

TYRA DAMM

Parents plant seeds, wait for kids to learn — and dance a jig when our efforts bear fruit. **2E**

DISTRACTIONS

Dallas Theater Center's *What Makes a Citizen?* is an empowering mix of music, movement and words. **2E**



ADVICE

Carolyn Hax helps a wife who's grown weary of husband's business ventures that never seem to last. **2E**

CULTURE

Tex-Mex's tasty evolution



File/Staff Photo

Ingredients such as yellow cheese, cumin, beef and mild sauces are what separated authentic Mexican cuisine with the hybrid version that came to be known as "Tex-Mex," said food expert Diana Kennedy.

Forced to adjust their cuisine for Anglo tastes, Mexican restaurateurs created a cuisine Dallas can't live without

By **OBED MANUEL**

Staff Writer
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Chili con carne. Yellow American cheese. Rice and beans. Queso.

Just reading those words makes you want to take off work early to grab a frozen margarita.

But if you refer to that delicious Tex-Mex you're about to dig into as "Mexican food," you risk starting a debate that is about as old as Texas itself.

To some, Tex-Mex is an invention of Mexicans and Tejanos living in the southern U.S., making it one of the country's oldest regional cuisines. For others, it's a weak imitation of the many foods found in the diverse regions south of the border.

For Thomas Ojeda, son of Ben and Cecilia Ojeda, the couple who opened Ojeda's Mexican Restaurant in Dallas in 1969, Tex-Mex is what kept the family fed, sheltered and, most importantly, together.

When the restaurant opened all those years ago, Ojeda says, everyone working in it was family. His dad worked as the chef while his mom handled the day-to-day operations and the front of the restaurant.

The menu featured Tex-Mex classics like enchiladas, tamales, nachos and rice and beans, but also included American classics like fried chicken and chicken-fried steak. Ojeda says older, white Dallas residents would come in and ask for bowls of chili con carne, unaware that it was meant to top

How the frozen margarita revolutionized an industry, **6E**



Louis DeLuca/Staff Photographer

"These days, Tex-Mex is no longer an acquired taste. It's something you do weekly, if not more," says Tommy Ojeda.

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Shaban Athuman/Staff Photographer

Taylor Swift, who took her Reputation Stadium Tour to Arlington on Friday and Saturday, is the first artist to perform back-to-back nights at AT&T Stadium — and she proved why.

CONCERT REVIEW

Taylor Swift, triumphant

Bombastic concert at AT&T Stadium included fireworks, dancing and a surprise local guest

By **KELLY DEARMORE**

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On multiple occasions on Friday, the first night of Taylor Swift's two-night Reputation Stadium Tour stop at AT&T Stadium in Arlington, I came across

men who acted as though they didn't want to be at the concert.

"I think I'll just hang here for a bit; it's not like I'm in a hurry to get back out there, you know what I'm sayin'?" remarked a muscular beer-buyer near

one of the bars just off the main stadium floor during Camila Cabello's dramatic opening set.

And later, during Swift's show, a guy in a golf shirt seated behind me stood, arms crossed with an exasperated look of defeat. When I turned in his direction at about halfway through the show, he nodded to me and said, "Well, this shouldn't take much longer, huh?"

Maybe these guys were genuinely annoyed to be there at those points in time. It's entirely likely both were dragged to the show by a friend, spouse or daughter and just assumed that since I am also of the male persuasion, I must be a fellow pop prisoner or half-hearted Swift soldier simply marching to keep the peace.

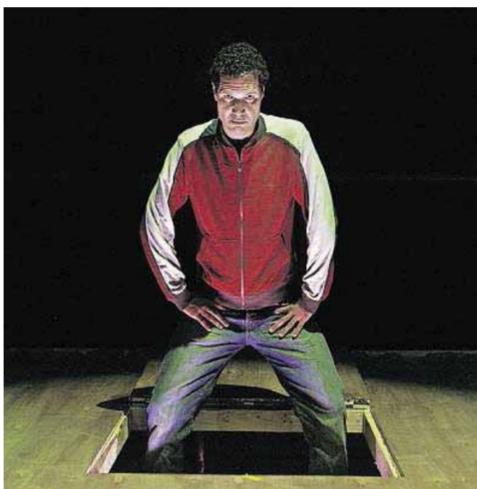
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DISTRACTIONS

THEATER

‘A THEATRICAL TOWN HALL MEETING’

Will Power calls it “90 minutes of fun and power.” The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Playwright in Residence at the Dallas Theater Center has created a mix of music, movement and words, called **What Makes a Citizen?**, presented by the Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture. It will take place Wednesday at 7 p.m. at Moody Performance Hall. The anchor is a presentation about the 14th Amendment and what it has to say about the rights of citizens by Jeffrey Rosen, president and CEO of the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia. Rosen’s conversation will be interwoven with a musical score by Brooklyn’s DJ Reborn, a video installation by Kate Ducey, performances by the youth of Dallas’ Cry Havoc Theater Company and Southern Methodist University alumni Janielle Kastner and Brigham Mosely, who will premiere elements from a play they are creating about journalism that was commissioned by *The Dallas Morning News*. “I envision it like a theatrical town hall meeting where people are passionate about what they want to say,” says Power (pictured). *Details: dallasinstitute.org*



Nan Coulter/Special Contributor

Nancy Churnin

Swift proves her mettle — again

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Regardless of how either fellow entered the stadium, both were soon converted into squealing fanboys. Not long after my initial encounter with the beer bro, I caught a glimpse of him dropping it low and busting a move during Swift’s rafter-rattling “Getaway Car.” During “Blank Space,” the preppy golf guy went ape as his buddy filmed him screaming the whole song with a closed-eyed fervor and some unfortunate gyrations.

Over two hours, the 28-year-old Swift offered a performance complete with impossibly impressive stage production. Opening with “... Ready for it?” and “I Did Something Bad,” both from her most recent album *Reputation*, the show got off to a bombastic, club-banging start.

It was also literally a hot beginning. Broadway-style dance productions, shooting plumes of smoke, soaring fireworks and the palpable heat of fiery torches ensured times were, as the kids say these days, “lit.” The ominous video presentation and matching sinister feel for “Look What You Made Me Do” served further notice that this night wasn’t about teen teardrops on country

guitars.

The ruckus caused by a couple of Swift’s hit medleys rivaled the jet-engine force of any song when metal legends Metallica performed in the same stadium last year. By melding latter-day gems with early-era favorites, Swift creatively covered her career bases to the deafening delight of her army of so-called Swifties.

Although the men in the audience had every right to feel safe about letting their T-Swift flags fly, this was certainly a showcase of some supreme woman power. Cabello and fellow opening act Charli XCX joined the headliner on one of the two satellite stages near the back of the stadium floor for a colorful “Shake it Off,” not long before Swift surprised the crowd by introducing Arlington native Maren Morris, who has become a household name herself. The pair teamed up for a chummy take on Morris’ summer smash “The Middle.”

It wasn’t all flames, big beats and imposing video screens. Armed with only an acoustic guitar, Swift earnestly offered “Dancing With Our Hands Tied,” and “White Horse,” which was the first time she sang the

decade-old song on this tour, to an impressively quiet stadium. Later, Swift sat at her piano for an elegant mashup of “Long Live” and “New Year’s Day.”

With confetti cannons, larger-than-life visuals and her entire squadron at her back, Swift ended with a triumphant medley of “We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together” and “This Is Why We Can’t Have Nice Things.”

With her ascension to globally dominant pop powerhouse, Swift is the sort of superstar most everyone can agree on. In the ’90s, everyone was a Michael Jordan fan. For a couple of decades now, it’s been nearly impossible to find a movie buff who doesn’t adore Tom Hanks.

As the first artist to perform back-to-back concerts in the history of AT&T Stadium, it might be more appropriate to suggest Hanks and Jordan are the Taylor Swifts of their respective realms.

And to the dudes I encountered early in the evening, don’t worry about your manly reputations so much. Having a great time at a Taylor Swift show is impossible to avoid, so don’t bother trying.

Twitter: @KellyRDearmore

Another harvest after years of tending

Parents plant seeds, wait for kids to learn — and dance a jig when our efforts bear fruit



TYRA DAMM
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To be a parent is to be a gardener — a gardener in an emotional, unpredictable, chaotic plot of land that you’re totally devoted to despite constant self-doubt and lack of clear instructions.

You plant seeds all over the place, sometimes in neat rows, sometimes haphazardly in reaction to spindly weeds.

There’s no predictable cycle. Sometimes you plant a seed, sprinkle a little water, hope for the best and harvest a bountiful crop. Or you might plant, water, prune, prune, prune, plant some more, water some more, swat away pests, wait a few years, spy a sprout and then eventually, after all kinds of worry, take in a single, precious bloom.

I was folding laundry this week while Cooper was in the next room, on the phone with a friend. She was seeking advice on a major project, one that Cooper had already turned in.

“I told you not to wait on this one,” he reminded her. Then he talked her through some details from the assignment’s rubric and offered tips and encouragement to finish in the time remaining.

Out of his sight, I danced a silent jig of happiness, in celebration of this rare harvest.

My son boasts a long list of fine qualities, and, like all humans, he has some room for improvement. Time management is what I would call one of his growth opportunities.

Yet this school year has been a little different. Yes, he stays up late each night finishing homework (I would too if I were taking four Advanced Placement classes), but he’s more deliberate in anticipating his schedule and starting long-term assignments early — the day it’s assigned, even.

There have been years of planting, watering and pruning. Years of modeling with to-do lists, reminders and calendars. Years of me reminding, “I told you not to wait on this one.” Years of asking, “What can you learn from this experience?”

He was learning the whole time. The yield simply took longer than I expected.

Another afternoon this week, I was in my classroom, grading papers while a group of students met to discuss the brand-new Newspaper Club, the brainchild of two sixth-graders who asked me to be their sponsor.

My Katie, an eighth-grader who arrives early and stays late

because I’m her ride to and from school, decided to join the club, partly because she enjoys writing and partly because she’s already in the room.

The rest of the group was struggling to agree on features to include in the first issue. They have big dreams and fanciful ideas, and there was some conflict, as is typical in group projects with passionate members.

Katie observed, listened, then spoke.

“I suggest that we look at an actual newspaper and its sections. Perhaps we can take one idea from each section for our own newspaper.”

I danced a jig in my mind (so as to not embarrass my eighth-grader).

Katie, like her brother and all humans, bears laudable qualities and harbors some growth opportunities. She speaks her mind, sometimes without thinking how her words will be received. You might call it showing signs of leadership or signs of bossiness, depending on your perspective.

But this time, without prompting or coaching, she assessed the situation and provided a route for compromise. She gave no specific answers but rather provided needed direction. The group responded well and made progress, with fewer arguments and more collaboration.

Another harvest after years of tending.

I’m celebrating my family’s recent evidence of growth while also noting that the garden still has wild patches. Some spots need a little more water. Others need to be left alone. And who knows when the next invasive species will arrive.

As always, I’ve got my eye on some long-anticipated sprouts. Their schedule is unpredictable, but I’ve learned that the harvest eventually arrives.

About the columnist

Tyra Damm is a middle-school teacher in Frisco and mom of two teenagers. She is a former *Dallas Morning News* staff member who writes a regular column for *Briefing*, a publication of *The News*. She is also a blogger, chronicling life as a single mom and widow. Her late husband, Steve, died at age 40 in September 2009, after living with brain cancer for 18 months.

DEAR ABBY

By JEANNE PHILLIPS
ANDREWS McMEEL SYNDICATION

Dear Abby: My best friend of 40 years and her boyfriend live several states away from my husband and me. Every winter she and her friend expect to come to our home for a week. We simply can no longer do this.

Her friend is a nice guy, but after a few days we can hardly stand it. He talks constantly and knows everything about everything. How can I politely tell my friend that we can’t accommodate them anymore without hurting her feelings and maybe ending our friendship?

Weary Out West

Dear Weary: Try this. When your old friend mentions coming to visit, tell her you aren’t up to having house-guests. If she asks why, and she probably will, say you’re not as young as you used to be — it’s true. Neither am I. Tell her you can accommodate them for a weekend. If that doesn’t work, say your husband isn’t up for company. (Also true.) However, if neither excuse suffices, you may have to choose between telling your friend the truth and fibbing by saying you plan to be out of town.

Dear Abby: For mothers out there who wonder why their “wonderful” grown daughters don’t have boyfriends, maybe it is because they are too dependent on you.

No guy wants to be involved with a woman who calls or texts her mom multiple times a day (unless she is ill).

No guy wants a girl who can’t make a decision without consulting Mom, and he certainly doesn’t want the intimate details of his relationship to be shared with you.

Men want confident women, not girls still tied to their mother’s apron strings. If you want your daughter to find a man, stay out of her love life and teach her to make her own decisions!

Hates Meddling Mothers

Dear Hates: I have long advised young women how important it is to gain independence before becoming romantically involved with anyone.

I agree that women who can stand on their own two feet are more appealing than those who are still dependent upon their parents. Your letter verifies the truth of what I have been saying.

Email via dearabby.com

CAROLYN HAX

WASHINGTON POST
WRITERS GROUP

Adapted from a recent online discussion.

Dear Carolyn: “Ken” and I have been married five years. He’s upbeat, handsome, charming and thoughtful, but can’t seem to stick to a job. He has a master’s in a high-paying technical field, but he hated it so much he lasted less than a year in that field. Since we’ve been together, he has participated in seven business ventures.

He gets super enthusiastic about a new thing, spends a lot of time and money doing the fun and exciting part, but loses interest when the tough, mundane reality of running a business hits. I’ve had to work lots of overtime to keep us solvent, we can never save, and can’t even think about having children.

When I talk to him about finding something steady, he tells me he’s still looking for his passion.

I could accept the status quo and love Ken for who he is, or admit love isn’t enough and divorce him. Since I do love him, but want a stable life, I’m looking for advice that finds a middle ground.

Overtime

Dear Overtime: My little voice was screaming “ADHD! ADHD!” but neither I

nor my little voice is credentialed, so consult a professional if you think there’s something to this.

Otherwise, there’s no middle ground without buy-in from Ken. And there’s no magic fix for someone a-OK with watching a spouse work “lots of overtime” to keep things afloat despite his having no plan of his own. You’re not carrying the weight while he, say, grinds through law school or works a thoroughly investigated business plan or pursues one concentrated shot at making a creative vocation pay. You’re working while he plays.

Did you get to look for your passion, by the way? Does your work fit that description?

So, yeah. You either decide he’s a house-husband and see whether there’s a happily-ever-after in that, and if there is, then you restructure your lives to fit into one income. Or you say no, this is not an arrangement you can abide, because the resentment it generates outweighs the good.

Re: Ken: You are now your husband’s mother. It’s a miserable, miserable way to live. Please, don’t go 20 years with him before reaching your breaking point like I did. You can’t have children with someone who can’t carry their share of the load.

Been There

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