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M A G A Z I N E

October 2010

**Lightening Their
Footprints**

**The ABCs of a
Healthy Life**

**A Culture
of Fitness**

ALSO INSIDE:

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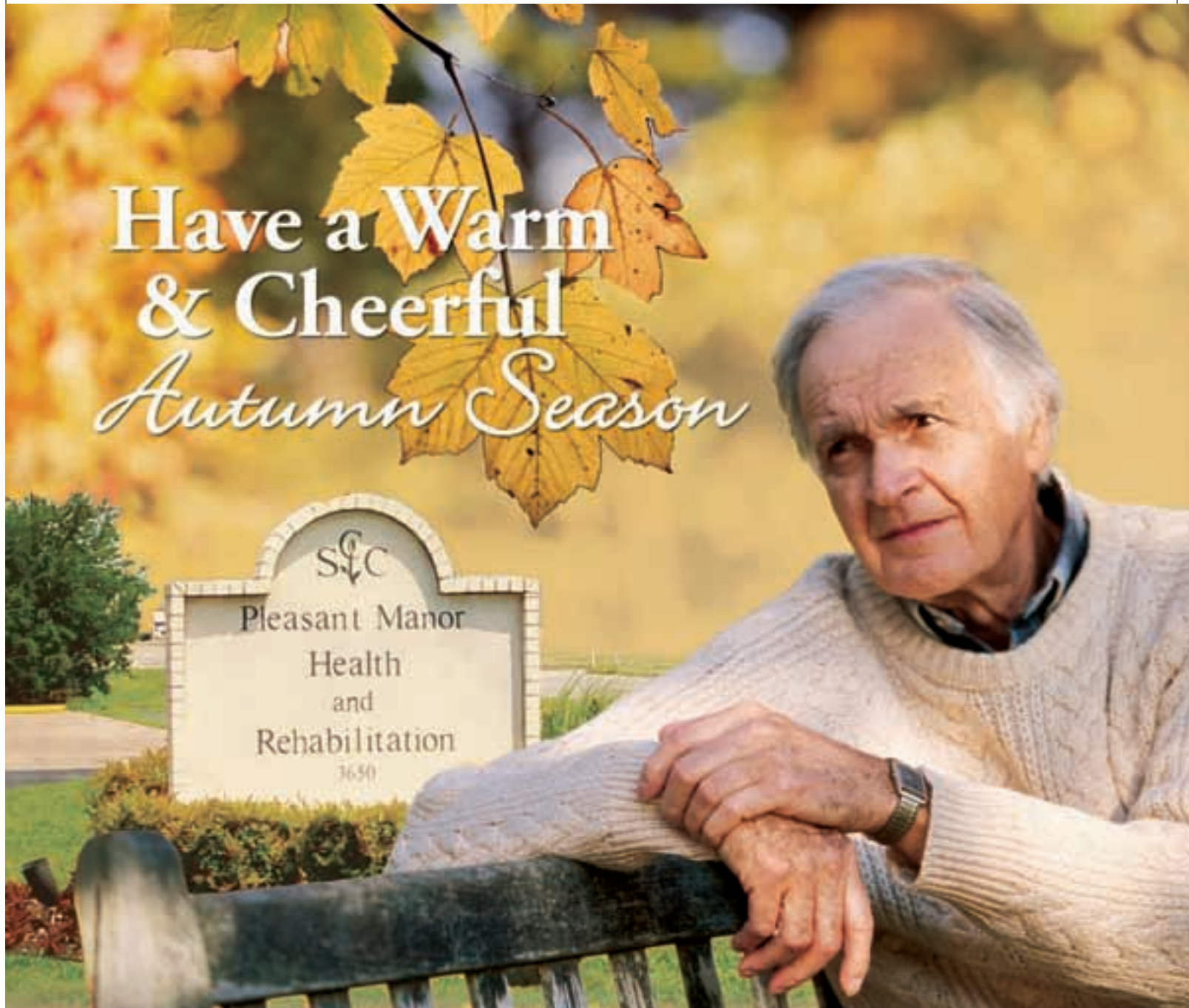
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


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General Manager, *Rick Hensley*

Editorial

Managing Editor, *Becky Walker*

Waxahachie Editor, *Sandra Strong*

Copy Editor, *Melissa Rawlins*

Contributing Writers,

Nancy Fenton . Janice C. Johnson

Sydni Thomas . Betty Tryon

Adam Walker . Loyd Wilson

Contributing Editors/Proofreaders,

Pat Anthony . Teresa Maddison

Beverly Shay

Advertising Art

Art Director, *Chris McCalla*

Ad Artists, *Julie Carpenter*

Allee Brand . Cherie Chapman

Marshall Hinsley . Arlene Honza

Editorial Art

Creative Director, *Jami Navarro*

Production Artists, *Brande Morgan*

Pamela Parisi

Photography

Photography Director, *Jill Odle*

Photographers, *Natalie Busch*

Terri Ozymy

Advertising

District Sales Manager, *Carolyn Mixon*

Advertising Representatives,

Renée Chase . Rick Ausmus . Teresa Banks

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Billing

Billing Manager, *Lauren De Los Santos*

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Contents

October 2010
Volume 7, Issue 10



Oscar Rodes, third from right, and his family enjoy the energy they produce in Sardis.

8 Lightening Their Footprints

14 If the Walls Could Talk

At Home With Jeff and Suzanne Hamilton

22 Around TownNOW

24 ArtsNOW

Creative Cowgirls, Kindred Spirits

28 SportsNOW

A Culture of Fitness

32 BusinessNOW

Focusing on the People

34 EducationNOW

The ABCs of a Healthy Life

36 Who's CookingNOW

38 FinanceNOW

40 HealthNOW

42 OutdoorsNOW

43 What's HappeningNOW



On the Cover

Fall has definitely arrived at the home of Jeff and Suzanne Hamilton.

Photo by Natalie Busch.

Editor's Note

Fall has finally arrived!

Fall is here, and I could not be more excited. I will soon get the boxes down from the attic and begin the annual event of unpacking my fall decorations. I will reintroduce myself to whimsical scarecrows and colorful pumpkins. I cannot wait to start decorating my home for the holidays. It should be lots of fun!

October is filled with several important events and celebrations. National Boss Day will be held on the 16th. I will be attending the Palmer High School homecoming game with fellow PHS grads on the evening of the 22nd. Thankfully, my mom will be celebrating another birthday on the 27th. Parents will be making last minute costume adjustments so their precious little ones can trick-or-treat in style on the 31st.

It is definitely going to be a busy month for me, but I cannot wait to get started. How about you?

Sandra Strong
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"If you're going to build a house, you need to ask your builder what you can do to make it energy efficient."

Lightening their Footprints

— By Adam Walker

Sardis, Texas, might be the last place you would think to look for something cutting edge, but that is what Oscar and Patricia Rodes have built along with their daughter, son-in-law and grandchildren. On 60 acres of land bought from the government after the failure of the Superconducting Super Collider, atop a hill sown with wildflowers, stand seven wind turbines that make use of Texas' abundant gales to produce extra electricity. The company that installed the turbines said it was the largest residential wind farm in the world.

Oscar, who was born in Brazil, used to complain about Texas wind. "Before, I was mad at the wind," he confessed. "There is so much wind here, but now I say, 'Oh no! There's no wind today!' It's a beautiful sound when the wind is making me money."

Patricia agrees that the turbines make

a pleasant sound, saying, "It's a very soft sound." Their daughter, Tanya Kirkland, disagreed somewhat saying, "It sounds like a lawnmower or a siren far off in the distance." But Tanya's husband, James, agreed with his father-in-law and mother-in-law that the turbines make a pleasant sound as they save their two households money and help keep the environment clean.

The Rodes and Kirkland families built their turbines on a 25- to 30-foot

hill on their property. Placing the 60- to 70-foot turbine towers there puts them well above the trees, insuring the winds are unobstructed. As long as it is blowing more than five miles an hour, the turbines will spin. The faster the wind blows, the more electricity the turbines make, but if the winds get above 60 miles an hour, the turbines shut off to avoid damaging the finely balanced propellers. According to Tanya, "The installation was fun to watch."





Four of the turbines help to power Oscar and Patricia's three-story mansion that includes a ballroom, a fountain pond in the front yard and a swimming pool that spills over into a waterfall in the back. When they built, the couple included as many green and energy-efficient features as they could into the design, so their electric bills were already ridiculously low for such a large estate. But now, with the turbines, their electric bill is down another 60-70 percent. They only paid \$261 in June. When is the last time you saw an electric bill like that during a Texas summer?

James and Tanya's house is twice as big as their old one, but because of their attention to detail in the construction, their electric bill did not go up. Now, powered by two turbines, their savings is around 40 percent of their former electric bill. And 40 percent is still a big deal, as any parent with five children at home will tell you. James said, "If you're going to build a house, you need to ask your builder what you can do to make it energy efficient."

The final turbine powers the barn where Tanya has an office and Oscar maintains a small apartment for out-of-state or international visitors and clients.

Oscar figures it will take about seven years for the turbines to pay for themselves, which is much better than the approximately 15 years it takes for solar panels to pay off. All four adults admit



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that installing the wind farm was an investment, but Oscar insists “the biggest expense was the copper wiring running from the turbines to the houses. Six years ago, this would not have been affordable. Now, with the 30-percent tax credit, it is good. We’re still in the beginning. In another three to five years, it will be even more cost-effective.

“We have a big house,” Oscar continued, “so we use a lot of energy. It’s good to give back. There is great satisfaction to be able to save some money and be able to lighten our footprint on the environment at the same time.”

**“It sounds like
a lawnmower or
a siren far off in
the distance.”**

Patricia agreed with her husband. “We feel good about what we did because we’re contributing instead of just taking. We’re kind of pioneers. We want other people to follow our example and say, ‘Yes, let’s do this.’ Someone has to start this rolling!”

Since this is new territory, the Rodeses and Kirklands have had to fight a few battles in order to get this rolling. They had to get zoning laws passed before they could apply for permits to build their farm. Then they had to find an electric company that would work with them; their original electric company was not interested. So they switched to another electric company, which buys the power they produce and credits their bill whenever the winds are blowing.

Some of their neighbors were concerned about the looks of having a wind farm nearby, but Patricia thinks people “should be less concerned about aesthetics, and more concerned about being responsible. Besides, Oscar calls them elegant, and I think they are almost a work of art. It is fun to look out and see them as they turn with the wind throughout the day.”

Unfortunately, a wind farm is just not



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practical in every situation. You cannot simply put up seven turbines in your backyard. Each of the turbines stands on a 6-foot cube of concrete, and you cannot live in a valley or where you are surrounded by tall buildings or where trees block the winds. And you must have enough distance between you and your neighbors that



your turbine could never fall on their property. But if, like the Rodes and Kirkland families, you do have the right conditions, why not save money and help

the environment at the same time?

James, who according to the rest of the family is the driving force behind their efforts to live green, economically and as self-sufficiently as possible, did a lot of research before the two households decided to build their wind farm. "I looked into solar, hydroelectric and geothermal. Hydroelectric and geothermal just weren't workable here, and solar panels have problems. Many of them are produced in China using lots of toxic chemicals that are just dumped into the environment. With wind, you don't need inverters to convert the power you produce to A/C."

James also likes having access, through their computers, to current information about their production. "We can monitor our production since we installed the turbines, for the year-to-date, or right now." James is concerned about the environment, but he is also a bottom-line sort of guy. "The long-term payoff on this could be really nice. Capitalism tries to find ways to save money," James said, "If you can save money by helping the environment, shouldn't you do it?" **NOW**

Editor's Note: For more information on this topic, view the video posted on our Web site, www.nowmagazines.com.

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IF THE WALLS COULD TALK

— By Sandra Strong

Jeff and Suzanne Hamilton downsized considerably when they moved from Hawkins Street to their old, yet new, bungalow cottage-style home on Kirven Street. “This home was built in 1927,” Suzanne said, also sharing that she moved in while Jeff was out of town at his high school reunion. In his own defense, Jeff laughingly said, “It was already planned.” Suzanne called in reinforcements — her son-in-laws — and got the job done. “That was five years ago this past June,” she added.



AT HOME WITH
JEFF AND SUZANNE HAMILTON





When visitors make their way up the front stone stairway, they can almost imagine what it would feel like to be in a fairy tale. Vintage pillows are lovingly placed on the patio furniture alongside the family cats, Oreo and Chloe. The scent of candles burning beyond the front door invites them in. The vintage cottage style with slight Victorian accents, which Suzanne loves, extends from the “celebration room” and dining room to the kitchen, bath and three bedrooms. “Suzanne has done all the decorating.



She’s Martha Stewart without the staff,” Jeff commented. “I tell her all the time that she needs to be an interior designer.” Jeff and Suzanne were able to move

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in with only a little remodeling, which was done after they were already settled. "It was very livable," Suzanne remembered. "We just had to add our own little touches." They repainted with a deep shade of cranberry, warm sage green and rich khaki, all trimmed in white. New, updated appliances were added to the kitchen. All the carpet was removed throughout the home, thus leaving the original hardwood floors free of any covering except for the unique throw rugs Suzanne acquired on the couple's many local shopping sprees. The only room that received new carpeting was the front bedroom.

The stenciling in the kitchen remained, but the flooring took on a life of its own when Suzanne put her vivid imagination and paintbrush to work. "She painted the slate floors herself," Jeff said. The checkerboard pattern she created in shades of cranberry and a deep, gray-blue added more warmth to an already cozy room.

The outside landscaping, both front and back, was also a labor of love. Most of their time and expense went into the front yard. "We planted all that you see under the 100-plus-year-old ash tree," Jeff said, as Suzanne nodded her head in agreement. "Grass never would grow, so we added the monkey grass and flowers to add more curb appeal." The backyard area with its whimsical decor is spacious enough for entertaining as the fall weather arrives. "We love to sit out here and have our morning coffee," Jeff added.

Going back indoors, visitors will see that Jeff and Suzanne love the fall season. Halloween is one of their favorite holidays because of the witches, ghosts and goblins that ring their doorbell for treats, not for the "spooky" decorations. "We like the ornate shiny decorations, ceramic pumpkins and a fall turkey placed here and there," Suzanne said, explaining her special way of welcoming the changing of the seasons. "I have a touch of fall in every room. I try to keep my Halloween decorations in good taste; less is more. It's fall harvest, not Halloween scary."

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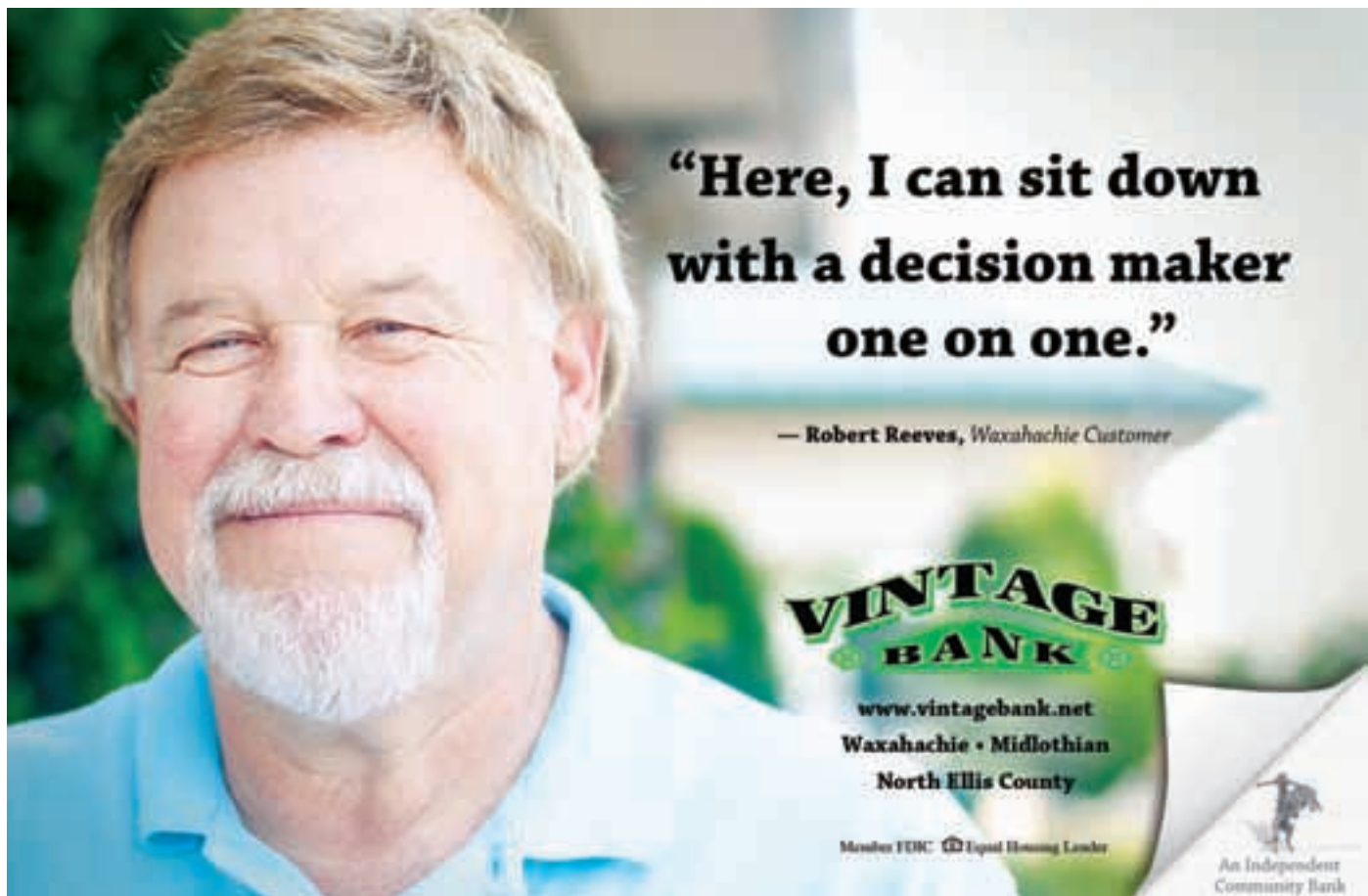
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The fall decor blends beautifully in each room, beginning with the “celebration room.” This room is what other homeowners would call the living area or den. Suzanne gave it a special name because it is a special room, most especially during the holidays when family and friends come to call. The antique hutch is an old piece she brought from her home on Hawkins. It showcases color photos of the couple’s four children and 10 grandchildren, as well as black and white Polaroid snapshots of people they have never met, but consider close friends.

The majority of Suzanne’s aged Christian art hangs in this room, too. Paintings and framed photos of the Virgin Mary hang beside vintage plates that date back to the early 1900s and a dated, hand-stitched sampler or two. “We’ve been on some wonderful treasure hunts,” Suzanne said, referring to the unique, and what they consider priceless, finds displayed in the home.

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The dining room table is home to the couple's newest collectible — Mercury glass. It was the old tarnished look that first caught Suzanne's eye a year ago. When mixed with holiday decor, the table becomes a work of art that is pleasing to the eye.

Collections are not limited to Polaroid snapshots, Christian art or Mercury glass. China that once belonged to Jeff's mother is easily viewed through the glass door of an antique white china



cabinet along one wall in the kitchen. On another shelf, visitors will get a good look at a few pieces in Suzanne's white gravy boat collection.

Suzanne's collection of Real Babies gets mixed reviews. One of her daughters finds them to be "creepy," while other family members and friends find them to be intricately detailed and life-like. "You can't buy these dolls in stores," Suzanne explained. "They are handmade. I purchased mine from a crafter in Hillsboro, Texas. The faces and hands are hand painted, as are the wrinkles

in both the arms and legs.” There are two boys dressed in blue and the little girl appears to be sucking on a pacifier, which in reality is held to her mouth by a small magnet. “I dress them up for company,” Suzanne said with a smile, also mentioning the cradle they sit in is over 100 years old.

Good investments are hard to come by these days, but Jeff feels one of his best investments was found in an antique hair dryer. “I use it almost every day,” Suzanne said, mentioning that the dryer has its own space in the front bedroom. “This is my little corner of the world,” Suzanne added.



The couple loves the days of old, so the antiques are a reflection of the things they are passionate about. There is a feeling of déjà vu when their antiques and collectables are intermingled with dried rose bouquets and one-of-a-kind pillows. “We’ve learned that no two old homes are alike,” Suzanne said. “We’ve lived in newer homes, but they just don’t compare. This home isn’t perfect, but we don’t want it to be perfect.”

Jeff and Suzanne’s old, yet new home is similar to the Polaroid snapshots they love. Each one has a story all its own to tell. Old homes have so much character and wisdom, as do the people in the photographs. “If the walls could talk,” Jeff said, “I wonder what stories they’d tell. I bet there might even be a ghost story or two.” **WAX**



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Creative Cowgirls, Kindred Spirits

— By Sandra Strong

Nearly four years ago, Cindy Mayfield and the late Tina Wright had a wild idea that came from their desire to attend the Silver Bella Art Retreat held annually in Nebraska. “Honestly, we couldn’t afford to go,” Cindy said, explaining that the weekend event brought “crafty” women from all over the United States together. “Tina and I had one of those ‘Lucy and Ethel-type moments’ when we decided to host our own event.”

That missed event was the blue print the two close friends followed when planning the first Paper Cowgirl Art Retreat in Waxahachie in June of 2008. “It took nearly eight months of planning, but we pulled it off,” Cindy recalled. “We kept it small because we didn’t want it to get out of hand.”

Before the first Paper Cowgirl Art Retreat, both women had a fear. “We feared we’d throw a party and no one would come,”

Cindy confessed. Their concerns were put to rest when they quickly filled the 20 slots available. Cindy has always served as the “carnival barker,” while Tina served as one of the art teachers. “Tina taught us the art of soldered necklaces,” Cindy said, smiling as she explained the necklace Tina made especially for her. “They are geared to the person you are making them for. Mine has a ‘C’ for Cindy, a red button, the word ‘goddess,’ a princess crown and one of my personal business cards.”

What was once just a fun necklace has become a piece of priceless artwork Cindy will cherish forever. Not long after the second art retreat in 2009, Tina found out she had colon cancer. Since the cancer had already metastasized, there was nothing the doctors could do but make her last months as comfortable as possible. At her passing, the plans for the third year had been



laid, but Cindy was not sure she would be able to go on without Tina. "I'm glad I continued," Cindy said with tears in her eyes. "It's good to carry on what we started together. I may have been alone in body, but Tina was there in spirit."

One day, four classes and 20 ladies who initially met through Internet blogs have grown into two-and-a-half days, 12 classes and close to 100 ladies. What began at a local craft store has grown to include the meeting room, board room and convention center at the local Hampton Inn & Suites. "Offering ladies a weekend of relaxation where they are encouraged to tap into their creativity, allows them to become the person they were meant to be," Cindy said, explaining how important it is to have balance in life. "Women are born with this natural need to create. We are exercising the creative muscles God gave us."

The annual retreats would not get off to a "smashing start" without what the ladies in the group refer to as "swaps." Swaps are when the ladies begin to share their craft ideas with one another. There is always one lady designated to be the swap hostess. "The hostess comes up with an idea limited to 10 people," Cindy said, explaining the most recent swap craft was a giant Rodeo Queen sash. "Only girls in Texas could come up with such an idea."

The sashes proved to be lots of fun as the ladies glued words, antique frames with old photos, crowns, flowers, feathers — anything to tell a story and make the sash personal for the lady creating it. "It was simply amazing what they were able to come up with," Cindy added. The swap time provides a

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welcome opportunity for the ladies to artistically bond with one another, while taking their creativity to a much higher level.

The most popular classes to date have been the ones on resin molds and computer digital art. "Each teacher is handpicked," Cindy commented. "They come with their own presentation ideas. They are extremely talented individuals. It's their love of art that brings this congregation of crafty women together."

The weekends would not be complete without the scheduled breaks in creativity. Everyone shares lunch as a group at The Dove's Nest, while one evening they make arrangements to meet at Catfish Plantation. To date, many women have come away from these two

The swap time provides a welcome opportunity for the ladies to artistically bond with one another, while taking their creativity to a much higher level.

eateries with newfound inspiration. "It seems everyone just loves the vintage style," Cindy said, confessing that she is partial to that style, too. "Anything to do with lace, ribbons and old black and white photographs seems to be a hit."

Tina was from Wichita Falls, Texas, and she came to Waxahachie to help bring a wild and crazy idea to fruition. Continuing to host the retreats is the least Cindy feels she can do to keep Tina's memory alive while staying focused on what the weekend was initially intended to do. "It's about getting together," Cindy stated, "and doing what women have done for centuries — learn a skill while finding their artistic selves in the process. It's all about kindred spirits." **NOW**

Editor's Note: For more information about upcoming Paper Cowgirl Art Retreats, E-mail Cindy Mayfield at yappingcat@sbcglobal.net.

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A Culture of Fitness

— By Janice C. Johnson

Bringing one's work home usually creates tension with the family, but Jeff Moore's wife and children welcome him to do so — at least, some aspects of his job. As executive director of the Waxahachie YMCA, Jeff's job is to create a culture of fitness in which everyone can take part. And fitness is a big deal at the Moore house.

Cynthia, Jeff's wife, does not need competitive team sports to achieve fitness. Between walking and doing activities with children, Brayden, 9, Alyson, 7, and 8-month-old Jenna, Cynthia stays in great shape. Jeff describes himself as more of a health seeker than an athlete. "I'm always trying to stay on a program," he said. "I struggle, though. Like anyone else, I tend to be 'on-again, off-again.'" Lately, he has been running with some friends. Though he does not compete in races, the group dynamic challenges and motivates Jeff. Over the summer, he worked up to running four miles. He has set a goal of finishing a 10-kilometer run, about 6.2 miles.

The family also engages in some less-strenuous sports. Jeff and Brayden, for instance, enjoy fishing together. "Our family also likes to travel and go to college football games," he added.

A 10-year veteran with the YMCA, Jeff worked in four other cities before moving his family from Beaumont to Waxahachie in April of this year. They are all die-hard Aggies fans. But, now that they live in the Metroplex, Jeff also expects to cheer for TCU. "We like to have a 'home team' to support," he said.

Jeff's favorite program of all is Angels League, the YMCA's medley of sports and fitness activities for children with physical and/or mental



disabilities. Angels promote cooperation and encouragement rather than competition. The play is adapted to each child's ability. Jeff explained softball as an example: "Some kids can hit off a coach pitching underhand; others hit off a tee. After they bat [and run the bases], they take a turn in the field." The children are not divided into teams and the game is not divided into innings; they just play one continuous game. "We have wonderful volunteers out on the field with the kids," Jeff went on. "Everybody has fun. Everybody gets to play. It's what we should be doing; it's the kind of program that really touches the community."

Often in organized sports, competition is the main focus. The prize goes only to one team or one person. Athletes feel tremendous pressure to become the fastest, the strongest, the most agile or skilled — because a competitive culture values those qualities. Not so at the "Y." Jeff pointed to the YMCA mission statement that illustrates its balanced approach to sports: "To put Christian values into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all."

Sports **NOW**

Besides Angels League, Waxahachie's YMCA offers several competitive youth sports such as basketball, swimming, flag football, volleyball and soccer. Even in these programs, coaches do not concentrate solely on winning. Instead, they pass along fitness basics, fundamental game skills, sportsmanship and respect. They do not over-emphasize the outcome of games. This approach helps the players develop not only physical fitness, but discipline and self-confidence as well. Trophies for overall health and well-being are available to the athletes on every team. Jeff's two



“Everybody has fun. Everybody gets to play. It's what we should be doing; it's the kind of program that really touches the community.”



older children, both of whom attend Felty Elementary School, expect to begin playing tennis at the YMCA in the near future. Meanwhile, Brayden plays baseball, while Alyson is into karate and dance.

As a new director still learning the community, Jeff finds member feedback especially important. “My goal is not to come in and offer what we think they

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want, or to duplicate successful programs elsewhere, but to find out where the 'gaps' are and work to fill those needs."

Jeff uses both informal surveys and personal observation to find those gaps. For instance, shortly after he arrived in Waxahachie, he noticed that a number of children loved to hang out in the racquetball courts. They would hit the ball around, but did not actually know how to play. "When we came here, that's the first thing my own kids wanted to do, too — go play racquetball." He began to look into adding racquetball lessons to the program offerings.

As a community resource, the YMCA wants to make its sports and fitness benefits available to everyone in the area it serves. The nonprofit works to raise



**Jeff describes himself
as more of a health
seeker than an athlete.**

funds but, Jeff said, "The community may not realize that the money is used to provide scholarships" for families who would otherwise find it hard to afford membership or sports fees. He added, "One hundred percent of the funds we raise go to benefit real folks right here in Ellis County."

Jeff looks forward to bringing new, enjoyable fitness events to the community, such as holiday-themed, 5K family fun runs. "Half our work is outside the walls, not just on this piece of property," he said. A recent nation-wide membership survey showed Waxahachie has the most growth potential of any YMCA in the Dallas Association. "It's a pretty exciting time to be at the YMCA here in Waxahachie." **NOW**

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From left: Plant Manager Mike Kitchens and Human Resources Manager Norman Hall; the most recent award given to Dart by the WISD Partners in Education Foundation; Mike and Norman go over daily production numbers.

Focusing on the People

After 50 years, Dart Container Corporation still focuses on the people side of the business. — *By Sandra Strong*

While some larger companies have come and gone in the recent up-and-down economy, Dart, a family-owned business, has continued to forge ahead, celebrating its 50-year anniversary this past July. “It was a time of great celebration,” Mike Kitchens, plant manager of Dart’s Waxahachie facility, said. “There were more than 700 people in attendance.” It proved to be a milestone day for the company. Family members of employees were present to enjoy the food, the building tours and a variety of activities for the children. Dart is the largest manufacturing company in Ellis County.

How many companies have been able to flourish for 50 years? Statistics say only about one percent. Dart’s Waxahachie plant, along with 19 other locations worldwide, is a testimonial of

how a well-managed company can succeed, even in a sluggish economy. Mike and Norman Hall, human resources manager, agree that it has everything to do with the people. “We focus on the people side of the business,” Norman said. “More than half of the workforce of approximately 630 employees has been here five years or longer.”

In manufacturing, employee turnover can be high. While Dart has seen turnover in the past 50 years, it can also boast of many long-term employees. “We have more than 20 employees who have been here for 30 years or longer,” Mike explained. “We offer more than a job; we offer a career.”

The Waxahachie location manufactures foam cups and foam dinnerware, as well as other types of polystyrene products.

"We're best known for our cups," Norman stated. "A big part is national account business." Sonic, Burger King, Chick-fil-A and McDonalds are only a few examples of those businesses that have printed advertisements on their cups. Dart prints foam cups for smaller businesses as well.

Giving back is also something the Dart family is committed to. Through the Dart Foundation, the Dart family has donated tens of millions of dollars in the form of grants to various charities worldwide.

Vertical integration allows Dart total product control from start to finish, ensuring the highest levels of quality and service. Dart produces its own expandable polystyrene resins which are then converted into finished products, like cups, by proprietary Dart designed machines. Many of the products are then

"More than half of the workforce of approximately 630 employees has been here five years or longer."

printed using Dart printing blankets, plates and inks and placed in film bags made by Dart.

"There's probably only one thing purchased," Norman said, "the flat cartons for shipping the products." As a company, Dart does not want to depend on others for their success. "We don't want to rely on others to make the product flow out the door," Mike admitted. "Full control has proven to be a pretty good thing." They even have their own fleet of drivers for the best customer service. "We believe Dart drivers have a better attitude toward the product," Mike added.

Mike's open door policy has helped reinforce the family atmosphere Dart has strived for since the very beginning. Since his door is always "open," he talks to no fewer than 25 employees a day about anything and everything. Mike also happens to be one of those 30-year employees. "My first job was sweeping the floor," he said. "But, it's not about me; it's about the kind of company Dart is. It's a company that believes in putting its people first. Everyone has respect for one another." **NOW**



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The ABCs of a Healthy Life

— By *Sydni Thomas*

Getting a hip replaced would put most people out of commission for a while, but Marvin Elementary physical education teacher Gail Stafford would have none of that. One month after her replacement, she was back at school motivating her kindergarten students to live active lifestyles.

Gail came from a family of teachers and knew early on that she wanted to teach physical education. After graduating from Southwest Texas State University, Gail began teaching at the elementary level. Then there came a 20-year break from teaching during which Gail and her husband owned several businesses: a scuba diving company in the British Virgin Islands for 14 years, an ostrich farm in Paris, Texas, and eventually, a remodeling company in the Waxahachie area. “It was not until I was on a roof bricking a chimney that I realized it was time to go back to teaching,” she laughed.

Gail taught fourth grade at Wedgeworth Elementary until eight years ago when Marvin had an opening. Gail’s approach to teaching physical education is unique. As a teacher, she must overcome serious challenges. Students typically are not reading when she first gets them; many of them do not know how to play on teams and keeping their attention for an extended period of time is next to impossible. “Growing up, I had too many teachers who would make P.E. not fun,” Gail said. “It was just exercising or sports. I make it fun and interactive, and we are constantly moving and changing subjects.”

Every moment in her class is an opportunity for fitness and learning. By the end of the year, Gail hopes to have improved each student’s hand-eye coordination, brain strength, pattern-learning skills and overall health and fitness. Each game challenges their motor skills as well as reinforces what they are learning in the classroom. Students also have the opportunity to learn traditional sports like tennis, volleyball, soccer and T-ball.



Constant communication between Gail and the classroom teachers help her decide what activities to focus on more than others. When students are having trouble in certain areas, the teachers will let her know. Unlike most gyms, Gail’s is decorated for each lesson with tools that help students recognize things they have learned in their other classes. “Learning is different for each student,” Gail said. “Some students need to touch and feel to learn. Others need to see what they are learning in different mediums.”

Gail’s priority is to keep her students active throughout the entire class. During her alphabet lesson, Gail groups the children together as they learn to make letters with their bodies. Then she takes a photograph of them so they are able to see what they did. “Not only are they learning their alphabet, they are learning team-building skills,” Gail explained.

Each year a whole new set of struggles is introduced. Students often come less prepared than their predecessors. To combat the simple problem of just tying their shoes, Gail devotes quite a bit of time teaching them the proper way to tie their shoelaces. Wooden shoes are used during class, and a practice shoe is sent home with each student so they can encourage parent participation.

With childhood obesity rising at an alarming rate, Gail challenges the eating habits of her students just as much as she does their fitness and knowledge. One of her lessons during

Education **NOW**

the year is to teach students how to read nutrition labels. As kindergarteners, many of her students do not know how to read, but Gail has found ways to help them decipher the information. Prepackaged foods and fast food restaurants have caused many children to miss out on these important food lessons at home. Each year Gail organizes a taste-testing event. Students are welcomed into the gym where they have the chance to sample a wide variety of fruits and vegetables. "So many of these kids have never tasted vegetables," Gail said. "Most of these fruits and vegetables are new



to them, and I have to teach them that if they don't like something they need to quietly throw it away so as not to influence the other students' opinions around them. We need them to learn what the foods are, and that they are great for our bodies."

The level of interaction and enjoyment coming from the students is hard to miss. Gail serves as an inspiration to other physical education teachers in Waxahachie and across the state. She credits the collaboration and continuing education she receives at physical education conferences for many of her successful lessons.

Gail plans to teach elementary physical education for the rest of her life — or until they make her stop. After many adventures across the world, Gail is where she wants to be and would not trade her job for anything. "I was scared to death to teach kindergarten," Gail said. "These kids didn't know colors, how to read or write, and I didn't know how to train them. But these kids are so loveable and excited about everything. They don't have an attitude, and they want to learn. It makes my job so rewarding." **NOW**

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In The Kitchen With Debbie Barnard and Tabby Ashmore

— By Adam Walker

Debbie Barnard and Tabby Ashmore share a similar love of cooking with different beginnings. Debbie began cooking with her grandmother. "I learned bread dough is delicious," Debbie said. "This began a love for cooking that has never stopped." Tabby began by watching her mother. "She cooked everything from scratch," Tabby said. "She loved to decorate her children's birthday cakes."

Debbie's grandmother-in-law, Irene

Curry, was a well-known Waxahachie cook. Tabby's family owned K-Bob's Steakhouse and each of her four brothers were fabulous cooks. Years later when Debbie and Tabby became friends, they soon realized they enjoyed cooking together. Tabby enjoys baking pastries and sweets, but Debbie loves cooking meats and veggies, with savory flavors. Their friends now refer to them as Sweet and Savory. **NOW**



GRANDMOTHER ASHMORE'S CHILI

2 lbs. ground chili meat
4 tsp. chopped garlic
1 tsp. shortening
1 small bottle chili powder
2 Tbsp. flour
2 tsp. ground cumin
Salt, to taste
1/4 tsp. black pepper
Water, enough to cover the meat

1. Drop chili meat and garlic into hot shortening. Cook slowly for 15 minutes.
2. Mix together chili powder, flour, cumin, salt and pepper. Add to meat. Add water, stir and bring to a boil.
3. Lower heat to simmer. Slow simmer for 30 to 45 minutes.

AUNT JOHNEDA'S CORN BREAD

1 3/4 cups self-rising cornmeal
1/3 cup flour
1/8 tsp. soda
Approximately 1 3/4 cups buttermilk
Shortening

1. Mix dry ingredients in a bowl. Add buttermilk and stir to corn bread consistency.
2. Melt shortening in a cast-iron skillet in 400 F to 450 F oven. Sprinkle some cornmeal in hot grease.
3. Pour in corn bread mixture and bake until golden brown. Umm, umm, good!

BREAD AND BUTTER PICKLES

25-30 medium cucumbers
8 large white onions
2 large bell peppers
1/2 cup of salt

5 cups cider vinegar
5 cups sugar
2 Tbsp. mustard seed
1 tsp. turmeric
1/2 tsp. cloves

1. Wash cucumbers and slice thin. Chop onions and peppers. Combine with cucumbers and salt. Let stand 3 hours. Drain.
2. Combine vinegar, sugar and spices in a large kettle. Bring to a boil.
3. Pack vegetables in sterilized jars to within 1/2 inch of top. Pour in vinegar mixture while still hot.
4. Process in boiling water bath for 5 minutes.

AUNT CASSIE'S CO-CO-NUT PIE

2 cups sugar
2 eggs, beaten
1/2 stick (2 oz.) melted margarine
1 can Pet® milk
2 tsp. flour
1 can coconut
Pinch of salt
1 tsp. vanilla
Unbaked pie shell

1. Mix all ingredients together.
2. Pour into unbaked pie shell.
3. Bake at 350 F until set.

CHICKEN AND DUMPLINGS

1 chicken
1 can cream of chicken soup
1 cup milk
1/2 stick butter
2 chicken bouillon cubes
1/2 cup milk
1/2 cup shortening

1 tsp. salt
1 egg
Flour
Pepper, to taste

1. Boil chicken until done. Take out and de-bone.
2. Add soup, 1 cup milk, butter and bouillon cubes to broth. Remove from fire.
3. With a fork, beat 1/2 cup milk, shortening, salt and egg.
4. Sift a little flour into mixture and beat. Keep adding flour until consistency of pie crust.
5. Put half of dough at a time onto floured pastry board and knead until tough and rolling consistency. Roll tissue thin and cut into strips.
6. Put broth on fire and bring to a boil. Drop dumplings, one by one, into broth.
7. Put in chicken. Add pepper.
8. Simmer over low heat until done.

CHEESE GRITS CASSEROLE

1 1/2 cups quick-cooking grits
6 cups water, unsalted
3 eggs, beaten
1 stick margarine, melted
1 lb. Velveeta cheese, diced
2 tsp. LAWRY'S® Seasoned Salt
Dash of TABASCO®

1. Cook grits in boiling water (according to package directions).
2. Thoroughly mix in remaining ingredients, stirring over low heat until cheese is melted.
3. Place in greased glass casserole. Bake uncovered at 250 F for 1 hour.

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Be Prepared for the Inevitable

— By *Loyd Wilson*



Have you ever dreamed you were standing in a crowd naked from the waist down? That's how it feels to be unprepared, as if something is missing (your pants). Could it be that you are missing some life insurance preparedness?

You buy auto insurance and homeowners or renters insurance because you may have a claim, but you will definitely have a life calamity called death one day. I know at that point you will not care about being naked, but your family will not have your income. Have you prepared for that reality?

Life insurance does something that no other financial product

can do. It sets aside a large sum of money for some unknown time in the future. So as long as the premiums are paid, your family has some financial security, and you will have some peace of mind knowing you are prepared.

The coverage doesn't have to be costly. With term insurance, you are buying more "bang for the buck." The death benefit you are buying is designed for a specific time frame with term insurance. Some families choose to carry a large amount of term insurance until their children become independent and have moved out of the household.

There are other types of life insurance that are more costly, such as whole life and universal flexible life, but they also have a living benefit as well as a death benefit. These types of life insurance are more expensive, but they have more features as well.

Another type of life insurance is called variable universal life. It has a basic life face amount, and it also has a separate account that is composed of one or more securities called sub accounts. These are generally owned by the life company, but they are controlled and directed by the insured or owner. They are very similar to mutual funds. Being securities and being tied to the life policy, the total account value rises and falls with the stock market performance of the sub accounts. The past performance of those sub accounts is no guarantee of the future performance, of course.

As far as how much life insurance to purchase, many advisors counsel to have at least 10 times your annual salary in face amount. But many people have bought life policies they could not afford, and wound up not being able to pay the premiums. So be practical, and before you buy, make doubly certain the policy will stay in force.

Remember the old adage, "Without a plan, you are planning to fail." Get with a trusted agent and plan for what you know is coming one day. The next time you feel that something is missing, I hope it's not your pants! Be prepared; have some life insurance! **NOW**

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Breast Cancer Awareness

— By Betty Tryon



The list no one wants to be on is endless. You cannot be rich enough or famous enough to escape it if you have it. Christina Applegate, Elizabeth Edwards, Amy Mickelson and Sandra Day O'Connor can attest to that. Their names are only a fraction of the numbers of people with breast cancer. Thankfully, many famous people have willingly shared their stories in order to bring more awareness to the subject. Here is a sobering fact for you — more than one in four cancers is breast cancer. Besides

skin cancer, it is the most common cancer in the United States. It is so common that even men can fall prey to this disease. Richard Roundtree the actor and former Massachusetts senator Edward W. Brooke can attest to this.

Because of the prevalence of breast cancer in our society, the media swamps us with information regarding it all year. Nevertheless, October is the official month of Breast Cancer Awareness. This month, there will be an increased effort in helping people become aware of what they can do to better their odds at preventing this disease or for early detection to increase their chances of survival.

Becoming aware is your first step; action is the second. Do your monthly breast self-exam. Information about how to do it properly is literally at your fingertips. Do not neglect getting your yearly mammogram. Plan to have it done in a location near you. Yes, it might be a hassle, and sometimes uncomfortable, but invasive cancer will cost you far more hassles and the uncomfortable part is off the chart. Become aware of what your community has to offer for free or minimal-fee testing. Investigate your family's health history and discover your risks. Educate yourself about the proper diet, lifestyle choices and medications that can increase your risks. Discuss your concerns with your health care provider to determine the best course of action for you. Be your own best advocate for your health care!

Get the word out! Communicate to family members and friends the importance of being aware, and encourage them to take the necessary steps for their health. If you can, donate to reputable organizations that seek to meet the needs of those diagnosed with this disease. There are many opportunities to make a difference. Organizations that further the research of this disease are critical, but they need your help to find a cure. Breast cancer can be a frightening diagnosis, but knowledge is power. Improve your odds of survival by arming yourself with all the proper tools to fight this disease. **NOW**

This article is for general information only and does not constitute medical advice. Consult with your physician for questions regarding this topic.

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Air Scrubbers for the Home

— By Nancy Fenton

October is a great time to open doors and windows, at least for a while. When the weather does not permit open windows, try a few houseplants to freshen things up. In addition to adding beauty, they can even out humidity and add oxygen to a home. Recent studies by NASA have shown that houseplants not only produce oxygen, but they are effective in removing harmful chemicals from the air.

In the 1970s when our construction changed to make homes more energy efficient, there began to be a problem called "sick building." All the synthetic materials, which are known to emit various organic compounds, were linked to numerous health complaints. Man, himself, adds to the problems in closed, poorly ventilated areas. Think about

people in an airplane for an extended amount of time!

It is no secret that plants take in carbon dioxide and use it to make food by separating the carbon and the oxygen through photosynthesis in the daylight. They use the carbon for growth, seed production, etc. and emit the oxygen in the dark wee hours of the morning. The larger the leaf surface, the more effective the process.

According to recent studies there are many good plants to have in the house. The top ones are as follows:

1. Mother-in-law's Tongue
2. Dracaena
3. Philodendron
4. Areca Palm
5. Money Plant
6. Airplane Plant
7. English Ivy
8. Chinese Evergreen
9. Gerbera Daisy
10. Ficus
11. Christmas Cactus

12. Golden Pothos
13. Rubber Plant

If you choose to have plants in the house, get started now! Buy plants, saucers and rolling stands for them before they all disappear in the Halloween rush! I consider saucers and rolling stands a must since it seems important to protect the floor and to be able to clean under the stands. As for which plants to choose, make your selection based on how much light you have available. I have almost no direct sun, so I have to go with Chinese Evergreen, Mother-in-law's Tongue, Golden Pothos and Corn Plant. I also like the fact that they tell me when to water by wilting. Water in the saucer can evaporate out and help the humidity when our central heat comes on. Studies show that as few as 15 houseplants will significantly reduce the quantity of indoor contaminants. Try them. You may like the look, and your lungs will love the extra oxygen! **NOW**

Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener.

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Fourth Monday

Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis County: 6:30-8:30 p.m., Waxahachie Bible Church, 621 Grand Avenue. The October program is "Putting the Pieces Together" by Darlene Williams.

Tuesdays

Waxahachie Sunset Lions Club: 6:00 p.m., The Dish in the Rogers Hotel in downtown Waxahachie. Questions may be directed to Laura Hargrove at (817) 673-0356 or by attending a meeting.

Fridays and Saturdays in October

Ennis Public Theater presents *Greater Tuna*: 7:30 p.m. evening performances; 2:30 p.m. matinee performance Sunday, Oct. 31 only. 2705 N. Kaufman Street; Suite C, Ennis. For more information or to order tickets, call (972) 878-7529.

Saturdays

Improv Comedy Night: 8:00 p.m., After Hours Improv Theater, 100 N. College Street, Waxahachie. Also this month: **October 8:** 8:00 p.m., improv benefiting Red Oak Lady Hawks Volleyball; **October 15:** 8:00-11:00 p.m., "Jump, Jive and Wail" swing dance, \$10 per person; **October 22:** 7:00 p.m. Murder Mystery Dinner, \$35 per person includes 3-course dinner. Call (972) 937-9839 or visit www.AfterHoursImprov.com.

Second Saturday

Songwriter Second Saturdays: 6:00 p.m. social time; 6:30-7:15 p.m. dinner and fellowship; 7:30-8:15 p.m. opening act; 8:30-10:00 p.m. featured artist. For more information, contact Randy Tredway at (972) 938-9990 or e-mail him at randy@inthemusicroom.com. Bring beverages for yourself and a covered dish to share. Seating is limited.

October 1

Student Fair Day — early release.

October 2

Waxahachie Annual Chamber of Commerce Auction "No Place Like Home": 6:00-10:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center, 2000 Civic Center Lane, Waxahachie. E-mail kmaxwell@waxahachiechamber.com or call (972) 937-2390 for more information. Evening includes dinner, refreshments and admission to silent and live auctions.

October 9

Campfire Creek Therapeutic Riding Center's Ride of Champions Awards Ceremony: 3:00 p.m., 767 Bethel Road, Waxahachie. Call (972) 937-7265 for more information.

Sardis United Methodist Church's Lord's Acre celebration, 640 Sardis Road, Midlothian. Crafts, games and homemade items: 10:00 a.m.; barbecue brisket lunch: 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.; live auction: 1:00 p.m.

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October 9 and 10

Trade Days of Waxahachie: Operating hours are Saturday, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. and Sunday, 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Ellis County Expo Center, 2300 W. U.S. Hwy. 287, Waxahachie. Free parking and admission. For more information, visit www.tradedaysofwaxahachie.com or call Les Clemons at (972) 617-8156, James Scott at (214) 202-1788 or Jean Davis at (972) 816-3644.

October 11

Waxahachie Independent School Board Meeting: 6:00 p.m. study session; 7:30 p.m. general meeting at the Administration Building Board Room, 411 N. Gibson Street, Waxahachie.

October 15

Waxahachie High School Homecoming 2010 vs. West Mesquite: 7:30 p.m., Lumpkins Stadium.

October 19

WRC Pregnancy Center of Ellis County's 15th Anniversary Dinner: 6:30 p.m., Creekside Church on Highway 287 between Waxahachie and Midlothian. Guest speaker: Laurie Westlake. Tickets are complimentary but reservations are required. Call (972) 938-7900 or (972) 878-0784.

October 22 and 23

Waxahachie Community Theatre presents *Fiddler on the Roof*: Saturday at 7:30 p.m., Sunday at 2:30 p.m., Chautauqua Auditorium, Getzendaner Park, 299 S. Grand Avenue, Waxahachie. Presentation features Jerry Ellis as Tevye and Leslie Everett as Golde. For more information, contact Kasi Jones at (972) 646-1050 or visit www.waxahachiecommunitytheatre.com.

October 23

15th Annual Bob Phillips' Texas Country Reporter Festival: 9:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m., Historic Downtown Waxahachie. Food, fun, arts, crafts and live musical entertainment throughout the day. Parade begins at 10:00 a.m. For more information, call (972) 937-2390.

October 29

Trick or Treat: 3:00-5:00 p.m., downtown on the Courthouse Square. Hosted by the Waxahachie Downtown Merchants Association. Call (972) 937-2390 for more information.

October 30

Ellis County SPCA 8th Annual Bow Wow Howl-O-Ween Hustle: 9:00 a.m.-noon, Getzendaner Park, 299 S. Grand Avenue, Waxahachie. Doggie Fun Run and costume contests with all proceeds benefiting the Ellis County SPCA. Visit www.elliscountyspca.org for more details.

For more community events, visit our online calendar at www.nowmagazines.com.

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