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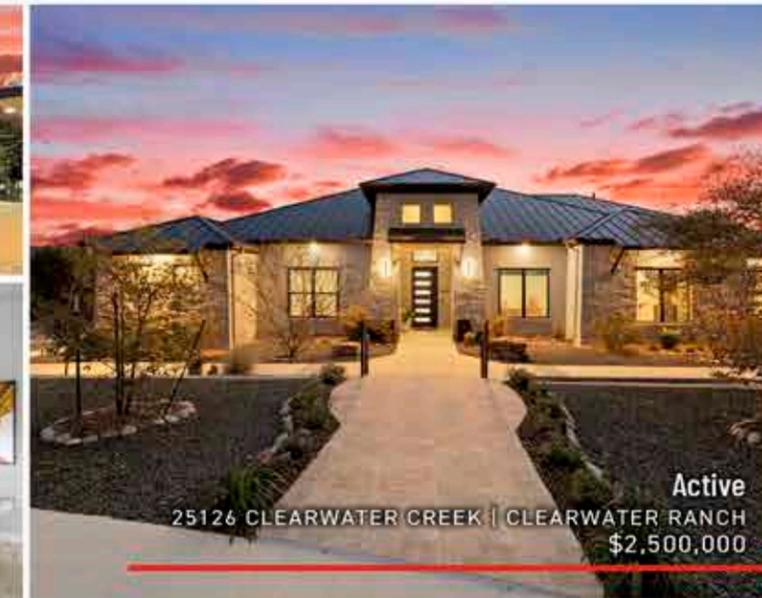
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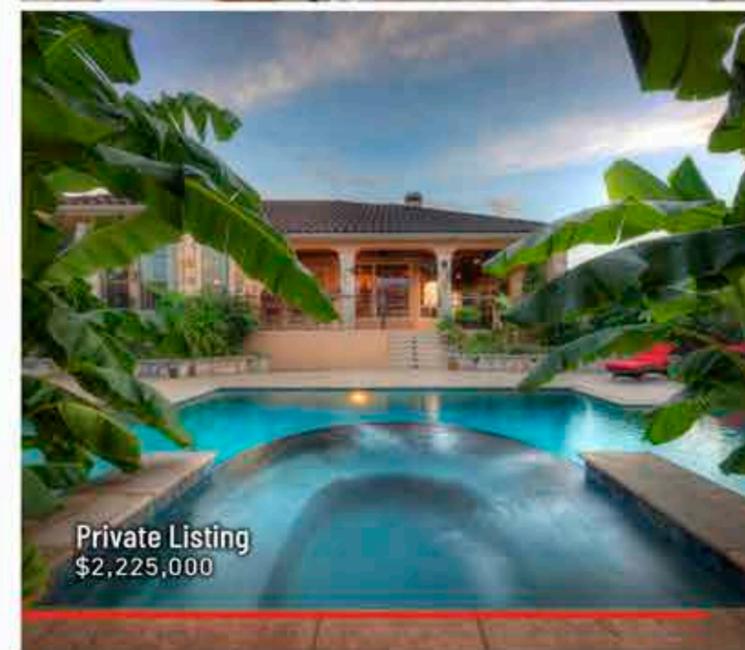
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THE RESIDENTS OF THE DOMINION!

We are always looking for residents to feature in the magazine, find great stories and send us ideas. Let's celebrate the great things happening in our community! No contribution is too small. Please email jason.smith@n2pub.com with your pictures, suggestions, or requests.

Life @ The DOMINION

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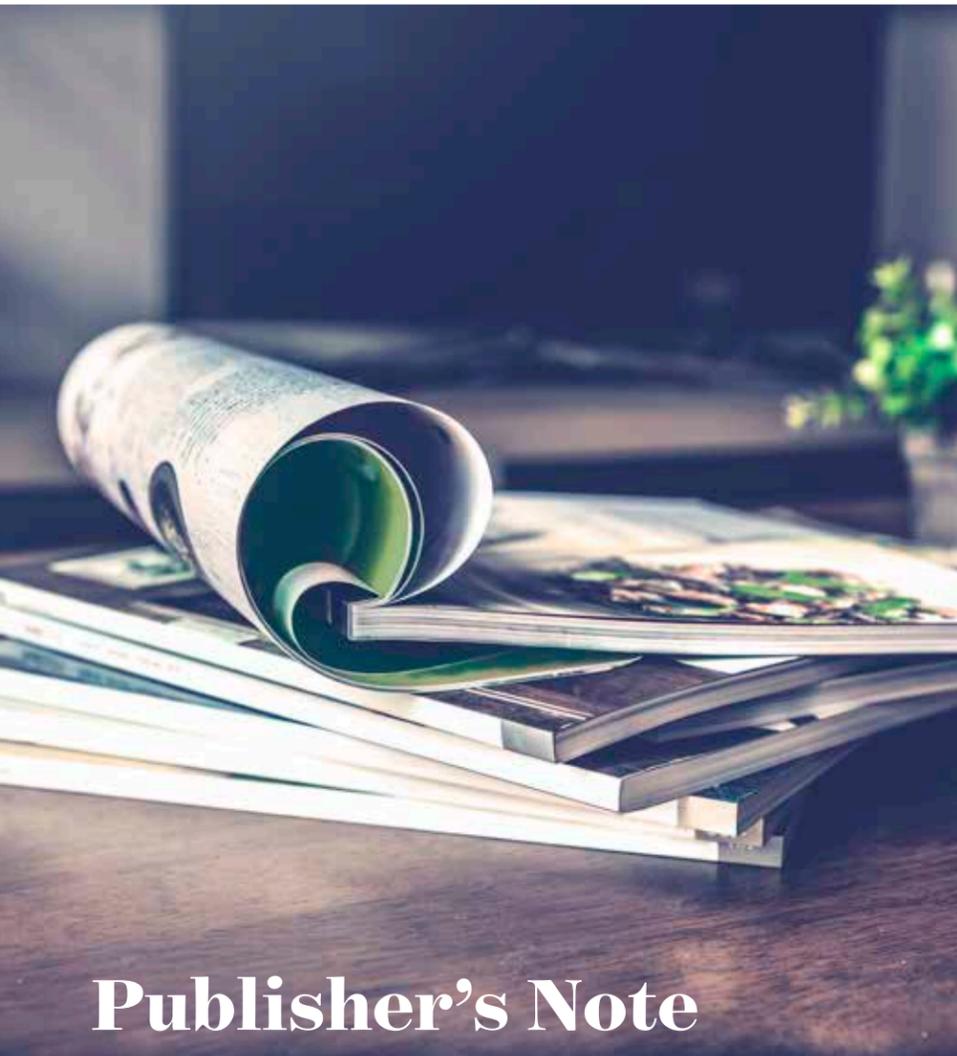


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Publisher's Note

EVERY MONTH, YOUR MAILBOX FILLS with a variety of publications. Some you toss aside without a second glance, others might catch your attention briefly. But Stroll Dominion isn't just another magazine—it's your magazine. It's personal. It's exclusive. And while it may seem similar to others at first glance, trust me—similar doesn't mean same.

For residents of The Dominion, this publication is a curated reflection of the community you've chosen to call home. It tells your stories, features your neighbors, and celebrates the unique spirit of this extraordinary place. There may be other publications that show up, but none are created with and for you the way this one is.

And for the businesses we partner with—yes, there are many magazines, digital ads, and social media platforms vying for your marketing dollars. But

Stroll Dominion is something entirely different. We're not a media buy. We're a relationship. We're an introduction. We're a trusted connection.

Advertising is a vital part of any business strategy. And let's be honest—if we were the only company who thought a neighborhood magazine was a good idea, it probably wouldn't be a good idea. But just because others have entered the space doesn't mean they offer what we do. Again, similar doesn't mean same.

What makes Stroll Dominion uniquely different?

We are deeply connected.

We've spent 11 years building relationships inside The Dominion. We don't just know this community—we are a part of it. We've earned trust, built friendships, and created a network that

is second to none. No other magazine can say that.

We are precise in our distribution. We don't blanket zip codes or target demographics with a wide net. Every issue of Stroll Dominion is hand-delivered to the front doors of the highest concentration of wealth in San Antonio. It's not about how many; it's about who many.

We are personal in our content. This isn't a generic "lifestyle magazine"—whatever that even means anymore. Our content is customized, relevant, and personal to this community. It's the story of your neighbors, your events, your achievements. It's not about lifestyle in the abstract; it's about your life, right here.

We are intentional in our connections.

From our private networking events to one-on-one introductions, we create real, meaningful connections between residents and the businesses that support them. This isn't passive exposure—it's active relationship-building.

We are social.

We don't just publish stories—we create moments. Our events bring residents and business partners together in person. From intimate gatherings to high-end socials, we go beyond pages and pixels to foster real community.

In a world full of noise, sameness, and short-term thinking, Stroll Dominion stands apart. We're built on long-term trust, local connection, and the belief that real relationships still matter.

To the residents who open these pages each month—thank you for allowing us to be part of your story. And to the businesses who partner with us—thank you for seeing the value in connection over clicks, in quality over quantity, in credibility over impressions.

Because when it comes to community, advertising, and impact—similar doesn't mean same.

Jason Smith

Publisher,
Stroll Dominion



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The Marin Family



For Karen and Pablo Marin, life is about connection. Connection to friends and family, to past lives and future endeavors. Connection is what ultimately brought them to the Dominion. Throughout the journeys, they've been consistently connecting the dots to piece together the perfect picture of a beautiful life.

Karen was born and raised in Mexico City. She fondly recalls weekend gatherings with her abuela, aunts, uncle and cousins. Growing up in a big city, there was always lots to do, good food to try, and adventures to be had. She also learned from her parents to help others, have a good heart, work hard and enjoy life. Her mother was a psychotherapist who utilized holistic approaches to healing, something Karen always found fascinating. With a passion for creativity, Karen studied Industrial Design after high school, but ultimately earned her Masters in Marketing and Advertising and began a successful career in the family business as a Marketing and New Products Director. Karen, however, considers knowledge a lifelong pursuit and consistently finds ways to further her education.

Pablo was born in San Antonio and raised in Mexico City. His parents held family values in high regard. Pablo holds dear the importance of being transparent and truthful, "even if it hurts". His father was a neurosurgeon, but Pablo preferred to pursue a degree in Electronics Engineering. Today, with an MBA in Finance, a Masters in Information Systems, and a PHD in Industrial Engineering, after a career in the automotive industry with Ford and Nissan, he runs a group of companies in the food distribution industry. In his spare time, he likes to play tennis, golf and write, and has written seven novels and has one more in the oven.

Though they met in '91 through mutual acquaintances, their romantic spark wasn't ignited until a decade later. Life has a way of seeing people in and out of each other's lives but keeping them connected, and thus was the case for Karen and Pablo. After reuniting in 2001, they began dating, and in 2005 were married in a beautiful ceremony at the Four Seasons in Mexico City. In 2006, they welcomed their firstborn daughter, Carol, to the family and almost 4 years later, welcomed their second, Nicole.

Having owned a vacation property in Sonterra for some time, in 2021 the Marin family decided to make San Antonio their official home and establish roots in the States to get away from the unfavorable COVID situation in Mexico. With both girls attending TMI, a desire to have more space, and to be closer to many of their family friends, they relocated to the Dominion in 2023 and



couldn't be happier with their decision. "The girls have friends here who they get to see and go to community events with," Karen says. "And it's quiet and peaceful here, which we all like," Pablo seconds.

Today, the family of four is thriving. Having just graduated from TMI, Carol is excited about life after high school and looks forward to attending Loyola University in Chicago this fall. Nicole has been enjoying her time at TMI as part of the varsity cheer team, and recently celebrated her quinceañera at the Eilan Hotel. Though Pablo's work is demanding and inevitably comes with everyday frustrations, he enjoys connecting the puzzle pieces to find the solutions to daily problems. After discovering an online program, Karen got back in touch with her maternal roots and is now a certified Angel and Metaphysics Therapist. Her work revolves around using a variety of techniques and philosophies regarding energy to help clients find understanding in their present and be better prepared for their future. "It's such a joy to see their faces change during our initial consultation as they gain peace of mind, clarity and insight," Karen says with a smile.

When they're not busy with their work, studies, or extracurriculars, the Marin family enjoys traveling or nestling side by side to delve into their favorite series on Netflix. If you're lucky, you might catch Karen out doing karaoke or spot Pablo on the fairway. While San Antonio and the Dominion may now be the place they call home, their ties to Mexico are still as strong as ever and they frequently make the trip to see friends and family. Karen and Pablo will always prioritize their connection to one another and to their incredible daughters. They cherish their connection to their loved ones, new and old. And they will always take the time to understand and connect to their surroundings, and to this beautiful thing we call life.



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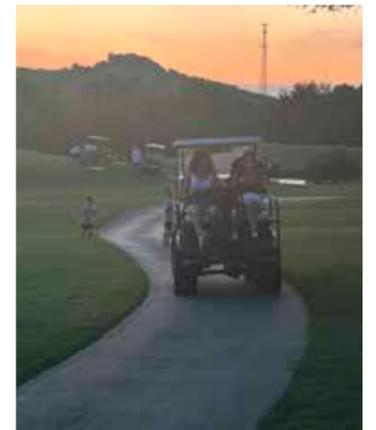




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After Dark in the Park

Our national parks don't sleep when the sun sets. Join us as we explore six national parks that shine brightest after nightfall.

BY SHAUNA OSBORNE, NATIONAL EDITOR

Everglades National Park, FLORIDA Nightfall brings the Everglades to life. Guided moonlight paddles wind through mangrove tunnels, night hikes offer the chance to hear frogs and owls in full chorus, and seasonal airboat rides allow glimpses of alligators by flashlight. **Safety tip:** Wear long sleeves and bug spray to protect against mosquitoes.

Bryce Canyon National Park, UTAH Towering hoodoos glow under moonlight in this International Dark Sky Park, where stargazing is extraordinary thanks to high elevation and remote skies. Bryce offers ranger-led astronomy talks, telescope viewing and full-moon hikes that spotlight its surreal beauty. **Safety tip:** Trails can be steep and shadowy; stick to marked paths and wear a headlamp.

Acadia National Park, MAINE One of the East Coast's top stargazing spots, Acadia hosts seasonal night sky festivals, astrophotography workshops and constellation tours near Jordan Pond and Cadillac Mountain. **Safety tip:** Coastal fog rolls in quickly, so check the forecast and pack accordingly.

Channel Islands National Park, CALIFORNIA Accessible only by boat, this remote park rewards the journey with glowing waters, night snorkeling

near sea caves, and bioluminescent kayaking adventures. Summer months offer the best visibility for moonlit marine magic. **Safety tip:** Check tide schedules and use a guide for water-based activities after dark.

Glacier National Park, MONTANA Catch views of the Milky Way from Logan Pass or St. Mary Lake. As an International Dark Sky Park, Glacier offers guided stargazing programs and summer events highlighting the night sky and native stories. **Safety tip:** Roads like Going-to-the-Sun can be challenging after dusk — drive slowly and watch for wildlife.

Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, HAWAII Watch molten lava glow beneath a starry sky, hike through ancient forests by moonlight, or join a ranger-led walk to hear nocturnal creatures like bats and cave crickets stir. **Safety tip:** Bring sturdy shoes and a red-light flashlight to preserve night vision on rugged trails.

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Behind the smile, a broken heart.
Below the laughter, tears of pain.
The daily maze masks disappointment.
And the sun comes up again.

The strong are lifted, and crumble the weak,
Success is praised, down-trodden no gain,
Despair a ritual, failure is normal,
And the sun comes up again.

The battle of life, so often within,
A losing drive, a lost campaign,
Courage quailed, with the dread of terror,
And the sun comes up again.

The plight a quandary, the puzzle unsolved,
Movement continues, none to explain,
Hopes are dashed, what outcome now,
And the sun comes up again.

Gratitude perhaps, perhaps some light,
A little hope, courage maintain,
Focus on others, not sink in your troth,
And the sun comes up again.



By Jacks Blue, a well-known, well-liked, and talented Dominion Resident who writes under this pseudonym

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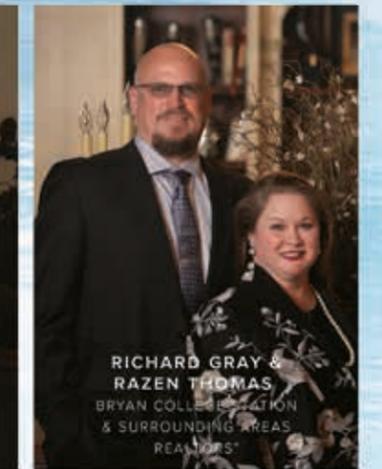
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Platinum Pediatrics

As a parent, nothing is more important than our children's well-being. We monitor their academic progress, their screen time, their sleep schedules, and the food they consume. We limit their sugar intake, check food labels to avoid certain dyes, and make sure they brush their teeth twice a day. However, there are certain aspects of their health that are beyond a parent's control. Illness and injury are our worst fears, as they riddle parents with anxiety and can often lead to unnecessary trips to the emergency room, which comes with a hefty price tag. The good news is, with Platinum Pediatrics, this doesn't have to be the case.

With a physician for a father, Dr. Mark Rodkey recalls visiting hospitals and witnessing first-hand the impact his father had on his patients' lives. Doctors still made house calls, and he remembers many holidays spent helping his father at patients' homes. Throughout high school, Dr. Rodkey volunteered at the hospital and eventually worked as an ophthalmic technician. After completing his undergrad at Gonzaga University, he attended medical school at Wayne State University. He began his residency at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation in Ohio, where he found his calling to help children. "Two shifts into a pediatric emergency medicine rotation during my residency, I knew it was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life," said Dr. Rodkey, "Pediatrics is more about hope and that is inspiring."

After completing a pediatric emergency medicine fellowship at the Children's Hospital Medical Center in Akron, he was appointed as medical director to develop a brand-new pediatric emergency department at the Cleveland Clinic, a department he would run for the following decade. In 2009, he moved to Boerne to help streamline the transition of the Christus Santa Rosa pediatric emergency department into the standalone Children's Hospital of San Antonio.

While living in Boerne, Dr. Rodkey received a call from a friend one day whose daughter was having an asthma attack and went over to help. Seeing that the child's medication had expired, he was able to quickly call in a new prescription, have that medicine delivered to the house, and help avert an emergency room visit. It occurred to him that, had they needed more help, they would have had to travel all the way to downtown San Antonio for emergency care. With a desire to provide his friends and neighbors better access to health care, he designed Platinum Pediatrics.

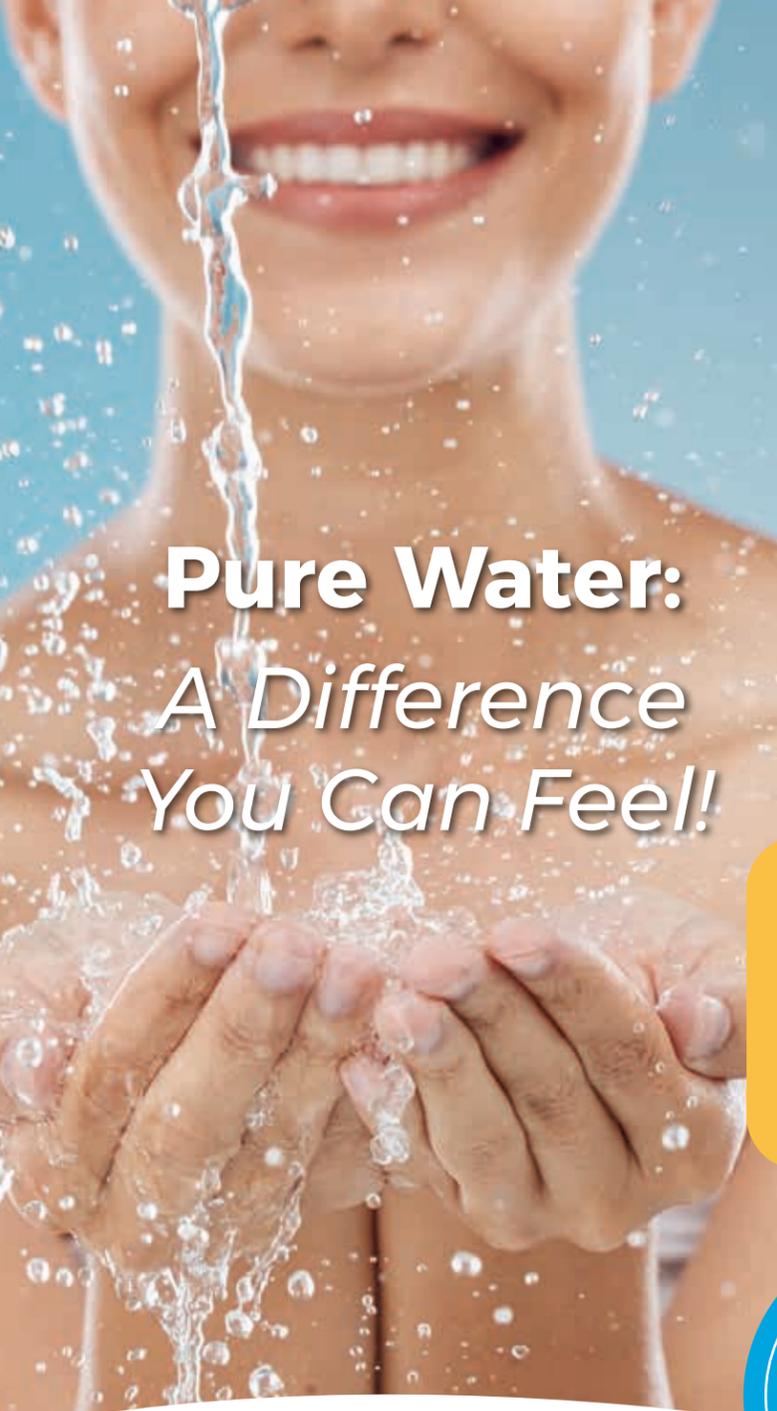
In September of 2022, Platinum Pediatrics enrolled its first patient and has since grown to support over 700 families. Located on South School Street in Boerne, Platinum Pediatrics utilizes a concierge model to health care. By becoming a member, insurance is taken out of the equation, and families have round-the-clock access to the only board-certified emergency physicians and nurses in Boerne. Simply paying a flat monthly rate provides all the standard newborn and wellness check-ups, sick or injury visits, physicals for school, and medication refills, but more importantly, it provides peace of mind in the event of a possible "emergency." "About 90% of children who visit the ER

return home having received nothing more than basic treatment," Dr. Rodkey says, "and the average cost of visiting the ER is a staggering \$5,000 or more. I've been answering medical questions for my friends and family for decades, so why not do that for my community? Everybody knows how hard it is to connect with a doctor when you need to, but at Platinum Pediatrics, all texts and calls go through me."

At a fixed rate of \$150 per month for the entire family, having this kind of access to medical knowledge and experience could potentially save you thousands annually. Plus, anything that's done in the office is included in that amount. Truth be told though, whether it's accidentally swallowing a coin and the fear of blockage or toxicity, or bumping a head and the fear of concussion, most parents would pay any price to have reassurance just a phone call away.

With over 35 years of experience, Dr. Rodkey is happy to have found a way to provide that reassurance to his patients and parents. He provides top-of-the-line care while saving families money along the way. Who could ask for more? For Dr. Rodkey, the best part is knowing that "scared parents don't have to be scared anymore."





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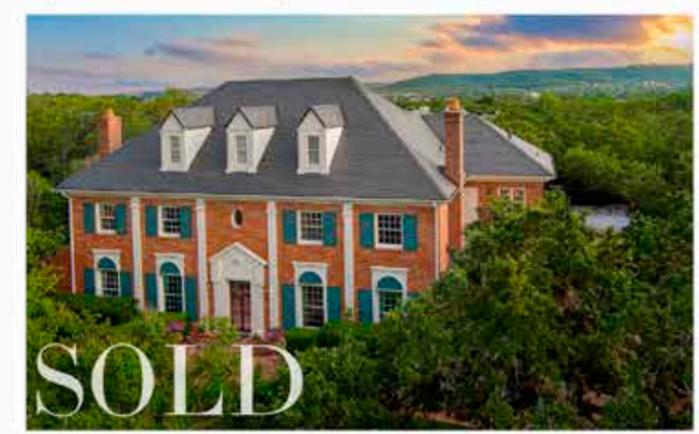
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Dominion Women's Golf Association 9-Hole Scramble

Congratulations Loy Thompson and Diana Jordan!

The 9-hole scramble event hosted by the DWGA (Dominion Women's Golf Association) was an exciting, competitive, and social golf tournament designed to bring golfers of all skill levels together for a day of fun and camaraderie. Typically, scrambles are popular for their relaxed, team-oriented format, where each player on the team hits their own ball, but the team plays the best shot from each player's attempt.

In this event, teams of four players work collaboratively to navigate through 9 holes. At each hole, players choose the best shot among their group's attempts and continue playing from that spot, aiming to complete the hole in the fewest strokes possible. The format encourages teamwork and strategy, as players can take advantage of each other's strengths, whether it's driving, chipping, or putting.

DWGA's 9-hole scramble was unique in that it offers an inclusive, less intimidating environment for women golfers. Participants ranged from beginners to seasoned players, making it a great opportunity for women to network, support one another, and enjoy a round of golf without the pressure of traditional stroke-play competitions.

Overall, the DWGA's 9-hole scramble was a perfect blend of competition and enjoyment, fostering community among women golfers while providing a memorable day on the course.

Congratulations to the big winners Loy Thompson and Diana Jordan!

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The Coolest

CHEF ELAINE PERUSQUIA

When the weather heats up, crisp and cool is the name of the game. Cucumbers are a favorite during hot summer months when the thought of heating up the kitchen with stoves and ovens is a no. Whether in salads, cocktails, sauces, or pickles, the humble cucumber adds refreshing flavor and crunch to any number of dishes. Read on to learn a little more about this favorite summertime fruit.

Native to Asia (more specifically, India and Northern Thailand), the cucumber is, botanically speaking, a berry. Commonly enjoyed as a vegetable, cucumbers are widely cultivated, with China dominating world production at around 70%. The top producer of cucumbers in the United States is Michigan, with Florida, North Carolina, Georgia, and California bringing up the rear. Cucumbers also have a robust presence in backyard gardens. The creeping vine is easy to grow, and fruits mature quickly, making cucumbers popular with the home farmer.

At around 90% water and a good source of vitamins K and C, cucumbers are available in many varieties. Picklers, baby cukes, English or seedless cucumbers, and garden cucumbers are a few that come to mind. My favorites are the thin-skinned English cucumber (traditionally sold wrapped in plastic) and baby cucumbers. Sweet and crunchy, these varieties have a tender skin and fewer seeds. They are perfect for salads, cocktails, crudités, or for slicing and adding to your favorite sandwich.

Need a quick topping for a spicy Thai or Asian dish? Toss thinly sliced baby cucumbers with a splash of white vinegar and pinch each of salt and sugar. Let sit at room temperature for 10-15 minutes and then drain. Use these "quickles" to cool down a spicy dish or add acidity to fish tacos. This month's recipe is Tzatziki, that oh so delicious Greek sauce made with yogurt, shredded cucumber, and

plenty of lemon, dill, and olive oil. I love it on top of grilled meats or just as a dip for warm pita bread.

One of my favorite things is simply adding slices of fresh cucumber to ice water and sipping it all day long. And I never met a mojito that wouldn't benefit from a little muddled cucumber, seeing as cukes pair beautifully with mint. Let me know how you're using those cucumbers of all varieties this summer. Stay cool, and happy cooking, everyone!

Greek Tzatziki

2 5 oz. containers full fat Greek yogurt

3-4 baby cucumbers

Zest and juice of 1 lemon

1 clove garlic, grated

3 tablespoons each chopped fresh dill and flat leaf parsley

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

½ teaspoon honey

generous pinch kosher salt and black pepper

Grate the cucumbers on the large holes of a box grater directly onto a paper towel. Use the paper towel to press out some of the water. There is no need to peel the baby cucumbers. The peel is tender and will add great color to the sauce.

In a medium bowl, combine all ingredients and stir well. Taste and adjust seasoning. Cover and refrigerate for a few hours to allow flavors to develop. Makes about 2 cups. Serve alongside grilled meats or warm pita bread.

*Honey is not a traditional ingredient in tzatziki, but the tiniest amount really balances the acidity of the lemon and yogurt. The sauce should not taste sweet. This is also the time to use really good olive oil!



Chef Elaine Perusquia is the mother of two and a graduate of The Culinary Institute of America. A long-time food enthusiast, she is a private chef, food writer, and culinary expert for the Skillr app for iPhone. Follow her on Instagram at chefelaine. culinarycrossroads to see what's cooking between issues.

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Weighing the Costs of a Top - Tier Education

CINDY SNYDER, VICE PRESIDENT FROST



Helping a child pursue a top-tier education is a meaningful milestone for many families. Whether it's rooted in academic excellence, family legacy or a belief in the power of opportunity, the choice to invest in a university is deeply personal, often rewarding and carries significant financial weight. With the cost of higher education at an all-time high, even well-prepared families are thinking more intentionally about what that investment means — and how to make the most of it.

Whether you're touring college campuses this summer or laying the financial groundwork early, here's some strategic advice to help guide your planning.

1. Understand the full financial picture. Tuition is just one part of the equation — additional expenses such as school fees, books, supplies, room and board and travel can significantly increase the total cost. Participating in Greek life, clubs or extracurricular activities may add thousands more per year.

Cost of living in different areas can also impact your budget more than expected.

2. Evaluate the return on investment.

Elite universities offer access to tight-knit alumni connections, unique programs and recognition that can benefit certain careers. But the value of these advantages often depends on your child's goals. For some families, it's worth comparing experiences across institutions and weighing whether funds might be better directed toward graduate school, launching a business or other long-term priorities.

3. Maximize the power of 529s. State-sponsored 529 plans remain one of the most effective tools to save for college, allowing you to invest, grow and withdraw funds tax free when used for qualified education expenses. In 2025, each parent and other benefactors such as grandparents can contribute up to \$19,000 per year, per child, without triggering gift tax consequences. You can also "superfund" the account by making up to five years' worth of contributions (\$95,000 for an individual or \$190,000 for a couple's contribution) in a single year, increasing the potential for growth over time. If one child doesn't use the full amount, funds can be transferred to another child or converted to a Roth IRA in the beneficiary's name.

4. Explore flexible paths to a degree. Families have more options than ever to personalize the higher education experience. Some students may qualify for merit-based scholarships — even at private institutions. Others may choose to spend one or two years at a local or community college before transferring to their dream school or commute from home if the school is nearby.

Whichever path feels right for your family — and aligns with your financial and personal goals — our trusted wealth advisors at Frost can help you navigate this financial decision with clarity and confidence.

Contact Cindy Snyder at 210.220.6845 or cindy.snyder@frostbank.com to learn more.



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THE UNWRITTEN RULES, PART I

There Are Things That Just Are

BY DAN JOHNSTON, DOMINION RESIDENT

For those of us who in our youth ever hit, threw, caught, or kicked a ball or a puck, or wrestled, or boxed, or competed in any sports activity at all, we learned over time that in addition to the formal rules that provided structure to the competition there were unwritten rules that provided a rich color and a certain character to our competition. It is entertaining to recall some of these unwritten rules, rules that exist in such great numbers as to require their summary over the pages of two of these articles. While many of these rules are recalled from personal experience, they are supplemented by rules presented in articles by the renown Sports Illustrated author Rick Reilly and a team effort by Mark Schofield, James Dator, Adam Ward, Joseph Acosta, and Jared Mueller.



HERE THEN ARE SOME OF THE THINGS IN SPORTS THAT JUST ARE:

- The coach always sits in the first row on the team bus. If he is out sick or dead, the seat remains empty.
- Apologize for a point won in tennis on a net cord.
- Take two or three pitches if your pitcher just made the second out of the inning.
- Never, ever put your finger in someone else's bowling ball.
- The starting goalie is always the first player on the ice.
- If a line judge in tennis makes a bad call in your favor, purposely double-fault the next point.
- A manager never drinks at the same bar as his players.
- Never knock in the tying run in the ninth inning of an exhibition game; far better to lose than go extra innings in spring training.
- No NBA player attempting a layup in the fourth quarter of a tight game should go unfouled.
- If another group arrives to the court you have to move your pickup game to half court.

- In a losing clubhouse you must act as if there has been a death in the family.
- Hand the manager the ball when he comes to the mound to take you out.
- Never shoot the puck into the net after a whistle blows.
- Do not talk to or sit near a pitcher with a no-hitter going. And never bunt to break one up.
- A first base coach never stands in the first base coaching box.
- Stand as far away as possible from a skeet shooter with a perfect score going.
- Never walk on a golfer's putting line, including the two feet on the other side of the cup.
- Always clear the inside lane for faster runners.
- Announce when you are passing someone on a run, something simple like "on the right".
- Never stand behind the pool table pocket your opponent is shooting for.
- A catcher may complain to the umpire all he wants about balls and strikes, as long as he does not turn around and do it face-to-face.



Colonel Dan Johnston was a career Army officer of 25 years service and a combat veteran of the Vietnam War. Following retirement from the service, he taught World History to high school sophomores for 15 years. He and his wife of over 50 years, Pam, are blessed with four children and ten grandchildren.

- Never tackle the quarterback during practice.
- If you are playing quarterback in any capacity (flag football, beach football, whatever) and a receiver drops a pass, you are obligated to do the "tap your chest/that's my bad" gesture.
- Except for Rocky Marciano, the challenger always enters the ring first - and always will.
- Suckers walk.
- The bus may be delayed by superstars only.
- When the coach finally wraps up a long meeting with "Any questions?", nobody better ask one.

This is the first of two articles on the unwritten rules of sports. For many of us, they evoke memories of our golden years and participating in the sports we love. There will be more next month. Have a great Summer. See you at History Club in September, where history is fun.



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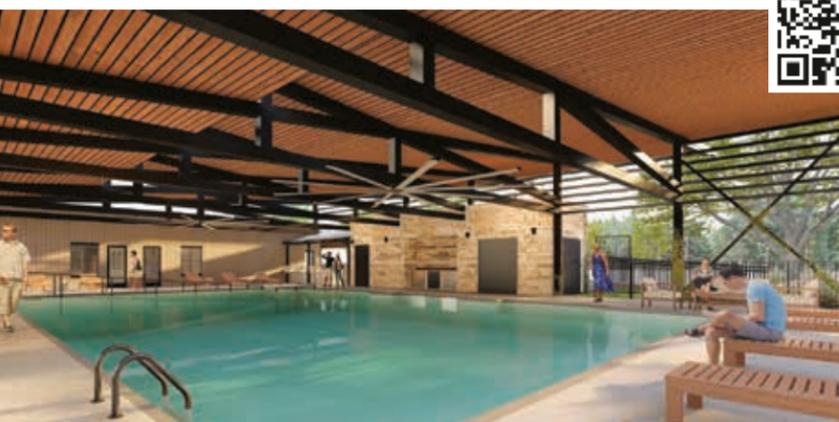
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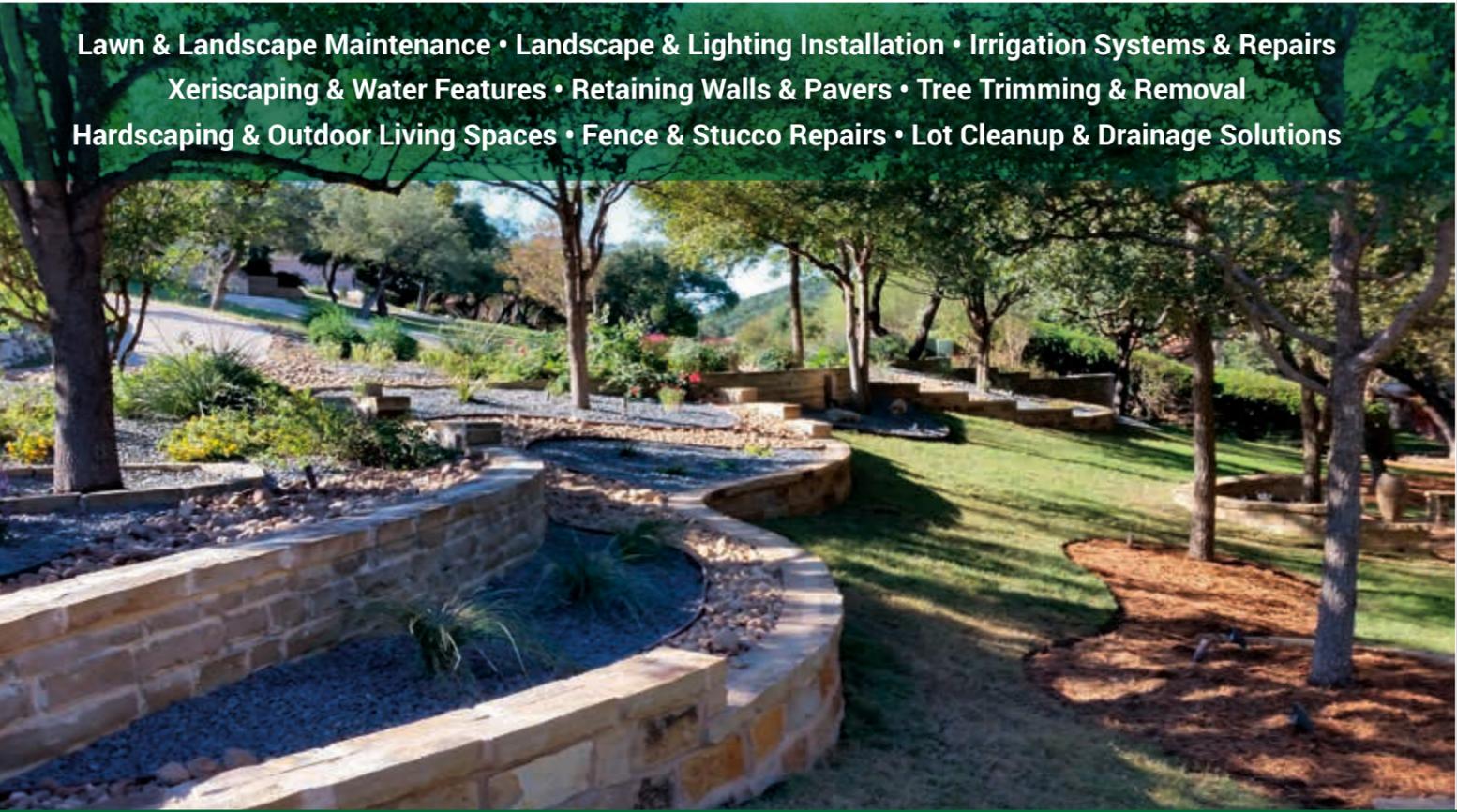
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Joe R. Acuña, Expert Lawn & Landscaping, Inc.



Where did you grow up? How long have you lived in the area?

I was born in San Antonio, and have lived here all my life. I was raised by my grandparents. My grandmother taught me from a young age about planting, weeding, trimming trees and plants, and it stuck.

Tell us about the events that led up to where you are now

I attended St. Mary's University for my Business Administration degree. I worked for a local cable company as a bookkeeper/accountant, then at USAA for 10 years in the Claims Department before starting this business. I began mowing houses with my brother in the evenings and on weekends as a second job, and he left after not too long to do his own thing. I got more and more mowing jobs, and then landscaping jobs, and finally I had so many mowing and landscaping jobs that I didn't have time for USAA anymore, so I left there and started Expert Lawn as a full-time business 32 years ago, on March 24, 1993.

Tell us about your role in your business either as the owner or position within your organization

I do all of the cost and project estimating for the business, as well as staff training and on-site visits to our customers. I am very hands-on and very involved.

Describe a business highlight such as why you started the business and/or what you enjoy most about your role

I have always loved landscaping, and I always had the best garden or yard in the neighborhood because I enjoyed doing the work myself. People would ask me who I got to do the work, and I would tell them that I did it. I still love gardening and landscaping, so it's a hobby as well as my job.

Where do you see the future of your business 3, 5 or 10 years?

We don't want to grow exponentially. We want to do a good job for a few customers, and have them appreciate the work we've done because it will last. We want to continue on this path, and provide great service and a great landscaping job for a few clients, because that speaks for itself. You get great referrals from positive conversations when someone sees the job you've done, and they want to have something great done at their home, too.

What is unique about your business (what sets you apart from the rest)?

As the owner, I am still very much involved in the day-to-day running of the business, even after 32 years. I keep good employees for a long time because they are paid well, and they are extremely knowledgeable about the business. Our employees average anywhere from 10 to 25 years with the company, so they are in it for the long haul, and are part of the day-to-day work. They have helped me to landscape hotels, shopping centers, and homes in many different places, including Twenty-Nine Palms, Palm Springs, and Ridge Crest, California; Houma, Louisiana; Santa Fe, New Mexico; and Texas cities including El Paso, Dallas, Corpus Christi, and Houston. We are familiar with landscaping for many different types of climates, from the desert West and Southwest to the wet lowlands of Louisiana, and the hot, humid, dry (and sometimes icy) conditions that we can have here in South Texas. I choose the right plants for the right place, and make sure that I choose something that will work for the long term. I will not try to sell anyone something that isn't going to make it in a particular environment.

I also visit the job sites myself and oversee the work as it progresses. I meet with the clients directly to discuss the plans they have for their spaces so that I can ask questions and get a feel for what they like and don't like, and incorporate their ideas into the proposals I create. And I don't employ any sales personnel who are just looking to sell plants for maximum commission.

Our word is our bond. If we do something wrong, we will correct it. We want our clients to be happy with the work that we provide them.

Describe your business culture as it relates to how you service your customers

We're not the lowest priced landscaper in town, but we're also not the highest. We want to do a good job, and do it the right way so you only have to do it once. You shouldn't have to do it again; it's something that is a long-term purchase, for your enjoyment, and the enjoyment of your friends and family. Doing a great job with the installation of a new landscaping plan, or changing to something you've always wanted to do gives us as much pride as it does to you as a client, and a bonus is getting referrals from someone after a job well done.

Take us through a customer experience that had a positive impact on your business

My best example would be the work that I do regularly for the Sonterra Country Club. The general manager trusts me enough to give me the landscaping budget there and just says, "You do you." He lets me do what I think will look good for a particular area. Then, when I'm done, he says the work is beautiful. He trusts my decisions and choices completely, and I like that I'm allowed to do something beautiful, without having to come up with a specific plan in advance. Just doing the work and making it look great for someone who knows we'll do a great job and appreciates the work we do is the best reward.

Given your business expertise and the nature of what you do, what advice (whether general or specific) can you offer residents seeking your business services?

With my previous experience at USAA, it definitely taught me that your word is your bond, for everyone from the highest officers down to the NCO's (non-commissioned officers) in that case. We're not a chain, and we're not trying to get hundreds of new jobs. We want to do a good job for you, today, and make it have a lasting, positive impact on you.

We will be honest with you, and we will not try to sell you something that you don't need. We don't need your business; we want your business, and we want to make your landscaping something that you love, that is attractive, and that adds property value appreciation.

What else we should know about you, your family, or your business?

We've won the San Antonio Parade of Homes three times based on the simple submissions for the builders. We didn't think of it as a competition; we just wanted to see beautiful landscapes installed at these beautiful new homes. Winning the Best Landscaping award at each of these events was just a little something extra.



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HEALTHY LIVING

Into the Trees

Forest bathing isn't about hiking or breaking a sweat; it's about slowing down and letting the natural world recalibrate your nervous system.

BY SHAUNA OSBORNE, NATIONAL EDITOR



Stepping into the hush of a sun-dappled forest, surrounded by birdsong and the scent of pine — it sounds like something out of a dream. But forest bathing, or shinrin-yoku, is a research-backed practice helping people slow down, feel better and reconnect with Mother Nature. Originating in Japan in the 1980s as a public health response to rising stress and burnout, forest bathing has gained global appeal as both a healing modality and a mindful ritual.

Backed by science

The benefits go far beyond mood. Dozens of peer-reviewed studies show that time spent in natural environments, especially forested ones, can lower cortisol levels, decrease heart rate and blood pressure, reduce anxiety and even enhance immune function by increasing natural killer cell activity. Researchers credit not just the calming sights and sounds of the forest but also exposure to phytoncides, essential oils released by trees that support immunity and well-being.



The art of presence

Forest bathing offers a low-tech antidote to digital fatigue. There's no need to track steps, chart progress or reach a destination. Instead, find a quiet patch of green and let yourself wander. Run your fingers along rough bark or velvety moss. Listen for the call of birds or the rustle of movement in the underbrush. The goal isn't mileage; it's immersion. Let your senses guide you and your attention settle wherever it naturally lingers.

Why it's catching on

Forest bathing resonates with a modern audience seeking tech-free time, improved mental health and more meaningful ways to unplug. With no special gear required and no goal beyond presence, the practice fits easily into busy lifestyles and a wide range of physical abilities. It's self-care — but quieter, and possibly with dirt under your nails.



A FOREST OF ONE'S OWN

You don't need a forest to practice forest bathing — it can be adapted to a park, garden or even your own backyard.

- Visit a local park or botanical garden (the greener, the better).
- Pause often and breathe deeply.
- Sit under a tree with your eyes closed.
 - Add essential oils like cypress or cedar to your diffuser.
- Bring home a bundle of eucalyptus or pine.
- Stroll barefoot through grass or sand.*

*This practice, called "grounding," involves making direct physical contact with the Earth's surface.

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