

HOMEFRONT

A Fort Hood Herald publication | January 31, 2018



Killeen junior ROTC program P7 | Military spouse makeover P8-9

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On the cover: Sarah Lynch speaks to the women who were nominated for the Military Spouse Makeover at HEB in Copperas Cove on Jan. 17. Retired Lt. Gen. Rick Lynch, her husband, watches. | Photo by Julie A. Ferraro.

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Army brats, from everywhere and nowhere

Where are you from? It's a seemingly simple question. Most people just want to know where you grew up or at least spent most of your childhood.

For Army brats, like me, the inquirer can quickly get more information than they bargained for, however.

I'm always asking follow-up questions such as, "Are you wondering where I was born, where I spent the most years of my childhood, where I liked living the most, or where I graduated high school?"

All of these questions have different answers with different locations for me because I didn't grow up in a place of constancy.

From Germany, to the East Coast, to the Midwest, and now Texas, where I'm from is not a place, but has rather manifested itself into a state of transience.

Army brats are nomads; not by choice, obviously, but by circumstance. Active-duty parents aren't the only ones to PCS — the entire family, by extension, has to pick up their lives and go where Uncle Sam needs them.

While making the question of our origin difficult to answer, this collective feeling between Army brats of being untethered, or without roots, can spur some benefits.

Brats are remarkably resilient and adaptable. Moving schools every year



GUEST COLUMN
Brittany Sodic

or two forces them to cultivate that skill, usually as a defense mechanism from being the perpetual "new kid on the block."

Some schools are filled with other military

brats, where friendships are forged quickly and let go just as fast, as one kid is bound to leave the other behind eventually.

Because of this, brats don't waste time asking other brats where they're from, but rather ask where they moved from. A subtle, but important distinction between the two questions, because they have this shared understanding that where you came from most recently was probably not your permanent home.

In my experience, many brats feel this sense of disassociation from the places that they are stationed, for one reason or another. To claim a place as your own is also to claim all of the negative assumptions that people attach to a certain state or town, which just doesn't feel fair when you're a kid not moving there of your own volition.

Because of this hole in part of what makes up a person's identity, brats cling to the commonalities that they all share, because if you didn't grow



HERALD FILE PHOTO

Summer is a peak season for military personnel to move to new assignments in and outside the U.S. Many military families move multiple times during their children's lives.

up in a military household, it's hard to understand the unique challenges of it — including all of the moves.

So as a result, brats, and the families to which they belong, have the unique ability to stay a part of a community no matter where they may find themselves. The locations may change, but the type of people and connections made throughout the military community give brats and their families a little sense of

being home.

When other people ask me where I'm from, I like to joke that I'm from nowhere and everywhere at the same time. To some, this may seem confusing. It's that feeling of not being able to claim one particular spot as my home, but rather, the entire world. But I know a brat would get it.

BRITTANY SODIC is an editorial assistant at the Killeen Daily Herald. Follow her on Twitter at @KDHBrittany.

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Things to Know Before Renting Out Your Home

BY MEGAN RENART

USAA

Thinking of sticking a “For Rent” sign in your front yard?

Many homeowners choose to rent out their homes for different reasons: Some are trying to sell but aren’t having much luck, and some want to move but keep their old place as a means of receiving income. Whatever your reasons, the effort and expense of renting out your home go beyond the minimal makeover of a few coats of paint, fresh caulk in the shower and new drapes. You’re about to undertake a huge responsibility by becoming a landlord, and you’ll need to do more than just a little physical labor — you’ll need to know the ins and outs of the law!

RENTING OUT YOUR HOME

One of the immediate benefits is a psychological one: The relief of having a solution if your house isn’t selling. This is especially helpful if your family needs to relocate fast and you don’t want to get caught paying two mortgages at once. That said, there are lots of other benefits to renting out your home:

- Possible increased cash flow: If rental payments exceed expenses for

that house.

- Appreciation: You could reap the benefits of housing appreciation while the monthly rent covers mortgage payments.

- Flexibility: You can wait for the market to recover and possibly not lose any money you’ve invested into the property.

But there are also risks—and the more informed you are, the better prepared you may be for any curveballs down the road. Some risks to renting out your home include:

- Maintenance and repair expenses: When something breaks, you have to fix it, unless you make arrangements with a property management company or repair company who will handle issues. So, ask yourself: Do you know how to fix a broken air conditioner or a burst pipe? If not, can you find and pay reliable professionals who can? “Many landlords choose to transfer the responsibility of the maintenance and time commitments to a professional property management company. That does add to the expense column of your budget and may be as much as 10% or so of the monthly rental payment, so adjust your asking price for monthly rent accordingly,” says Rich Lunsford, advice director at USAA.

- Time commitment: As a landlord, you’re expected to be available 24/7 to handle any and all issues related to the property or tenants. This means 4 a.m. wake-up calls to address anything from plumbing issues to weather disasters to break-ins. It also means having holidays and vacations interrupted. Are you willing to make that sacrifice? It won’t just affect you—if you have a family, their time takes a hit, too.

- Expenses: Resources related to marketing the property, screening tenants and enforcing the terms of the lease can add up quickly. “You may find that simple screening and marketing of the property may eat up 25% of your first month’s rent and enforcing the terms of the lease can add up not only in time, but cost of repairs,” Lunsford says.

- Liability: You’re responsible for any and all liabilities related to the property.

So, if all that doesn’t make you want to run for the hills, and you feel confident in facing the risks associated with being a landlord, it’s time to get started. Here are a few suggestions to help you have a successful experience.

Learn and abide by federal, state and local housing laws. These laws

are designed to protect both you, as a landlord, and your tenants. Understanding them fully will work in your favor.

Consult with a certified public accountant and look up all the relevant tax codes related to investment properties. Research federal, state and local housing laws — this way, you can provide a safe property for your tenants while protecting yourself from possible litigation. “Typical suits involve the landlord refusing to repair the property adequately or at all. Compliance with building codes and safety issues are of chief concern in most litigation cases,” Lunsford says.

Always sign a lease or an amendment: Avoid “shaking on it” or any verbal deals, because you won’t be able to enforce them. You must have paperwork in place to prove the terms of your rental agreement. “I’ve heard it said that good fences make good neighbors. I’m not sure about that, but in my experience clear, lease agreements make good renter/landlord business relationships and avoid much of the legal troubles down the road,” Lunsford says.

Be prepared to make timely repairs on the property, or you could face lawsuits from your tenants.

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How to do estate planning: Talking with mom and dad

BY ANGELA EPLEY
USAA

Reconnecting with family over the holidays, especially if you live many miles away, is both beautiful and bittersweet. Some things stay the same, like getting to taste a beloved recipe handed down through the generations; but some things definitely change, like noticing that your parents' hair has gotten a bit grayer since the last time you saw them.

Navigating the transition to an adult child can be challenging, but is ultimately an act of love — which is why it's time to talk to Mom and Dad about the legacy they want to leave and how to do estate planning. "There may never be a good time to talk about estate planning, so now is as good as ever," says certified financial planner professional and USAA advice director Robert Steen.

Estate planning consists of all the tasks and paperwork needed to prepare for a person's eventual, or unexpected, passing. On its face, this may appear to be a morbid undertaking — but it's actually quite the opposite: Estate planning is an act of true love.

By removing doubt, confusion and uncertainty from a situation that will already be fraught with grief, you give surviving loved ones the gift of not needing to bear the burden of dealing with piles of paperwork or potential legal expenses. Even better, major disagreements among family members can be mitigated.

Many finance and legal experts have seen their share of family feuds flare up in the absence of estate planning. Whether you or your parents feel like you're doing each other a kindness by avoiding this discussion, it's critical for all involved to realize how silence on this topic does every-

one a disservice.

Sometimes it will take multiple tries to facilitate the conversation. Try these tips to approach parents about their estate planning thoughts from a place of kindness, care and consideration.

ETIQUETTE AND EMPATHY

As you choose your words when talking to your aging parents about sensitive topics like their financial situation, a potential inheritance or major debt, evolving health care needs and other subjects that have to do with aging, remember these three: respect, consideration and honesty. Politeness goes a long way, but by deploying empathy, you're in a better frame of mind to really listen and receive what your parents may have to say on a particular matter. Put yourself in their shoes: It's challenging to think of end-of-life details, especially if there are multiple children in the picture whom they want to treat fairly.

By putting their feelings, needs and concerns before your own, you can assure your parents that you're coming from a place of love — this may help them feel more open to discussing these details.

BE SPECIFIC

Speaking of details, it's important to be specific when discussing estate planning with Mom and Dad. The whole point of talking through which assets go to whom, or who will make medical or financial decisions in the event of disability, is to eliminate any confusion, so this isn't the time to be vague.

"It's important to have a document that lists all assets, liabilities, key documents, where they are held and who has access to them in the event of disability or death," Steen says.

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3 reasons to claim Social Security early

BY MAURIE BACKMAN

USAA

Look around the internet and you'll come across countless articles urging you not to file for Social Security ahead of schedule. Heck, I've written several myself. But as is the case with many financial matters, there are always exceptions to the rule. In fact, in just a minute, I'll review some scenarios where claiming benefits early absolutely makes sense.

But first, what does claiming early even mean? To understand what on earth I'm talking about, you'll need a quick review of how Social Security works.

Your Social Security benefits are calculated based on your top 35 years of earnings. Once your monthly benefit amount is established, you'll be eligible to collect it in full upon reaching full retirement age (FRA), which, for anyone born in 1943 or later, is 66, 67, or somewhere in between.

That said, you don't have to file for benefits at FRA—you actually get an eight-year window to claim them starting at age 62 and ending at age 70 (well, technically you don't have to file at 70, but there's no financial incentive to wait longer than that). Now if you hold off the maximum amount of time, you'll end up boosting your benefits substantially. But if you file early—meaning prior to FRA—you'll lose a portion of your benefits for each year you claim them ahead of schedule.

How much money are we talking about? Say your FRA is 67 and your monthly benefit amount is \$1,600. If you file at age 62, you'll lower each payment to \$1,120. And if you're counting on those benefits to pay the bills in retirement, that sort of reduction can really hurt.

That said, claiming benefits early isn't always a bad idea. Here are three reasons to snag them as soon

as you possibly can.

YOU'RE OUT OF WORK

It's an unfortunate statistic that 60% of Americans end up retiring earlier than planned, and the reasons run the gamut from getting laid off to falling ill. It's an equally unfortunate statistic that the median savings balance among U.S. households nearing retirement is a rather sad \$17,000.

If you're in a situation where you're out of work and don't have enough income to pay your bills, then filing for Social Security is pretty much a no-brainer, even if you're doing so several years before reaching FRA. Though you will face the reduction in payments we talked about, it's a far better move than racking up debilitating credit-card debt to cover your expenses.

YOUR HEALTH IS POOR

Here's a little-known fact about Social Security: The program is actually designed to pay you roughly the same amount in lifetime benefits regardless of when you first file. That's because while filing early will slash your payments, you'll also get more of them. On the flip side, holding off on benefits past FRA will cause them to increase, but you'll collect fewer payments. This formula, however, operates on one key assumption—that you live an average life expectancy. If you pass away sooner, you could end up losing out on lifetime benefits by not claiming them as early as possible.

So let's go back to the above example: Your FRA is 67 and your full monthly benefit amount is \$1,600. If you end up living until about 78 1/2, you'll collect roughly the same lifetime payout regardless of whether you file at FRA versus age 62. But if you end up passing away at 73, you'll end up with over \$32,000 less if you don't take benefits as early as possible.

Though it's never comfortable to think about our own mortality, the fact of the matter is that you stand to lose out on benefits by not facing reality. If your health is in bad shape, and your life expectancy is lower than average, then it pays to claim Social Security as early as you can.

YOU WANT TO START YOUR OWN BUSINESS

Many of us are quick to associate retirement with not working. But actually, a growing number of seniors are using it as an opportunity to venture out on their own. The Kauffman Index of Entrepreneurship reports that 55- to 64-year-olds composed 24% of new entrepreneurs in 2016. And seniors 65 and older are more likely to be self-employed than any other age group, according to the

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. If filing for Social Security early allows you to kick off a moneymaking opportunity, then it pays to access those benefits when you want them, especially if you're having trouble securing an affordable business loan.

Now in this particular scenario, you'll want to come in with not only with a solid business plan but a reasonably healthy level of savings. But assuming that's the case, if your venture does well enough, the profits you reap might more than make up for the reduction you face in benefits.

Of course, none of this should be construed as an invitation to file for Social Security before FRA without considering the consequences. But if you fall into one of the above categories, I certainly wouldn't yell at you for claiming benefits early.

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Killeen High Junior ROTC wins big at drill competition

BY TODD MARTIN
SPECIAL TO THE HERALD

KILLEEN — Killeen High School's Junior ROTC competition team won the largest invitational drill meet in Texas for the second year in a row.

Retired Lt. Col. Richard Crossley, director of Army instruction in Fort Worth Independent School District, made the trip to Killeen on Jan. 17 to personally deliver the Cowtown Classic Invitational Drill Meet championship trophy.

With KHS cadets standing around him in the battalion's air rifle range, Crossley put the victory in perspective and issued a challenge.

In the 21-year history of the Fort Worth drill event — the largest in Texas — only two schools have won back-to-back championships and no team has ever won three straight.

When he asked the cadets if they were interested in that challenge, they gave a loud vocal affirmative.

"You are our future leaders. We know you are going places," said KHS Principal Susan Buckley, who received from Crossley a coin indicating her support for the suc-



TODD MARTIN | KISD

For the second year in a row, the Killeen High School Junior ROTC competition team won the largest drill event in Texas, the Cowtown Classic Invitational Drill Meet, held in Fort Worth in November. During a ceremony Jan. 17, the KHS team received their championship trophy and numerous individual event trophies and medals.

cessful JROTC unit.

Junior ROTC cadets, especially those who rise to leadership roles, are leaders throughout the school, Buckley said. "You are shining stars of Killeen High School."

The Cowtown Classic, which attracted 43 high school units, tests a variety of skills, including armed and unarmed drill, marksmanship, color guard presentation, physical training and academic skills.

Retired Lt. Col. John

Stanley, KHS JROTC senior instructor, said the scoring spreadsheet tells the tale of how the local battalion won its second championship.

They entered teams in every event and scored points consistently. One team in particular, the armed drill team, impressed Stanley. They are a relatively new team, but worked hard and won their event.

"All the students come together and work hard," the senior instructor said. "The

spreadsheet shows every team was consistent. That leads to championships."

Student battalion commander Daniel Calderon Perez, a senior, said he was proud of his peers for earning the coveted championship trophy.

"We're leaving something special behind," he said, explaining that the younger students would work toward a historic "three-peat."

"We're so proud of being back-to-back champions," he

said. "We were able to beat these guys again. We practice every day and at competition we get to show off how we're doing."

Student adjunct officer Jaren Queja is a junior looking to help lead the KHS team in its attempt next fall to win Cowtown three years in a row.

"We've won twice and we have so much determination to win another one," Queja said. "This motivates all of our special teams. This was a good competition. We achieve so much together."

The Fort Worth event took place in November. The unit's formal inspection and then final exams put off the championship trophy ceremony. The achievement was worth celebrating, even months later.

Stanley used to take his rifle team to the event because it was one of the few marksmanship contests in the state. In 2009, he started taking a full team.

"I never thought we would win it," he said.

Now, they've done it twice.

"We lost a lot of seniors and so we trained a new group," Queja said. "It's pretty astonishing we could do so well with a new group of leaders."

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JULIE A. FERRARO | HERALD

Military spouses dip strawberries and pretzels into chocolate as part of the Military Spouse Makeover at HEB in Copperas Cove on Jan. 17.

Military spouses enjoy day of pampering

BY JULIE A. FERRARO
FORT HOOD HERALD

“We are in the presence of American heroes.”

Those words, spoken by retired Lt. Gen. Rick Lynch on Jan. 17, meant a lot to the women who heard them.

Lynch and his wife, Sarah, spoke at the beginning of the annual Military Spouse Makeover, held at the H-E-B in Copperas Cove.

The event is sponsored by the Fort Hood USO, H-E-B and KCEN TV.

During his military career, Lynch and his family moved 27 times. “We know what you’re going through,” he told the military spouses.

That was one of the reasons Lynch became involved in Operation Appreciation with H-E-B.

As for the USO, the organization partnered with H-E-B for the makeover as a sort of pilot program, according to Isabel Hubbard, center

director for the Fort Hood USO.

To date, H-E-B and USO Fort Hood have hosted a total of 7 Military Spouse Makeover events. More than 150 military spouses have been celebrated through these events.

“Anywhere there’s a USO and an H-E-B, we’d like to do this,” Hubbard said. “We wish we could do it for more.”

The spouses were nominated by husbands, friends and relatives for the makeover. Each one received a call to let her know she’d been chosen.

Meriah Wail admitted, “My friends and I all nominated each other. My husband nominated me, too.”

While her friends weren’t selected, Wail was surprised when she got the call. “I’m excited. H-E-B always does an amazing job on everything.”

Wail enjoyed the opportunity to

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PLEASE SEE SPOUSES, 9

SPOUSES: Women enjoy breakfast, assorted goodies

FROM PAGE 8

have a day for herself, especially with the daily task of taking care of four children, ages 3, 8, 13 and 18.

For Alison Latimer, this was her “first rodeo.” The family arrived at Fort Hood in June, including children aged 11, 12 and 22. “I wish I would’ve known about the USO earlier in my husband’s military career,” she said. “The organization really unites the families.”

Jeannette Todd’s call came as a total surprise. She’d been nominated by her wife, who just got back from deployment. “I was told to just come on out.”

The women enjoyed a light breakfast, then broke

into teams to visit the different stations. At the floral station, they learned how to arrange flowers in a vase. The bakery had set up an assortment of goodies which the spouses could dip into melted chocolate. They received the “full treatment” of hairstyle, make-up and manicure, as well.

Before they departed, each was given a gift basket of personal care items, and a reusable shopping bag filled with a variety of gifts.

More than anything, they took home Lynch’s words, “I always tell people, don’t thank the soldiers, thank the spouses.”

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JULIE A. FERRARO | HERALD

Military spouses learned floral arranging as part of the Military Spouse Makeover at the HEB in Copperas Cove on Jan. 17.

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[WHAT'S HAPPENING IN FORT HOOD AREA]

Local Music

Dirty Harry's presents live music at 9 p.m. on Wednesdays. For ages 21 and older, no cover. Dirty Harry's is at 206 W. Veterans Memorial Blvd., Harker Heights (next to King Pin Tattoos). Call 254-680-6557.

Chupacabra Craft Beer and Salado Lonestar Winery: Every Thursday is Pint Night, with free pint glasses. Chupacabra is located at 401 S. Main St., Suite 105 in Salado.

Stillhouse Wine Room has live music from 8 p.m. to midnight every Friday and Saturday. Cover: \$5. Sunday Champagne Brunch is from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Cost: \$19.95 in advance, \$23.95 at the door. Walk-ins seated based on availability. Purchase tickets through the Facebook page, www.StillhouseWineRoom.com or at the Wine Room. Thursday Night Trivia is at 7:30 p.m. with a relaxed version of the game. Topics include music, movies, sports, geography, animals and more. Every 10 questions someone wins a bottle of wine. Stillhouse Wine Room is at 403 E. Stan Schlueter Loop, Suite 308, Killen. Go to StillhouseWineRoom.com.

Farmers Markets

All-Year Pioneer Farmers Market will be open in front of Tractor Supply Company on Central Texas Expressway in Killen from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. every Saturday, weather permitting. Call Heike at 254-458-8223 or go to www.facebook.com/pioneerfarmersmarket.

Arts & Theater

Thom the World Poet will host the 24th annual Central Texas Poetry and Prose Reading Festival from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Feb. 1. Tablerock Amphitheater is at 409 Royal St. in Salado. The indoor stage is located in the building behind the amphitheater.

The Mayborn Museum Complex presents the "Of Texas Rivers & Texas Art" exhibit through March 25. This exhibit uses contemporary representational art as a vehicle to pique visitors' curiosity about the state's water resources, while creating meaningful opportunities to learn about how Texas rivers directly impact residents' daily lives, industrial activity, the



economy, recreation and wellness, and agriculture. "Find a Way, Not an Excuse: Women in STEM" is showing through March 25. The exhibit presents the lives of 19 women and their contributions to the science, technology, engineering and math fields, including five from Baylor University. The exhibit focuses on pioneering innovations in STEM with the hope of inspiring a fierce desire to learn continuously and encourage curiosity to lead to discovery. The museum offers free admission from 1 to 5 p.m. the first Sunday of each month. The museum is at 1300 S. University Parks Drive in Waco. For information, call 254-710-1104.

The Lampasas County Museum is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, and admission is free. The museum is at 303 S. Western Ave., Lampasas. For information, call 512-556-2224.

Dancing

Bo's Barn Dancehall at 4984 W. Farm-to-Market 93 in Temple offers free dance lessons every first Thursday of the month from 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Bars, Clubs

Main Street Tejano Club, 201 S. Main St., Temple, has a DJ/live music from 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. Fridays and Saturdays.

Pan American Club, 575 Pan American Drive, Harker Heights, features Tejano, Norteno and Cumbia music. Call 254-690-2882.

Family Fun

The Bell County Museum is open to the

public from noon to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday; and from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday. Call 254-933-5243 or go to www.bellcountymuseum.org.

Temple's Railroad and Heritage Museum's exhibit "Russell Lee Photographs" is on display starting Jan. 27. The museum, at 315 W. Avenue B, in downtown Temple, is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Go to www.templerhm.org or call 254-298-5172.

Free guided tours of the Lampasas County

Courthouse are offered each Saturday. Tours start at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., except for major holiday weekends. Tour attendees will see the water level mark of the 1957 Mother's Day flood, as well as the stately second floor courtroom and clock tower works on the third floor. The courthouse is on the downtown square, 501 E. Fourth St. Take the Loop 257 exit off U.S. Highway 190. Contact Linda Moore-Lanning at 512-564-5122 or Jim Rutland at 512-556-5302, during regular business hours.

Clubs, Meetings

The Copperas Cove Bass Club meetings are held at the Lil Tex Restaurant in Copperas Cove on the first and third Tuesdays of each month at 7 p.m. Call 254-661-9274.

The Mystery Book Club meets every first Tuesday of the month at 1:30 p.m. at Barnes & Noble in Harker Heights. The club is free and open to all mystery lovers. Contact Marcene at 830-357-8314 for more information.

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DAILY HERALD

Better than ever!

Making resolutions to be better parents

BY MIEKE VANDERBORGH
FAMILY ADVOCACY PROGRAM

Welcome to the new year. Right about now is when many people take stock of where they are in their lives and compare that to where they'd like to be. Resolutions for a better you abound as we think about what we can improve upon.

Parents are no different. Anyone out there thinking about how they can be better parents? Good for you! This is a great time to examine your parenting habits and think about whether there's anything you'd like to change. Don't forget to talk about it with your children — in an age appropriate way of course — so they're in on the game and are aware of any changing rules or family dynamics.

As you keep goals to be better parents in mind, however, consider another kind of parenting resolution: To be as forgiving with yourselves as you'd like to be with your children.

We all know you're the perfect parent: Every meal is nutritionally-balanced and home cooked (even baby never eats food from a jar), you custom sew Halloween costumes, you've never lost patience or raised your voice and your children are always lovely little angels that get top-notch grades, always listen and have never failed or been disappointed, right? No? Well join the club!

Now that we're in touch with reality, let's consider the distinction between the perfect parent and the "good enough" parent, first introduced by psychoanalyst and pediatrician, Donald Winnicott. The perfect parent never falters and is the shining ideal we'd all like to be. But life gets in the way.

We're sleep deprived, children whine, stressors get us down, children will inevitably make mistakes and dinner needs to somehow magically appear on the table. That's when the good enough parent steps in. Don't reach your ideals all the time?



COURTESY PHOTO

The new year is an excellent time for parents to re-examine their skills and see what they can do to be better for their children.

That's okay; in fact, it may even be better for your children.

By recognizing that we aren't perfect ourselves, it's easier to understand that our children aren't perfect either. They are flawed human beings, just like we are. We love and accept them both despite of, and because of, their flaws. When we're not hovering over our children, doing everything perfectly and at the ready to fix every problem, we give them the space they need to learn for themselves. Children need to step up, develop a sense of personal responsibility, take risks, make mistakes and learn from them.

Let's be clear: This is not an argument for mediocre parenting. Rather, it's a reminder that, though we should always aim for being the best parents we can be, sometimes that best isn't perfect. Sometimes we're tired or stressed out or distracted, or we just don't know how to handle a situation and muddle our way through it. Don't beat yourselves up about those moments: We're parents, not superheroes.

If you're keeping your children safe and the majority of the time they are surrounded with love, compassion, good guidance, loving discipline and a good dose of age-appropriate stimu-

lation for learning and growth, rest assured you're doing good enough. So by all means, think about how your parenting can better match your children's needs and make changes if

necessary. But also give yourselves a pat on the back for surviving through the toughest job there is.

Strive for perfection, but be ready and willing to accept good enough.

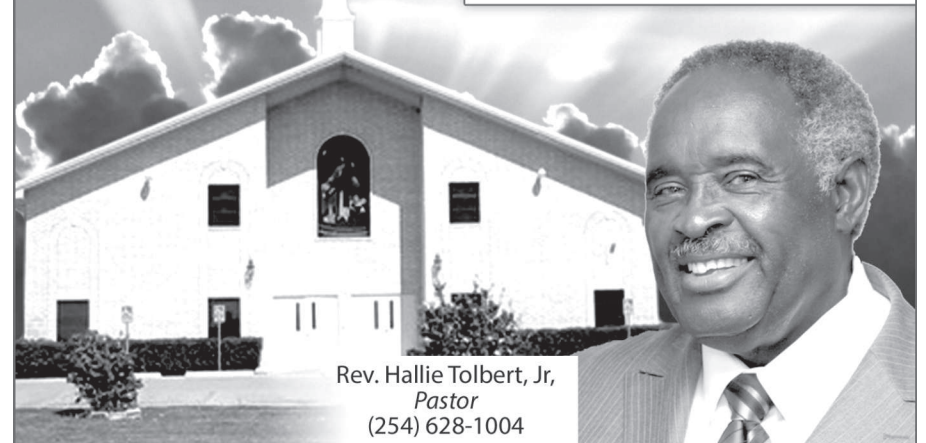
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'12 Strong' review: Solid, enjoyable war movie

BY RAFER GUZMÁN
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Nicolai Fuglsig's "12 Strong," about the dozen men who became the first U.S. Army soldiers to enter Taliban-controlled Afghanistan after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, is a fairly straightforward and enjoyable movie about an extremely complicated and demoralizing war. Its goal is to focus on a small group of heroes, and it shows little interest in the bigger picture.

Produced by Jerry Bruckheimer ("Armageddon" and many other blockbusters), "12 Strong" chooses a familiar formula and sticks with it. Our real-life protagonist, Capt. Mitch Nelson, now looks like a movie star (Chris Hemsworth, likable and inoffensive), and his Special Forces crew includes a range of familiar types, from the jovial Sam Diller (Michael Peña) to the hard-nosed Hal Spencer (a dependably fierce Michael Shannon). When the planes hit the Twin Towers, these men say goodbye to their families and hop a military transport to a far-flung country that had suddenly become synonymous with international terror.

On the ground, Nelson and his men will learn about Islamic fanaticism, suicide bombers, fractious tribes

— all the tropes that would eventually become familiar to the news-reading public. Their greatest teacher is Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum (Navid Negahban), a battle-weary but unbowed warlord who becomes another trope: the native warrior who will help the Westerner find his primal self. Dostum also, however, admits he is a necessarily fickle ally and warns Nelson that Afghanistan is the "graveyard of empires." His future political career would be tainted by accusations of killing civilians and prisoners, but the film does not mention this.

"12 Strong" has little time for such details, because it is first and foremost an action film. Debut director Fuglsig handles the battle scenes confidently, with a mix of Hollywood hokum — our heroes have amazingly good aim — and the unusual sight of American soldiers charging at tanks on horseback. (The film is based on Doug Stanton's book "Horse Soldiers.") If anything, that visual and symbolic aspect of the story could have been played up much further.

In the end, it's hard to grouse about a movie that mainly wants to salute a dozen men who served their country. It's also hard to shake the feeling, though, that there's a lot more left to say.



DAVID JAMES/WARNER BROS. ENTERTAINMENT VIA AP

This image released by Warner Bros. Entertainment shows Chris Hemsworth, center, in a scene from "12 Strong."

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Tight pace helps powerful 'Insult'

BY KATIE WALSH
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

In Ziad Doueiri's searing "The Insult," a small slight spirals wildly out of control. It seems unreal that such a minor event can spark such a firestorm, but using the incident as a powerful symbol, Doueiri reveals the tinder box of trauma that is Lebanon nearly 30 years after its Civil War. Drenched with a gasoline of machismo, stubbornness and pride, it's no wonder everything goes up in flames.

Nominated for the Best Foreign Language film Academy Award, this tightly paced film showcases two powerhouse dramatic performances from Lebanese comedian Adel Karam and Palestinian theater actor Kamel El Basha, who won the Best Actor Prize at the Venice Film Festival for this role.

Karam plays Tony, a Lebanese Christian, an auto mechanic with his own garage and a baby on the way with his young wife. One day, he encounters Yasser, a Palestinian engineer supervising a work crew repairing city code violations on his street. The two men tussle over the illegal open drain pipe on Tony's balcony. Ugly epithets are thrown and a feud is underway.

Part of what fuels the indignity of the insult is both men's pride and their refusal to back down from their positions, or even apologize. But when Tony shouts at Yasser he wished Ariel Sharon had wiped all Palestinians out, it becomes clear this isn't just about posturing, but about prejudice, and things turn violent.

Tony ultimately sues Yasser, and "The Insult" evolves into a riveting courtroom drama, with Yasser represented by a young hotshot female lawyer, Nadine (Diamand Bou Abboud), while Tony's case is taken on by a legendary lawyer of the old guard in Lebanon, Wajdi Wehbe (Camille Salameh), who seems to have ulterior nationalist political motives. The two lawyers are well-matched, and lock



COHEN MEDIA GROUP VIA AP

This image released by Cohen Media Group shows Rita Hayek, left, and Adel Karam in a scene from "The Insult."

horns, reaching deep into history for context to argue for their client's justice.

The case, as it spreads into the media, takes on symbolic weight, as Palestinians and Lebanese Christians riot in the streets, exposing the fragility of the truce between the two groups. It becomes a treatise not just on words or respect, but on the nature of the Middle East, and the deep-rooted traumas sown by war and unrest.

The script, written by Doueiri and Joelle Touma, is a masterful example of withholding and revealing information, and of nuanced character development. Both Yasser and Tony are shown to be good men. Flawed, yes, but inherently noble. We follow what happens in their lives as the trial unfolds, moments of war and peace in the street as the battle unfolds meticulously in the courtroom.

Doueiri and Touma carefully parcel out bits of information that drop like bombs, for the impact they have on the story. Slowly, they peel the bandage off the wound of the war, expose the unspoken traumas to the air; to let them breathe and heal. It's ugly, and painful, but so necessary.

"The Insult" isn't a subtle film, but it's a powerful and impeccably crafted tale arguing for the crucial importance of addressing history and facing down trauma that welds hair triggers onto our souls. Doueiri weaves a starkly intimate fable of violence that's at once deeply personal and universally, globally relevant.

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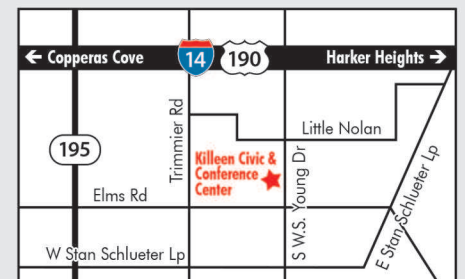


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Sesame on the ziti, and we couldn't be happier

BONNIE S. BENWICK
THE WASHINGTON POST

There's something to be learned from even the simplest recipes, and this bowl proves the point.

Radicchio's bitter edge mellows once this vivid chicory spends seconds in a hot pan. That same pan, graced with a little olive oil, can then immediately coax firm grape tomatoes into almost-bursting beauties. Ziti tends to get baked into cheesy casseroles, and therefore I don't use it much. But a good dried brand of the pasta yields tender noodles seemingly made for spearing with a fork - especially when a small pillow of mozza-

rella comes along.

Toss those with more olive oil, the crunch of slender chives and a helping of nutty sesame seeds - the kind you can buy already roasted, on the Asian ingredients aisle - and the dish is done. I have to say, the sesame seeds bring the components together in an unexpected way.

While it's warm and filling and cheerful to behold, it can serve as a terrific pasta salad for lunch the next day.

Mozzarella and Radicchio Ziti

2 to 3 servings

Serve with pan-roasted broccolini. If the mini mozzarella balls you find

are on the large side, just cut them into quarters before using.

Adapted from "Supper Love: Comfort Bowls for Quick and Nourishing Suppers," by David Bez (Quadrille, 2017).

Kosher salt

5 ounces dried ziti

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

1/2 medium head or 1 small head radicchio

Freshly ground black pepper

Handful grape tomatoes

Mini mozzarella balls (bocconcini)

from one 8-ounce container

1 to 2 tablespoons roasted/toasted

sesame seeds

Fresh chives, for garnish

Bring a pot of water to a boil over medium-high heat. Add a couple of generous pinches of salt, then the pasta. Cook according to the package directions (al dente).

Meanwhile, heat a tablespoon of the oil in a large nonstick skillet or saute

pan over medium heat. Cut out/discard the core of the radicchio, then cut the rest into bite-size chunks. Once the oil shimmers, add the radicchio and cook, undisturbed, for about 45 seconds, then season lightly with pepper. Transfer to a plate.

Return the skillet to medium heat; add the tomatoes and cook for 5 minutes, or until well heated through. Season lightly with salt and pepper. Return the radicchio to the pan, along with the mozzarella, and turn off the heat.

Drain the pasta well, then add to the pan along with the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil. Add the sesame seeds (to taste), toss gently to distribute evenly. Divide between wide, shallow bowls.

Cut the chives into 1-inch lengths, using them to garnish each portion. Finish with an extra grind of pepper.

NUTRITION PER SERVING (based on 3): 510 calories, 21 g protein, 39 g carbohydrates, 29 g fat, 10 g saturated fat, 55 mg cholesterol, 230 mg sodium, 3 g dietary fiber, 3 g sugar



Mozzarella and radicchio ziti.

DEB LINDSEY | THE WASHINGTON POST

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DAILY HERALD
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The chicken sandwich that has it all

BONNIE S. BENWICK
THE WASHINGTON POST

If you had any doubt that an open-face sandwich is suitable and filling enough for dinner, this one is bound to convince you. Besides the crisped bacon and quick-cooking chicken cutlets, you've got a hidden protein in the mash of chickpeas that is added to the avocado spread. It is creamy and crunchy and tomato-juicy, all in one bite, especially when you toast those thick slices of bread.

And as meaty as this sandwich is, at least one prominent Washington Post Food vegetarian has weighed in to say it could still work without the pork and poultry. So customization is an option.

When ultra-thin cuts of chicken are not available, a sharp knife can divide a boneless, skinless chicken breast into two or three thin pieces. We do not recommend using chicken tenders, which don't provide the sandwich coverage and good chew needed here.

For easiest eating, we recommend a knife and fork for this sandwich - or at least a judicious cut in half before you dig in.

Chicken, Bacon and Avocado Sandwiches

4 servings, Healthy

We preferred the bread toasted; you can do this while the bacon's in the pan. If you can't find thin chicken cutlets, buy 2 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves that are on the small side; cut them in half horizontally. Serve with baked sweet potato fries. Adapted from "The Essential Diabetes Cookbook: Good Healthy Eating From Around the World," by Antony Worrall Thompson with Louise Blair (Kyle, 2010).

4 slices thick-cut bacon (5 ounces total)

8 ounces boneless, skinless chicken breast cutlets (may substitute 2 chicken breast halves; see head-



DEB LINDSEY | THE
WASHINGTON POST
Bacon and
avocado sand-
wiches.

note)
Kosher salt
7 ounces (half a can) no-salt-added chickpeas
Leaves from 2 stems fresh flat-leaf parsley or cilantro, plus a few sprigs for garnish
1 ripe avocado
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
Crushed red pepper flakes
1/2 lime
2 Campari or Kumato tomatoes
4 slices whole-grain or multigrain country-style bread (5 1/2 ounces total; see headnote)

Line a plate with paper towels. Cut each

bacon slice crosswise in half. Arrange in a large nonstick skillet. Cook over medium heat for 6 to 8 minutes, until crisped. Drain on the plate.

Season the chicken lightly with salt and immediately place in the same pan; cook (medium heat) for about 3 minutes on each side, until lightly browned and cooked through. Transfer to a plate. Drain and rinse the chickpeas, then place in a mixing bowl. Coarsely chop the parsley or cilantro leaves; add to the bowl. Peel, pit the avocado; add to the same bowl, along with the cumin, a pinch each of the salt and crushed red pepper flakes, and the juice of the lime half. Use a potato masher or large fork to mash the mixture into a chunky paste.

Taste, and add more salt and/or crushed red pepper flakes, as needed.

Cut the tomatoes into 1/4-inch slices, and season them lightly with salt. Let them sit for 5 minutes, then begin to build the sandwiches: Spread equal amounts of the avocado-chickpea mash on each piece of bread, then a few tomato slices. Next, the bacon and then the chicken. Top with parsley or cilantro sprigs.

NUTRITION | PER SERVING: 450 calories, 26 g protein, 35 g carbohydrates, 23 g fat, 6 g saturated fat, 65 mg cholesterol, 470 mg sodium, 8 g dietary fiber, 5 g sugar

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