

Austin American-Statesman

Sunday, February 10, 2019

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HUNT FOR A TEXAS KILLER

'The whole story is going to come out'



The bodies of Anna Scott, left, and Michael Swearingin of Temple were found by authorities in Oklahoma on Jan. 15. (CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

By Mary Huber
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TEMPLE — Clouds loomed over this Central Texas town last month as family and friends came to honor the lives of two of their own who were found slain. At a service for Jenna Scott, her mother described her as being like a butterfly.

The 28-year-old nurse and

More online

Trace the trail of events on an interactive map with this story on statesman.com.

mom was the embodiment of transformation, she said. In the past three years, she had left an abusive relationship, cut back on drinking, gone

vegan, started meditating, taken up yoga and was undergoing therapy to combat a lifelong mental illness.

Scott was the kind of person whom friends turned to when they were struggling, which had motivated her to go back to school to get her master's degree in counseling from the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, a 10-mile drive from

her parents' home in Temple, about 60 miles north of Austin. She wanted to help other people find a path to healing and was nearing graduation when she was killed, along with Michael Swearingin, a friend of 10 years who had been close to fulfilling his lifelong dream to love, marry and raise a family.

See HUNT, A6

Did medics do enough to save dying man?

First responders' dispute at hit-and-run s under investigation and raises larger questions

By Tony Plohetski
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Emergency officials are investigating whether paramedics who responded to a hit-and-run last fall did enough to help a dying man, raising the question of how first responders should



McKay

for permission to keep working on 73-year-old Joe McKay after they discovered he was still breathing after the Sept. 27 crash.

McKay, who suffered a severe head injury, was not taken to the hospital. He was pronounced dead at the scene near Texas 130 and Bruce Lane about 30



Former Zavala Elementary student Robie Hernandez, 15, participates in a demonstration at the school in October. Parents, students and former students were advocating to keep the school open after it was not chosen for a project to modernize the campus. (LARRY GREEN / AMERICAN-STATESMAN)

Valentine's staycations say 'I love you'

By Mauri Elbel

Special to the American-Statesman

Valentine's Day is just around the corner. If you're still scrambling for a way to woo your sweetheart, consider swapping the usual dozen roses and heart-shaped box of chocolate for a room full of romance. From relaxing resorts to hip hotels, these nearby properties are turning up the heat this February — flight delays and travel hassles not included with your stay.

Shop by day and snuggle up by night at Lone Star Court

Sweethearts can experience vacation vibes without ever leaving town when they staycation at Lone Star Court, sitting just a short stroll from the luxury boutiques and lively restaurants sprinkled throughout the Domain. Celebrate Valentine's Day — or plan a fun-filled Galentine's getaway — here if you're

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Lone Star Court features a relaxing courtyard with outdoor fire pits and a pool reminiscent of a Texas swimming hole.

(CONTRIBUTED BY LONE STAR COURT)

Sweetheart staycations: Some easy escapes perfect for Valentine's Day

overcapacity schools with additional demographic data.

Sources: Austin school district; maps-from.com/HERE

GATTHOUSE MEDIA

STAY

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after an in-town stay that offers shopping and dining options at your fingertips while providing an unexpected oasis to return to. It's like stepping back in time when you enter Lone Star Court, a nostalgic throwback to the motor courts of the past. The hotel features a lush communal courtyard complete with a swimming hole and outdoor fire pits surrounded by vibrant, retro-inspired guest rooms with sprawling front porches and colorful wooden rocking chairs on the outside and plush beds, barn-style sliding doors and locally curated honor bars on the inside. On a recent stay, we borrowed vintage bicycles to spin around the Domain for a day of shopping and spa treatments before returning to chat by the fire, sip cocktails from the Water Trough and listen to live music. Throughout the month, couples can book the Valentine's Day Romance Package, which includes accommodations for two, two drink vouchers and two appetizers from the Water Trough, complimentary continental breakfast, Wi-Fi, parking and a late 2 p.m. checkout. For an unforgettable Valentine's dinner, indulge in a farm-to-table dining experience at nearby Second Bar + Kitchen Domain Northside (sbkdomain.com). During Valentine's Day weekend (Feb. 14-16), couples can look forward to a seasonally inspired four-course dinner featuring decadent dishes including roasted red beet hummus, poached lobster and herb salad, black truffle-potato ravioli, braised lamb osso buco and Gorgonzola dolce (\$75 per person/\$25 for wine pairings). More at lonestarcourt.com.



Romance your valentine with a Texas Hill Country staycation.
(CONTRIBUTED BY HYATT REGENCY HILL COUNTRY RESORT AND SPA)

Lounge lakeside with your love at Lakeway Resort and Spa

Just over a half-hour drive from downtown Austin, this lakeside resort perched above shimmering Lake Travis offers a romantic escape just beyond the city's bustle. Celebrate your love by booking one of the resort's Valentine's Day-themed packages like Champagne, Roses & Romance, which includes a bottle of Veuve Clicquot, chocolate-covered strawberries, breakfast for two, a dozen red roses, a \$150 dining credit to the on-site TR Restaurant Bar and Lounge and a late 2 p.m. checkout. For next-level romance and relaxation, squeeze in some together time at the Spa — the 50-minute Couple's Romance Retreat features the "I Love" blend of essential oils in the Couples Lake Suite followed by extended room and terrace time and more Champagne and strawberries. Did we mention the resort's palatial pool complex is heated on weekends and holidays through February? More at lakewayresortandspa.com.

Romance your Valentine downtown at the LINE

Looking for a different kind of downtown staycation? Rest your head inside one of the 428 chic rooms including

108 newly-launched suites at the Line Austin, the less-than-year-old boutique hotel located on Cesar Chavez where sweeping lake views and immediate access to the hike and bike trail are included with your stay. Book a romantic Valentine's Day dinner at Arlo Grey, the hotel's on-site restaurant helmed by "Top Chef" winner Kristen Kish, to enjoy a prix fixe menu of artichoke hearts, aged rib-eye tartare, seared diver scallops, roasted Cornish game hen and a baked meringue (\$100 per person). Continue the romance through the weekend with the Line's Valentine's Day-themed Self Love rooftop yoga class led by Gustavo Padron (free) on Feb. 16, or sign up for the 90-minute demo workshop with local fragrance company Boyd's of Texas that teaches the basics of natural perfumery and allows couples to spend the afternoon blending the perfect fragrance together (\$55). More at theline-hotel.com/austin.

Reconnect along the shores at Lake Austin Spa Resort

Craving a Valentine's Day staycation that's all about relaxation, reconnecting and romance? Whether you're whipping up a delicious dish together at a cooking



Step back in time with a staycation at Lone Star Court.
(CONTRIBUTED BY LONE STAR COURT)

class, working up a sweat during a private fitness session for two or enjoying a couples treatment at LakeHouse Spa, a couples' getaway at Lake Austin Spa Resort is the perfect staycation for those wanting to unwind together. Book the Romance Package throughout February — a two-night stay includes a bottle of sparkling wine upon arrival, chocolate-covered strawberries in the room and a 50-minute Two of a Kind massage in the private couples' suite; stays of three or more nights also include a 50-minute private boat cruise. More at lakeaustin.com.

Spoil your sweetheart with a SoCo staycation

Staycation at hip Hotel San José, the 1936-built motor court-turned-urban bungalow hotel tucked off South Congress Avenue. Purchase gifts for the one you love at Hotel San José's Valentine's Day-themed Can Buy Me Love Market in the hotel's courtyard lounge from 3 to 7 p.m. on Feb. 14 while enjoying a Valentine's Day drink special and music

by DJ Feelin' Groovy. Treat your valentine to heart-shaped pancakes at Jo's, located in the Hotel San José parking lot, before snapping a selfie with your sweetie in front of the neighborhood coffee shop's iconic "I Love You So Much" mural. More at sanjosehotel.com.

Retreat to Texas Hill Country romance

Want to get out of the city without going too far? Escape to the Hyatt Regency Hill Country Resort and Spa, a peaceful retreat nestled on 300 serene acres just 90 miles from Austin where you'll find everything from a 27-hole Arthur Hills-designed golf club to a 5-acre waterpark boasting a heated Texas-shaped pool. From Feb. 10-17, guests can book the Messages and Mimosas Valentine's Day special at the resort's full-service Windflower Spa and receive 50 percent off a treatment for a second guest while

sipping complimentary mimosas. Continue melting cares away at the spa's private heated pool, on-site sauna and eucalyptus steam room. Spending Valentine's Day at this casually elegant 500-room resort? On Feb. 14, guests can indulge in a prix fixe five-course dining experience at the upscale Antlers Lodge (\$90 per person/\$35 additional for wine pairing). More at hillcountry.regency.hyatt.com.

Pamper your partner at the JW Marriott San Antonio Hill Country Resort and Spa

If Cupid is pointing his arrow out of town, take the quick 70-mile road trip to this sprawling Hill Country oasis boasting a 9-acre River Bluff heated to 86 degrees for year-round enjoyment, seven distinctive restaurants, a 26,000-square-foot spa and two PGA-Certified TPC golf courses. Throughout February, the resort's Couples Spa Retreat package includes breakfast for two guests daily, two daily 50-minute massage treatments at Lantana Spa and plush accommodations (packages start at \$389 per room per night for two). For the ultimate in pampering and indulging, treat your sweetheart to the resort's Valentine's Day Relax and Dine experience on Feb. 14 or 15, which combines a Lantana Spa package and three-course dinner at 18 Oaks steakhouse (\$325 per person). More at jwsanantonio.com.

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