.

Keep a Positive Outlook.

A positive outlook on your future leads to contentment and accomplishment and can catapult your whole life into a positive direction. When asked what her future looks like, Dr. Mustafa said, "The future looks bright and beautiful! There's no limit to what I'll accomplish. As a woman, I want both. I want to grow my family, keep growing a successful business(s), God willing. We don't have to compromise either one.

Dr. Mustafa's Five Oral Hygiene Tips for Busy Moms!

1) Oral Care is Self-Care: Schedule your six months check-ups and cleaning. Think of it as a 'Spa treatment' for your mouth! We strive to make our patients

feel pampered and right at home during every visit. The calming ambiance in our office is noticeable as soon as you walk in.

2) Model good oral hygiene behavior to your kids early. Make it a morning ritual to brush together with your younger kids to ensure proper technique. Brush for at least 2 minutes.

3) Many patients don't find it exciting to floss but remember, brushing only cleans 60% of your mouth. That grungy, filmy feeling in your mouth is the remaining plaque and sticky bacterial waste in between your teeth. So, if you're not flossing, 40% of tooth surfaces weren't addressed leading to gum disease and cavities.

4) Utilize a tongue scraper. Your tongue should be pink and not coated with white build up that contributes to bad breath. The white/yellow build up you often see is actually trapped bacteria, food, and debris in the tongue's papillae (those tiny bumps).

5) Drink lots of water! Water literally cleanses your mouth with every sip you take as it washes away residue from bacteria. It keeps the Oral pH at a stable level by diluting the acids produced by harmful bacteria.

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EDUCATION

The Aubrey UIL Academics Team Placed Second

At the UIL Academics District 9-4A meet
Amy Ruggini



AUBREY ISD, TX- The Aubrey UIL academics team placed second at the UIL Academics District 9-4A meet. Aubrey was one of seven teams that competed with Melissa taking the top spot. Fifteen AHS students advanced to the regional meet in eight different events. The top three individuals and the top team in each event advanced on to the regional meet. The regional meet will be held on Saturday, April 23 at Texas A&M Commerce. Aaron Cajilema is a region qualifier in four events: individual and team accounting, team number sense and individual calculator apps. Cayden Stephenson joins Aaron in qualifying with the team accounting and team number sense events. Cayden also qualified individually in the number sense category. Brody Burton placed first in informative extemporaneous and current events and was part of the top current events team. Pieter Koman qualified with individual and team current events and the team spelling event. Other qualifiers included: Nick Foster, Kadence Gercak, Chris Golson, Colby Hendricks, Matthew Jackson, Hillary Koeman, Caleb McWhorter, Xander Rouk, Kellen Wallis and Daniel Warren.

Pilot Point Fine Arts Offers Free Arts Classes



PILOT POINT, TX- Beginning in the fall of 2021, the Pilot Point Fine Arts Program offered free arts classes to ages 4 years - 5th grade. Offerings include painting, Latin dance, hand chimes, choir and yoga. Each class is 4-6 weeks long with a showcase at the end of each session. New classes are always being added and there are plans to



add choir and music for middle and high school in the fall of 2022. Check out the FB page (20+) Pilot Point Fine Arts Program | Facebook for updates and further information, to register or to see what classes are coming up. You can also call 903-213-3796 if you have any other questions. Help our kids embrace their whole self through the arts.

Summer Opportunities for Youth in Denton County

Steven Baringer



DENTON COUNTY, TX- It has only been spring for a few weeks, but Denton County 4-H is in full swing planning summer events. Our goal for all of our summer events is to offer the youth in Denton County to experience a little of AgriLife Extension and 4-H. We have various programs for all ages, covering a topics ranging from Food and Nutrition to STEM and more. In this article I will talk about each program Denton County 4-H will be offering, as well as two that our fellow Extension professionals are planning. Clover Kids Camp Our Clover Kids Camp is for youth who are not old enough to be official 4-H members yet. It is open to kindergarten through second graders, and will be held on July 12-14 at the North Texas Fairgrounds in Fair Hall. They will be experiencing what 4-H has to offer each morning from 9 am to 12 pm! This camp will focus on Texas 4-H's

Top Five Project Areas: Food & Nutrition, Agriculture, Leadership and Citizenship, Natural Resources, and STEM. There is no cost associated with this event and to register please visit denton.agrilife.org/upcoming/. 4-H Summer Expo Denton County 4-H has so much to offer! To help showcase this we have created an event for the entire family. On Wednesday, July 27th from 3-7 PM, we will have a 4-H Summer Expo held at the North Texas Fairgrounds. We are encouraging our 4-H clubs to set up a booth highlighting one project or event that Denton County 4-H offers. Some of the activities include STEM Robotics, Archery, Food and Nutrition, Horticulture, Small and Large Animal Showcase, Camping Education and more! For more information contact Victoria Scott at victoria.scott@dentoncounty.gov or 940-349-2884. 4-H & FCH Boot Camp One of Texas 4-H's largest projects is Food and Nutrition. We want to provide an opportunity this summer for youth who may be new or experienced in this project, to have a chance to learn. This is a two day camp. The first day will cover Food & Nutrition while the second day

will focus on Fashion and Interior Design. There is no cost associated with this camp and you do not have to attend both days. It will be held on Tuesday, August 2nd and Thursday August 4th, from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. To register you can visit denton.agrilife.org/upcoming/. I also wanted to mention two other camps this summer. The first is the Farm to Table Camp that Denton Parks and Rec and our colleagues at the AgriLife Extension office are hosting. It will be June 13-17, from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm at Clear Creek Heritage Center. The cost for this camp is \$65. Youth who attend this camp will learn where food comes from and how to prepare it in a healthy way by bringing the farm to their table! To register please visit dentonparks.com. Lastly, the other camp I wanted to throw out there was the JMG & JMN Camp. JMG & JMN is Junior Master Gardner and Naturalist. This camp will be held June 20-24 for youth in Denton County. More information on this camp will be out soon. You can follow Denton County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension on Facebook to stay up to date on both of these camps. For any questions you may

have about Denton County 4-H or our 4-H summer calendar, you can keep up with us on social media or contact myself at steven.baringer@ag.tamu.edu or call 940-349-2884. I hope to see you and your family this summer! More About 4-H 4-H is a community of young people across America who are learning leadership, citizenship and life skills. 4-H is about having fun, learning, exploring and discovering. In 4-H, young people make new friends, develop new skills, become leaders and help shape their communities. More than 65,000 Texas youth are enrolled members of 4-H community clubs in Texas. Another 850,000 Texas youth get involved in 4-H through special educational opportunities at school, in after school programs, or at neighborhood or youth centers. These youth live in cities, suburbs, small towns and rural communities. 4-H gives them a chance to pursue their own interests – from photography to computers, from building rockets to raising sheep. A list of 4-H projects is available here. They go places – to camp, to state and national conferences. They learn to be leaders and active citizens.

Denton ISD Recognized as 2022 Best Community for Music Education

For 15th Consecutive Year, Article Provided by Denton ISD



DENTON COUNTY, TX- For the 15th consecutive year, Denton ISD has been recognized by the NAMM Foundation as one

of the Best Communities for Music Education for its outstanding commitment to music education. The Best Communities for Music Education designation is awarded to districts that demonstrate outstanding achievement in efforts to provide music access and education to all students. To qualify for the Best Communities designation, the District answered detailed questions about

funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities, support for the music program and community music-making programs. The Best Communities for Music Education Award recognizes that the District is leading the way with learning opportunities and understands that music and the arts are important elements of a well-rounded education.

The Denton ISD Fine Arts Department knows that music education lays the foundation for individual excellence in group settings, creative problem solving and flexibility in work situations, as well as learning how to give and receive constructive criticism to excel. For more information about The NAMM Foundation, please visit www.nammfoundation.org.

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measures to get various stakeholders (grandparents, business leaders, district employees, etc.) involved in supporting public education and helping families whenever they needed assistance. Many of these programs have been adopted by school districts across the state and still flourish today.

He also credited Mrs. Cox for being instrumental in helping the district keep up with growth, helping pass five bond elections, and guiding the Board of Trustees to a pair of Top 5 Texas Honor

Board recognitions. Many colleagues, several of whom were on hand, continue to seek her advice and counsel on political campaigns, public engagement, and program implementation today.

Perhaps the proudest moment from his time with Mrs. Cox was her creation of the Grandparents in Public Schools (GIPS) Task Force, which promoted grandparent volunteers to mentor students at Denton ISD schools. The program has nearly doubled in members since its inception more than twenty years ago.

Denton ISD's GIPS program is just one of the many initiatives created by Mrs. Cox to be recognized by both local and national public education organizations and has been copied by many other districts in the state of Texas.

Dr. Braswell became emotional when speaking about Mrs. Cox's ability to manage all of the demands of her job and balance her family responsibilities while raising three children.

Jackie Jackson, executive director of Denton Public School Foundation (DPSF), talked about her time working first as Mrs. Cox's secretary for a brief stint, followed by their time working together in the community on behalf of the district.

Former Denton ISD communications director, Mario Zavala, Jr., relayed his affection for Mrs. Cox as a mentor and

colleague when hired by the district and then was tabbed as her replacement when she retired in 2015.

The honoree then took the stage and thanked those in attendance as well as those who took the time to speak on her behalf. She also announced a ten-thousand-dollar scholarship from her family in honor of her children which will be given to multiple Denton ISD students for years to come.

"I've always been proud to be a part of Denton ISD – as a parent and as an educator – because the district is extremely supportive of students and all of their educational endeavors. Communications and community relations are vital to the success of each student as we continue to bridge the communications gap from the child's home to the classroom

and school," said Sharon Cox.

"From grandparents in our mentoring programs to volunteers donating thousands of hours to help our students succeed, as well as hundreds of advocates helping to support and pass every bond election in the past two decades. The district's success is exemplified through the hard work of the district's past and current staff, administrators, and board members."

Current Denton ISD Chief Communications Officer, Julie Zwahr, closed the ceremony by mentioning the time she's known Mrs. Cox and her many fond memories of their interactions together, which date to when Mrs. Zwahr was a high school student and Mrs. Cox was the editor for her town's local newspaper, The Arlington Citizen's

Journal.

Mrs. Cox has more than 40 years of service in news reporting/editing, school communications, and school media relations in North Texas. Her career culminated with a 15-year stint as Director of Communications and Community Relations in Denton ISD. She served as state president of both the Texas School Public Relations Association (TSPRA) and the Texas Association of Partners in Education (TAPE).

In 2014, TSPRA awarded Mrs. Cox with the organization's "Professional Achievement Award," an honor bestowed upon exceptional professionals for their cumulative body of work.

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The Color of Barcelona *Jodie Linton-Prickett*



The colors of Barcelona are vivid, the vibe is energetic. It is a sophisticated city hugging the coast of the Mediterranean with a thriving economy, and an excellent quality of life. The creativity and the culture are vibrant and exciting. The weather is suitable with days filled with brilliant sunshine. It is a place uniquely its own, the Capital of Catalonia.

Barcelona ticks several boxes for an ideal vacation. It offers beaches for relaxing, mountains and hills for climbing, a rich history with old world charm for exploring, unique architecture for marveling, a seaport for cruising, a happening night life for partying, and excellent food for dining. No matter how long you stay, there is no chance of running out of things to do.

After two years of limited travel, I could not contain myself in one place any longer. The world is vast and I want to see as much of it as I can. Usually, when I travel, I like to stay as long as possible and spur off from my main destination with day trips to surrounding areas. With today's restrictions and travel limitations, I decided to take a different type of trip and stay only in one location for a shorter time.

Barcelona has been on my bucket list for quite some time. Spain was open for tourism, so it became my destination of choice. A few years ago, I spent several weeks in Spain, yet denied myself Barcelona. In a way I am glad I did because this trip allowed me to just focus on one place.

There is such a diverse culture in Barcelona, it feels vastly different from most of Spain. Catalan's have their own language, which enriches their own flavor of art, architecture, music, and dance. You can lose yourself for days exploring the twisted and narrow streets of the Gothic Quarter, or shopping Las Ramblas, the longest main street in Europe. My favorite thing was learning more about the Catalan Renaissance. More specifically, getting to know Gaudi's art and architecture.

Often, when marveling over images of Barcelona, Antoni Gaudi's architecture is in the picture. While Barcelona is so much more than Gaudi, you can hardly escape him in the city. He left bits of himself everywhere. One place I would

love to visit is inside his brilliant mind. I can only imagine how fascinating it must have been. Since that is impossible, the next best thing is to explore his creations, and that is easy. Undoubtedly, his most famous, must be La Sagrada Familia. After going to the temporary Gaudi exhibition at Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, La Sagrada Familia would be my first Gaudi visit.

I have yet to meet a church that I did not like. They amaze and delight me no matter where they fall on the timeline. I started this trip to Barcelona by visiting the historic Barcelona Cathedral because it was right across the square from my hotel. This Gothic cathedral had its groundbreaking in 1298 and its central tower was completed in 1913. Beautiful, imposing, grand, yet familiar. This was a huge contrast to my visit to La Sagrada Familia. It was like nothing I had ever seen before. The basilica was started on March 19, 1882, and the scheduled completion year is 2026, representative for the century of Gaudi's death.

Every element on the exterior and interior of La Sagrada Familia has symbolic significance. While it felt like I was entering a place of worship it was so overwhelmingly strange and eccentric that I had to catch my breath. Every element is inspired by nature, and every measurement has a mathematical reason that resonates throughout the monument. The soaring ceilings are held up by pillars resembling a canopy of trees in various heights, materials, and circumstances to hold the weight of the structure above. You feel like you are walking through a forest. Colors flood the basilica. I visited in the afternoon, so oranges and yellows were the dominant colors bathing the walls and the floors. The way the patterns formed and covered everything it landed on, including other visitors, it reminded me of a kaleidoscope I had as a child. Visually stunning, spiritually moving and an architectural genius like no other. If you visit in the morning, I am told you see mostly blues and greens. No matter the time of day, it is a must see for anyone visiting this cosmopolitan city.


Next stop Park Güell. This private park is situated on Carmel Hill offering amazing views of the city. The construction started during an urbanization movement during 1900 and was completed in 1913, however it was not officially open until almost a decade later. In 1984 it was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. The park was originally designed for a master planned community, much like the ones lining Highway 380. The park was never completed but it is still arguably one of the most beautiful parks on the planet. Gaudi abandoned constraints and let his imagination go wherever it wanted to take him. The result was a playful playground for both the body and mind. One of the most beautiful parts of the park is the continuous bench quilted in vividly colorful ceramic shard mosaics. It is surprisingly comfortable and offers an expansive vista of the city. There is a fee to enter the park,

but you can stay as long as you like. It is a perfect place for a long walk and soaking up the warm Mediterranean sun.

A trip to Barcelona cannot be complete without a visit to Casa Batlló, located at number 43 on Paseo de Garcia. In 2021, it was named World's Best Landmark. It was a renovation from a previous building built in 1877 it was completed in 1906. Gaudi had the confidence to take on the project and was given full artistic license by the property owner Josep Batlló. Gaudi redesigned everything from the facade to the interior, making it a continuous dialogue of art and function. Gaudi never explained his design, or inspiration for the dwelling. However, the marine-inspired facade is one of the two most popular interpretations. It is easy to get sucked into a jubilant feeling as the light's glow reflects off the vivid ceramic scale like tiles, breathing life and movement onto the urban street. The Inside curves and bends like fluid nature, with each room holding a new surprise, full of disguised function behind color and whimsy. Casa Batlló is also known as The House of the Dragon, because of its interpreted reference to the Legend of St. George, patron saint of Catalonia. It was he who killed the dragon to save the princess. Many see the scales formed by tiles, the ribs in the columns and the sword through the roof. Most people agree that Gaudi never explained so that each individual can draw their own conclusion based on their individual experience inside.

One place I cannot recommend enough is Palau de la Música Catalana. It was completed in 1908, by architect Lluís Domènech i Montaner. It is considered the jewel of Catalan Art Nouveau. There is not another concert hall of this style listed by UNESCO. If you cannot attend a concert, book a tour. Plan to arrive early and visit Cafe Palau, it is absolutely delicious to look at. Have a coffee or a meal but do take time to feast your eyes on this beautiful cafe. After a leisurely coffee, go on a tour. They offer several in English throughout the day. It will give you a complete history of the venue as well as a taste of the acoustics. Have your camera ready, because after you catch your breath, you will want to snap away at the stunning interior auditorium. The skylight is so magical it is hard to believe it can structurally exist at all. It defies gravity as it captures light, spilling over the lavish concert hall below. The whole experience is like entering an enchanted music box. Don't miss this experience.

There are so many other things to do in this captivating city. Get lost in the Gothic Quarter, dunk into charming coffee shops or tapa houses and while the day away. Visit the aquarium and stroll around the marina. Take a Hop-On-Hop-Off bus tour to get an overview of the city. Go to a soccer game and party at the clubs afterward. The options are endless. That is what makes Barcelona a great fit for any traveler. Any time of year is a good time to visit. Soak up some Catalan sun, experience the culture and really absorb the colors of Barcelona!



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