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## On The Cover



Members of the  
Midlothian Fire  
Department conduct  
the first Citizens  
Fire Academy.

*Photo by Natalie Busch.*

# Contents

October 2011 • Volume 7, Issue 10



**8** **Honored to Serve**  
Helping people in need is the one  
common trait firefighters share.

**14** **Think Wedded Bliss**  
At Home With Chris and  
Theo Acker.

**24** **Football is the Tie  
That Binds**  
America's game holds special  
memories for two longtime friends.



**30** **Enjoy the Dance**  
Sheila McDowell found that Zumba  
teaches the key to any fitness  
routine is loving yourself.

**36** **Connected Through  
Craft**  
Don Lish turns raw steel into  
beautiful hunting blades, linking  
himself with each knife he makes.



**42** **BusinessNOW**

**46** **Around TownNOW**

**48** **HealthNOW**

**52** **CookingNOW**

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# Editor's Note

*Hello, Midlothian!*

The World Series, the State Fair of Texas, pumpkin harvesting and for us in North Texas, a welcomed hint of cool breezes in the air — finally, it is October! Every season has its beauty, and autumn is no slacker in this regard. The changing colors of the leaves must delight the artist in all of us.

Autumn is also the beginning for the multiple feasts to come: Halloween candy hunts; delicious, juicy turkeys for Thanksgiving; and homemade cookies, gingerbread houses and plump hams for Christmas. Those who cook — and those who wished they knew how — find their thoughts turning to fall recipes, such as: pumpkin pies, pecan cranberry salads, butternut squash soup and apple cider. Let the feasting begin!

If you have recipes you would like to share with your neighbors, contact me at [bttryon.nowmag@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bttryon.nowmag@sbcglobal.net) or (972) 775-5095 to be our cooking feature of the month!



*Betty*

Betty Tryon  
MidlothianNOW Editor



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# Honored to Serve

— By Alex Allred

*The life of a firefighter is perhaps one of the most exciting yet misunderstood, dangerous though methodical, funny but frustrating professions a person could ever hope to have. In one day, in one moment, a firefighter can save a life and lose one. The timing, the ability and willingness of a firefighter can literally change the course of history. No surprise, it is also reportedly in the top three most stressful jobs, following the President of the United States.*



“But I can’t imagine doing anything else,” said Deputy Chief Dale McCaskill. Both McCaskill and Chief David Schrodtt have seen tremendous changes within the department. As recently as 1987, there were only six members to the department. Today, the Midlothian Fire Department is now being called a leader in fire-base, pre-hospital care. In fact, due to the extensive training and demands on the paramedics and firefighters, Midlothian is the only fire department within Ellis County that offers ambulance transport to hospitals.





**“While the firefighters have varied personalities, they share one common trait: We like to help people.”**

Other cities and towns use privately owned, for-profit services.

The pride that these firefighters have in their department, their leaders and their work was the motivation behind starting the first Citizen’s Fire Academy. The premise was simple: Offer a seven-week course to everyday citizens, and meet once a week to learn the ins and outs of the department. While the firefighters hoped to impart some knowledge about the equipment and day-to-day functions of the department, the first-ever Citizen’s Fire Academy walked



away with far more.

Just as firefighters are depicted in the movies, Midlothian’s firefighters are funny and engaging. They play practical jokes on one another and revel in all embarrassing moments of fellow firefighters. But these escapades generally come as stress relief following a difficult call in which someone was seriously hurt. “It is,” Capt. Kevin Lucia said, “the worst part of being a firefighter. Seeing suffering, loss and uncontrollable situations is the worst. Sometimes, there is nothing that can be done to help someone, and you feel their



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pain." While the firefighters have varied personalities, they share one common trait: "We like to help people," Capt. Lucia said.

"We're team players," Capt. Jeff Silva added.

Team play is certainly something the students of the Fire Academy learned, whether they teamed up to hold the 70-pound "Jaws of Life" equipment or the hose. That seemingly harmless water hose can weigh hundreds of pounds and can easily throw an ill-prepared firefighter to the ground.



"I honestly had no idea how physically demanding this job was," said Fire Academy graduate and Navarro College English teacher, Michelle Powe.

For Donna Collins, the academy offered a real reality check. "I know I was like a lot of people who had this perception that firefighters are always at the station doing nothing, and that life was so easy for them. I had no idea," Donna said. As the administrative assistant to the fire chief, "I respect them now so much more, having gone through the academy."

Few people understand that heart attacks among firefighters have been an issue. In one moment, they are resting; in the next, they are desperately trying to save a life! This is one reason that the Midlothian Fire Department now does annual check-ups and mandates that its employees take part in a progressive wellness program, including fitness routines and better nutrition. But the



issue of fitness was not lost on the Fire Academy students who struggled with both equipment and gear.

In the academy, students learned that each firefighter is assigned a set of gear, including: bunker pants, coat, hood, boots, gloves and helmet, as well as breathing apparatus, to enter burning structures.

"The night we practiced putting on the air tanks was really fun but a little intimidating," Michelle said. "Just standing there in a safe, controlled environment, you have a moment of panic when you start breathing through the mask. I can't imagine doing that in the dark, with a fire and lives on the line."

If you stand still too long, an alarm will sound. While Fire Academy citizens practiced crawling around on the ground in full gear, sweat filling their boots, an occasional alarm would go off, indicating that one of the "firefighters" had not moved in the last 30 seconds. While the citizens laughed and performed the "firefighter shuffle," a move that requires the

sudden wiggling and shuffling of legs and hips to stop the alarm, Lt. Brancato offered a sobering reminder. In film



footage of the terrorist attack on Sept. 11, those same alarms can be heard in the chaos of people running from the Twin Towers. "I can't watch it, because I know what it means," he said. Brother or sister firefighters were down.

The Citizen's Fire Academy students got to see the inner workings of an ambulance, a PHI air (helicopter)

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ambulance, and even used the “Jaws of Life” to remove car doors and cut off the tops of two cars. “You can’t believe how hot it is in the uniforms! And we were standing in the shade with a breeze,” Michelle laughed. A typical firefighter responding to a fire or rescuing a victim from a car on the side of the highway can lose up to eight pounds in sweat alone.

With so much sweating, one would hope that the department had enough gear to supply each of the 45 firefighters on staff. Unfortunately, the city does not have enough air tanks and regulators for each fighter. As advanced as the



department is, it still needs more equipment. This would include the Pac Tracker, an innovative device that is used by the Rapid Intervention Team (RIP). It allows a team to locate one of its own downed firefighters and execute a rescue. It is here that Capt. Silva is most passionate about team play. “It is the team approach,” he said. “We have to have each other’s backs. Our lives depend on it.”

Once again, team play was a factor upon graduation day when the first ever Citizen’s Fire Academy cadets crawled into a burning building (used for training by the academy), dragging a hose line to put out their very first fire! While the cadets erupted into applause after everyone made it through the fire house, Chief McCaskill was pleased to have new ambassadors for the department.

Understanding the joy and stress, the labor and knowledge required for the job is so important. And always, according to Chief McCaskill, the best part of the job is, “I get to serve the citizens in a time of need. It is an honor to serve.” **NOW**





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# Think Wedded *bliss*

— By Alex Allred

*Chris and Theo Acker are living the American dream. A mere glimpse of their sprawling estate with a magnificent, tree-laden driveway, roaming longhorns, a stock pond large enough for the family to ride their Jet Skis in, two intersecting creek beds and an old-fashioned foot bridge with a beautiful house perched on a hilltop are all evidence to their successes. But this is only half the story. Everything they have come through hard work, blood, sweat and many tears. In fact, the only thing that came easily was their friendship.*



## At Home With **Chris and Theo Acker**







Chris was (and still is) a homebuilder and designer. Theo was working as a mortgage loan officer. It was natural, then, that their paths would cross. At the time, Theo had a clever advertising slogan entitled "Think Theo," which certainly had its effect on Chris. Nevertheless, it was not until family interceded that he made his move.

"I've learned to listen to my parents," Chris laughed. "They're not here to steer you wrong." When Chris referred his mother and grandmother to Theo for a loan — always thinking Theo — his grandmother did not waste any time. "She said, 'You should date her!'" But, both Chris and Theo were getting out of very difficult relationships. While they took their time, first building on a friendship, others around them knew these two were the perfect match.

Not only are both Theo and Chris funny, social and adventurous, they are also deeply connected to their families. As the daughter of a small-town, farming family where her father also



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served as a preacher, Theo had been slow to introduce her parents to Chris. On a whim, Chris decided to make the hour-plus drive to meet them. As soon as Theo's mother opened the door, she simply said, "Oh, my." She knew instantly who the young man was.

Today, they are newlyweds with three children between them. Not surprisingly, Haley, Payton and Reagan became fast friends while Theo and Chris built their own house. "I decided to build on a Monday and we were pouring concrete by Friday. I didn't even finish the blueprints," Chris laughed. Since their courtship, it has been a whirlwind mixed with spontaneity. On the night Chris proposed to Theo, they were in Times Square in New York on New Year's Eve, hoping to watch the ball drop. "But we were kicked out," Chris said, due to overcrowding. Mere hours later, the couple was sitting with the New York Chief of Police and his wife, alongside actress/singer Jennifer Lopez and a string of other celebrity guests in a private booth watching the ball drop. As Theo rapidly sent texts to friends, those



who love her could only laugh, "Only you, Theo." The bigger question became, "How can your wedding top this?"

It did. However, they did not have a long guest list with an expensive wedding planner (although it had been fun to meet Jennifer Lopez!) with elaborate flowers and dresses and party tents. They had a very simple and quiet ceremony at their new abode. After months of construction, burying the electric cable themselves, home was the perfect place to make their vows. In fact, it was there while working with a trench digger that Chris pretended to find a promise ring to present to Theo. "He said, 'Look what that trencher dug up!'" Theo smiled.

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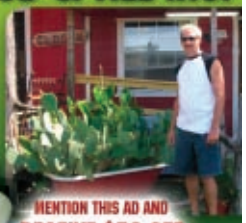
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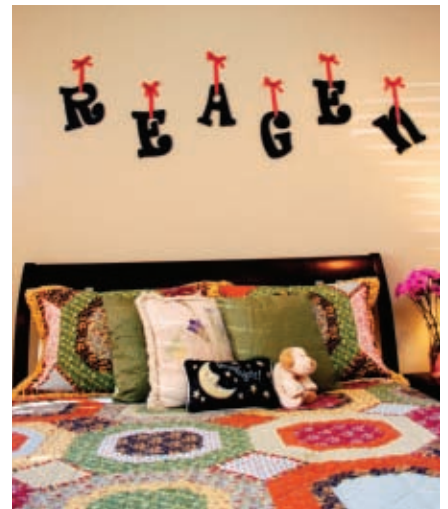
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tended to. In its design, Chris did not want a sprawling mansion but a highly functional home that showcased who they are and how they live. The first clue is right outside the front door.

"When I said I wanted a pool right outside the front door, the guy looked at me like I was crazy. But I knew that was what I wanted," Chris explained. Situated between the front door and the lodge-like patio, the pool is literally a stone throw away from the pond.

"When he gets home from work," Theo said, "a lot of times he likes to throw a line in to catch a few fish." From the corner of the patio, Chris can catch a Rangers game on the flat-screen television that is mounted outside while casting a line — all under the shaded breezeway of his patio. It is an oasis.

Fishing has always been a part of Chris' life. Just inside the three-bedroom home is a shadow box filled with Layfield Lures. Two Texans, Jester and Cotton Layfield, designed the lures during the Depression and Chris' maternal grandfather owned Layfield Lures, teaching Chris to fish at a very early age. But, he tells no fish tales. When Chris talks about the footbridge beyond the house that was constructed in Granbury

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and transported to Midlothian in the 1930s, a major production given its sheer size and weight, or that buffalo do not make good pets, he is not kidding. The latter involves a hilarious story of his “pet” buffalo escaping, only to be cornered in a graveyard and rescued by a buffalo whisperer. The patio, much like the house, is the perfect setting for this vibrant couple to share their days with one another.

When the economy took a nosedive, so did the mortgage business, and Theo was suddenly rethinking her career. Together, she and Chris agreed that she should follow her passion to become a schoolteacher. So, Theo went back to school to earn her degree from Texas A&M University-Commerce at Navarro College. “Plus,” Theo added, “I love to keep house.” In addition to playing the piano, staying home has allowed Theo to pursue yet two more passions: baking her specialty chocolate and strawberry cakes, among others, and calling KBEC. “I used to have a mortgage talk show with them. Now I just like to call in and say, ‘Hi!’”

Together, Chris and Theo also converted their garage into an apartment that serves as a chalet to Theo’s daughter, Reagan. Parked outside is a golf cart used to travel around the Acker’s compound. Buffalo long gone, today their pets involve four cows and two horses, as well as the untamed array of animals that come to visit from the surrounding woods, including raccoons, bobcats, wild turkey and more. “I used to always want to be running around,” Theo said with a shrug. “But now I don’t even like to go anywhere. I just want to be home. This is the most perfect place. And when I’m out, I just can’t wait to come back home again.” Think bliss. **NOW**



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# MISD

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## MISD Earns Highest Rating on Comptroller's FAST Report

Midlothian ISD has earned the highest rating of five stars in the 2011 Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts FAST (Financial Allocation Study for Texas) rating report. "This recognition spotlights our conservative effort to be good stewards of MISD's taxpayer dollars while providing a quality educational experience for our students," said Dr. Edd Bigbee, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations. Each Texas school district and charter school is assigned a FAST rating of one to five stars, indicating its success in combining cost-effective spending with the achievement of measurable student academic progress. There are 46 Texas school districts and charter schools that earned a five star rating. Texas has over 1,200 school districts and over 200 charter schools.



Financial Allocation  
Study for Texas

## Danny Hemphill Named Bus Driver of the Year

Bus drivers deliver our most valuable resources — students. Many times there are drivers who go the extra mile and deserve to be recognized for their efforts.

Danny Hemphill was awarded the 2011 School Bus Driver of the Year, sponsored by the district's fleet insurer, Property Casualty Alliance of Texas and administered through Edwards Risk Management, Inc. The award is based on multiple driver attributes, such as attitude, leadership, perseverance, student and parent relationships and technical skill.

MISD Transportation Coordinator, Deanna Cannon, presented Hemphill with a certificate and a personalized jacket during special recognition at the school board meeting held on September 19. "I commend Danny Hemphill for his attitude and commitment toward his colleagues and students. Because of his strong work ethic, he deserves to be the 2011 Bus Driver of the Year," said Cannon. Hemphill has been driving a MISD bus for 10 years. He is also a local realtor for Coldwell Banker Americana Realtors.



## New Webpage On Bullying

Midlothian ISD takes the concern of bullying seriously and uses proactive measures to educate students and staff. A new web page on bullying and cyberbullying has been launched for quick access on how to report bullying, district anti-bullying programs and other resources. There is also a "Break the Silence" video produced by Frank Seale Middle School teachers, which portrays the realities of bullying and encourages others to stand up and report a bullying incident. Because of the recent HB 1942 anti-bullying law, the local news media has applauded the district's efforts in providing a user-friendly format. The webpage is located on all campus websites under the Safety & Security link.





*mission is to develop in each student the character, confidence, knowledge and skills to be successful in life."*

## Gold Card Club

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**Benefits:** Free admission to Midlothian ISD fine arts events, such as plays, musicals and concerts. Also, free admission to MISD athletic events in school district gymnasiums and general admission seating at the Multipurpose Stadium. (Not valid for playoffs and fundraising events).

## Your bond dollars at work!

On May 14, 2011 Midlothian ISD voters approved the district's \$97.3 million bond package to build high school #2 (phase 1), elementary #7 and Frank Seale Middle School addition. For additional Bond 2011 updates visit [www.midlothian-isd.net/bond](http://www.midlothian-isd.net/bond).

### Architect

The district hired VLK, an architectural firm, to design all three 2011 bond projects.

### Schematic Design Process

The first project of design is the high school #2 (phase 1), and this process is one of five professional services VLK provides MISD: 1) schematic design, 2) design development, 3) construction documents, 4) bidding and 5) construction. The MISD School Board and the Design Team have identified programs to be included in the HS #2. Core academic, cocurricular and extracurricular programs are on the list. In addition, a list of programs were health science, horticulture, and culinary arts. (Note: some programs may be started with HS #2, phase 2).

### Construction Manager at Risk

The Board approved the selection of Charter Builders as the Construction Manager at Risk for High School #2 (Phase 1) and the addition to FSMS contingent upon successful negotiation and board approval of a contract.

### Bond Oversight Committee

The MISD Board of Trustees approved the recommendation to establish a citizen's Bond Oversight Committee subsequent to the successful passage of the bond election. The committee's objectives are: 1) to oversee the use of school district funds in the 2011 bond building projects, and 2) to receive information on all aspects of the 2011 bond building projects and expenditures.



Midlothian students and staff showcased their college spirit during the "College: Go Get It Week," which was an effort to ensure students have an awareness of postsecondary education opportunities.



At right: Avery and Riley shared their future dreams with LaRue Miller principal, Beth Van Amburgh.



Above: MHS counselors Melissa Tomlinson, Carol Lemmon, Harriette Fowler and Laura Phillips (not pictured David Moore and Hollye Hess)

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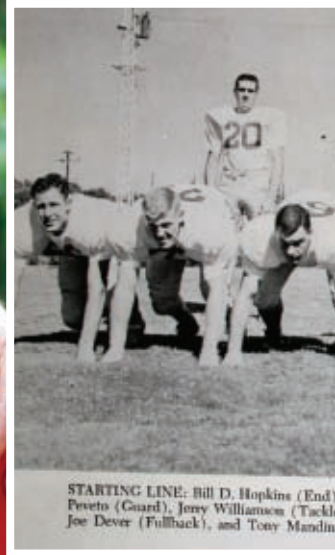
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# FOOTBALL



STARTING LINE: Bill D. Hopkins (End)  
Feveto (Guard), Jerry Williamson (Tackle)  
Joe Dever (Fullback), and Tony Mandina

## is the Tie That Binds

— By Betty Tryon

*For all lovers of football and of history, this tale will delight you. Here in Midlothian, we have a walking, breathing embodiment of both! Jon Gilliam played in the very first Super Bowl. Longtime friend, Tony Mandina, remembers watching that game. "I was on the edge of my seat. I knew Jon was playing because I kept up with wherever he went. I was living in Sulphur Springs, Texas, and coaching at the time." Although Tony was able to follow Jon's whereabouts when he was an active player in the American Football League (AFL), after he left, the friends lost touch with each other until a couple of years ago.*

Back to the beginning when they first met, Jon and Tony played football together for four years at East Texas State University (now Texas A&M University-Commerce) "I used to block for him," Jon said. "Tony played halfback, and I was center lineback."

Tony remembers a moment of triumph for their team. "In 1958, we played in the Tangerine Bowl in Orlando, Florida (now called the Capital One Bowl). That was a big deal for a small college like ours."





After college, both men went their separate ways and took different career paths. "I had an opportunity to play in the Canadian football League," Tony said. "The Baltimore Colts contacted me, but I didn't think I was good enough to play at that level, and I wanted to go into the Marine Corps. So, I went into the corps



Jon Gilliam (Center), Bobby Parker (Tackle), Jim Farmer (Guard), Dee Mackey (End), Sam McCord (Quarterback), Dan Malone (Halfback), and Jon Gilliam (Halfback).

**"Being a part of the first Super Bowl contest is something few can claim, and Jon will always cherish."**

for three years and had the ranking of second lieutenant. I hurt my shoulder while I was in there playing football, so that shortened my time."

After graduation, Jon went directly to the professional leagues of football. "I was drafted by the Green Bay Packers in the '60s," he stated. "I didn't play for them — just with them during the fall training season. I was traded to the New York Giants. They traded me to the Dallas Texans, and they cut me. After that, I went to the Kansas City Chiefs, signed with them and started as their center and played for them for seven years."

Jon's time with the Chiefs was from 1961-1967. Included in those seven years with the Chiefs were two years with the

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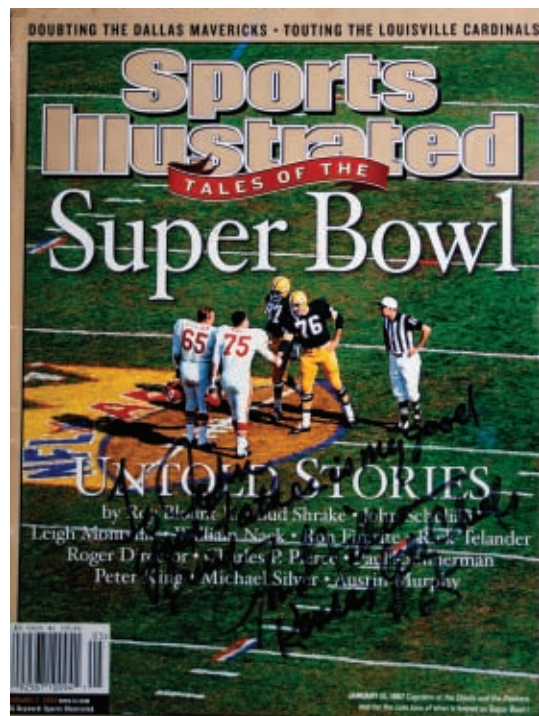
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Texans. Jon explained the situation to bring clarity. "The Dallas Texans turned into the Kansas City Chiefs. After the first year, neither team had money of any significance, so the two owners



supposedly flipped a coin and our owner, Lamar Hunt, lost the toss. So, he had to deal with Kansas City. It was a lucrative deal, so they moved the team to Kansas City. That year, we won the AFL Championship (as the Dallas Texans). The next year is when they moved to Kansas City."

Jon was a big guy, standing 6 foot 3 inches and weighing 230 pounds. It certainly helped his football career.





Another fact that contributed to his success was the absence of serious injuries while playing in college. Tony added, "Jon could beat guys who were a lot bigger than him because he was thinking all the time. You have to outsmart those guys, and Jon was very smart in his play."

Meanwhile, Tony was building his life, after his stint in the Marine Corps. "I went into coaching and taught school for seven years," he stated. "At the end of the seven years, I was offered a job as a salesman making two or three times what I was making as a schoolteacher. So, that is what I ended up doing as a career. I sold Resistol — the largest hat selling company in the country — and Stetson hats. As a salesman, I had part of Texas, part of Oklahoma and part of Louisiana. Traveling five days a week, I enjoyed doing it because it was basically just talking to people. They wanted the product, so I didn't have to sell that. I did that for over 20 years."

During all of those years apart, Tony wanted to reconnect with Jon and tried to locate him. The moment of their reunion was quite unexpected. Tony explained, "You won't believe this story. Somebody told me that they thought Jon was living here in this area. I was a member of the Catholic Church, and I had gone to mass that Sunday morning. My daughter wanted me to go to the church she was going to in Waxahachie. So, I decided to go after going to my church." Laughing he said, "Boy, I thought, *I'm doing good today. I'm going to church two different times!* So I got there and, as I was walking in, Jon

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was walking out. I saw him and said, 'Jon! I've been looking for you a long time. I guess the Good Lord said, "You two are going to meet!" Isn't that something?' Since finding him, we stayed in touch. I guess we're brothers."

Jon agreed. "When you go to college and play football, you develop a family concept. You're all brothers. With professional football, it's a different thing. Bottom line is, you like your teammates in professional football, but there is no family atmosphere. There is a whole lot



of partying going on; it's just a different atmosphere. So, I really related to the guys I played with in college 110 percent more than the guys I played with professionally."

Since being reunited, Jon and Tony had a lot of catching up to do and many football tales to share. One special item is a copy of a *Sports Illustrated* magazine issued during the year of the first Super Bowl in 1967. Obviously, there have been many changes in the culture that surrounds the Super Bowl over the years. Jon illustrated this difference by pointing to the cover of the magazine. "If you look on the cover of *Sports Illustrated* January 15, 1967, there is a shot of five people. There is my teammate and me, the two opposing Green Bay Packer teammates and the referee. With the last Super Bowl, there were 287 people on the field."

The first Super Bowl was called the First World Championship Game, and it was played in Los Angeles, California, with the Kansas City Chiefs against the Green Bay Packers. The Packers won 35 to 10. Being a part of the first Super Bowl contest is something few can claim, and Jon will always cherish. The only thing that could make it better would be to share it with a good friend, and Jon gets to have it better. **NOW**

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# Enjoy the

# Dance

— By Alex Allred

*Ditch the workout; join the party. This is the mantra for those who love Zumba, a Latin-inspired dance fitness workout that is revolutionizing the fitness industry. Created only in the 1990s by dancer and choreographer Albert “Beto” Perez, Zumba has quickly become one of the most sought-after workouts in American gyms.*

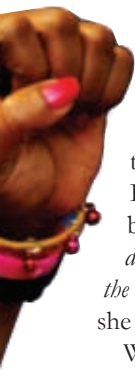


For Sheila McDowell, however, it was not love at first groove. She was teaching aerobics when one of her students invited her to attend a Zumba class. “So, I tried it,” Sheila said. But she arrived late and found that, “they were already doing all these body movements and dancing around. I’d never done that before and thought, *I can’t do this! I’m too old for this! I’m 50 years old!*”

Even though she was in excellent condition from teaching aerobics, step and total body aerobics, she stayed away from Zumba for two more months. While aerobics classes are based on a count







system, Zumba is driven by rhythm, the sound of music and repetitive movements. "But that wasn't it. I like to dance," Sheila said. "But they were moving in a way I thought I couldn't. They were shaking their booties, and I was thinking, *I can't be doing this as an adult. This goes against all the social training I've ever had,*" she laughed.

When the same student came back and asked that Sheila try the class once more, she agreed. "And this time, I loved it.



**For Sheila, it is all about enjoying the music, appreciating your own body and celebrating life.**

This time, I arrived on time so I was able to mingle before class and talk to the others," an important step, Sheila pointed out, to feeling comfortable before the music even starts. "It was a two-hour class, and I danced and danced and danced. I fell in love that day."

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samba, salsa and mambo moves, Sheila works for a software company where she is able to work remotely from home. This was extremely important when her children were minors, as it allowed her to



**“I danced and danced and danced. I fell in love that day.”**



be a stay-at-home mom. “I use my lunch hour to practice new routines,” she said. In addition to the dance moves, aspects of martial arts and various lunges and squats are incorporated throughout the hour-long routine. In short, “every part of your body is being worked!”

Once Sheila earned her certification in Zumba, she could not wait to share this unique style of fitness, and for Patty Soper-Shaw, it was a change she was looking for. “I decided it was time for me to lose some weight and get back in shape,” Patty said. Already a member of





the Main Street Gym, "I had been told that Zumba was an exercise class set to Latin music with Latin moves. You wore cute little skirts that jingled, and the more you moved, the more they jingled. And there were pink ones to boot — I was sold!" The skirt is a sheer scarf fabric laced with decorative metal-like tassels, or "coins," that jingle when moved, and for Patty, the jingle was half the fun.

A lifelong athlete, Sheila was also looking for fun. "I always participated in sports," she said. In high school, she played basketball, volleyball, ran track and was a cheerleader. "In college, I played intramural sports and was always active. I think that's what helped me maintain my energy level." But work, parenthood and life often took the fun out of exercise. While Sheila exudes beauty, confidence and joy, her age and insecurities once held her back.

"But it's important because I don't want to be tired. I want to have the energy to walk upstairs. I want to feel like I can do whatever I want to do, and I don't want to feel restricted." The irony, of course, is that Zumba has very little restriction. It teaches the true key to success in any fitness routine is love of oneself.

Certainly, Patty understands this. Once

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Zumba was introduced to her, it became a way of life. Zumba began to carry over into how she approached other day-to-day activities. For Patty, it is not unusual to suddenly break into a salsa routine while hitting the heavy bags in her kickboxing class or to mambo her way up a flight of stairs at work.

"Zumba helped me lose weight, as well as reduce my waistline. My Zumba skirt fit better and better the longer I took the class. It also toned up my arms, abs, hips and thighs. It is just a great cardio workout that also increases your stamina," Patty said.

With loud music and the party atmosphere, Zumba enthusiasts everywhere are lifting their own restrictions and having fun while they dance the calories away. "The thing about Latin steps is you have to get your hips



and feet both going at the same time, and once you stop thinking about it and just loosen up, it all comes together nicely and you get a great workout," Patty said.

While technique is important to Sheila, it is the attitude that she is most concerned about. "At first, people are so intimidated," Sheila said. Many, she says, want to shrink into a corner. So when Sheila learns that these same Zumba-ists are mambo-ing and dancing through hallways and stairways at work and down the aisles of grocery stores, it is a great reward. For Sheila, it is all about enjoying the music, appreciating your own body and celebrating life.

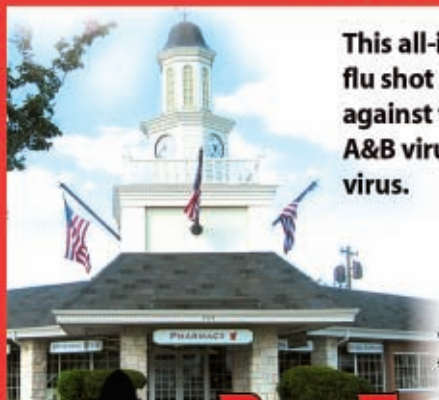
"If exercise has never been on your Top 10 of Fun Things to Do list," Patty said with a smile, "take Zumba! It will change your mind about exercise." And possibly change the way you see a flight of stairs. With that attitude and a coin skirt wrapped around her waist, Sheila offers the sound yet simple advice on how to lead a happy and healthy life: "Enjoy the dance!" **NOW**





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# Connected Through Craft

— By Zachary R. Urquhart

*In today's modern society with so much technology available, practically everything is mass-produced. It's rare to find people making things the hard way. But some individuals still make things by hand and find great pleasure in doing so. Don Lish is one of these people. Working in a space barely big enough to call a shop, Don turns raw steel, scrap metal, wood and often antlers into beautiful, hand-sculpted works of art.*

Don's hobby started on somewhat of a whim. He liked hunting knives and was intrigued by them but did not put much thought into making them himself. He worked for 38 years as an insurance adjuster and also repaired auto

glass on the side. One of his friends, Brooks Lough, was in the car restoration business but made knives in his spare time. In 1990, Brooks called Don for help on a car, and Don said he would do it for one of Brooks' knives, instead of money. Now that he had a knife made especially for him, Don's interest was piqued. Several months later, Brooks called and asked Don if he would like to buy his equipment and supplies. This was a big deal, as Don recounted, "You need a lot of stuff, and you don't usually get it

all at once." By taking Brooks' equipment and supplies, Don was leaping into the trade of knife-making — headfirst. "Now that I had all of this stuff, I actually had to use it," Don said.

The process for making each blade seems deceptively simple. Don gives the block of raw steel a quick sanding with a belt sander to remove striations found in raw steel. Next, he draws the blade shape and begins grinding away. To do this, he cuts away the larger chunks, which will not be part of the final blade, with







a hand saw. Then Don shows his desire to do things the old-fashioned way as he files down the steel to its sharpened blade by hand. Once the blade is close to being finished, Don adds a handle and secures everything with a combination of pins and adhesives. After one last sharpening, he makes a sheath, and the project is finished. The reality is one knife from steel and antlers to finished product, which takes upward of 20 hours to complete. And that process is full of

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potential mistakes that can result in a ruined, or at least inferior, final creation.

More important than understanding the process involved in Don's knife-making is understanding why he does it. Someone can buy a mass-produced hunting knife at any number of stores for less than Don spends on his materials, so



it might seem antiquated to hand-grind blades for hours at a time. Although he does sell many of his knives to offset his costs, Don's main goal in his craft is the craft itself. "I don't want it to seem like a chore. I want it to be a creative effort," he said, as he looked at photographs of some of the knives he has made in the last 20 years.

For that reason, Don grinds his 'DNL' initials into the blade of every knife he

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makes, proof that this really is “just a way to express myself,” he said. One of his most important projects each year is the knife he donates to the Lord’s Acre Festival at First United Methodist Church. Don has given one of his creations each year for over a decade, and proudly stated, “The last several years, it seems that the big bidders, the ones who want to donate a lot of money, wait for my knives.”

Several years ago, Don’s wife, Barbara, had the idea that he should detail his knife-making process, so he began filling photo albums with pictures and descriptions of each knife he sculpts. This Rolodex of knives serves as a collected memory of how he has progressed in his craft. Don has pages of pictures and descriptions that include everything from the materials he used, to the people for whom each knife was made.

The photo album is evidence of Don’s overall sense of nostalgia. In his secondary shop, where some of his larger power tools accompany the first new car he and Barbara purchased in 1964, Don houses several sentimental collections. As he peruses stacks of the elk antlers that will eventually be shaped into knife handles, Don recounts the story behind any number of the hundreds of collectibles in his garage/shop. One of the key pieces is Don’s display case filled with dozens of model cars, trains and airplanes. Many of the models inside were from his childhood, kept safe by his father for decades, unbeknownst to Don himself. Don points to a tableau of model planes posed in dogfighting

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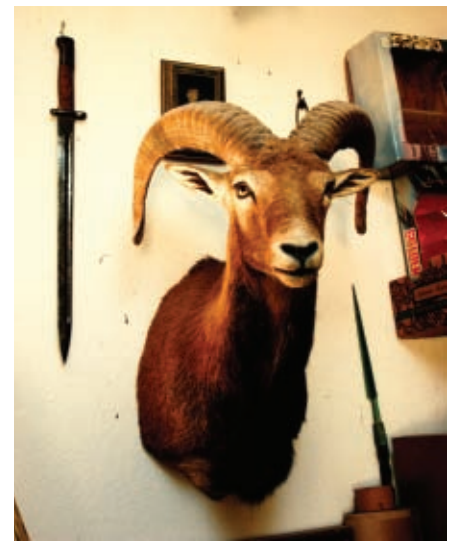


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position. "I never knew my dad was keeping these [airplanes]," he reminisced. "It's amazing to me that he kept all these models and stuff for me."

Don's nostalgic character is perhaps best exemplified in his original form of documentation. For years, before Barbara suggested the picture album, Don used a simple, pocket-sized notepad to keep track of each knife he made. What is most interesting, though, is that he still uses it, in addition to the picture album. Don is not the type of person that would break from a traditional practice like jotting notes in his old notepad, in spite of the fact that the same information is now more easily accessible in his more advanced catalogue. In his flip book, Don



has evidence of knives made for family, friends and as gifts for people he has never met. One of his favorite stories is that of a knife he made as a wedding present of sorts. The preacher who officiated the service was a hunter, so the bride had a knife commissioned as a thank you gift. She and the groom gave him his gift shortly before the service, so he was already dressed in his ecclesiastical robe. He said a sincere thank you and simply tucked the knife in his pants underneath the robe, performing the ceremony while the knife rested against his leg.

With his photo album, flip book and various collections throughout his shop, Don keeps memories of his past. He is connected to the 154 knives he has crafted in the last two decades. More importantly, though, he has 154 connections to the people for whom each knife was made. **NOW**



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### **Midlothian Conference Center**

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(972) 723-7919  
[www.midlothiancenter.com](http://www.midlothiancenter.com)  
[cyndi.golden@midlothiancenter.com](mailto:cyndi.golden@midlothiancenter.com)

#### **Hours:**

Monday-Friday: 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.  
Saturday: 8:00 a.m.-midnight  
Sunday: 6:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.  
Extended hours available for special events.



Cyndi Golden is ready to show you what Midlothian Conference Center has to offer.



# LET'S DO BUSINESS

*Midlothian Conference Center is open and available for business.*

— By Betty Tryon

The new theme for Midlothian Conference Center should be onward and upward. Center Director Cyndi Golden has big plans for the facility. Cyndi most recently worked for the city of Irving as vice president of sales for the Convention and Visitors Bureau. With her experience in the hotel industry, she admitted this is a little different for her. "I love new projects. Even though I have sold conference centers before, they have always been attached to hotels. A goal of this city, and of mine, is to find a hotel to build right next to the conference center," she said.

The center is very busy Thursday through Sunday, but Cyndi wants to fill the schedule during the week also. "In order to go out there and find corporate business, people usually want a place where they can house their guests overnight so they can

have a two- or three-day meeting," she stated. "We are trying to be more full service. We have a corporate package now where they can get what they need in one place, including having a caterer. Now that we offer it, we have been able to pick up some monthly business. Our business is up 25 percent over last year. Some businesses can thrive in a down economy. Those are the ones that are affordable and can offer service, so I would say that's why we are doing so well."

Cyndi is also reaching out to the Chambers in the surrounding cities. It makes great business sense to establish a cordial relationship with them because when they are busy, they can refer parties to Midlothian's Conference Center and vice versa. "Joining the Chambers in the surrounding cities has been



## Business **NOW**

very good for us because we are in their directories, and we are listed as a venue. As in the case of Cedar Hill, they don't have a venue like us, and we have done three events for them. Mansfield doesn't have a conference center, so we also get business from them as well as Duncanville, DeSoto, Waxahachie, Ennis and, occasionally, from Arlington. We would be much tougher competition if we had a hotel."

Recently, the conference center received \$50,000 worth of upgrades. With that money, the center can now get new matching chairs for the whole building, a food warmer, a dishwasher and some high-definition televisions that will help sell corporate businesses on Midlothian. "The 4B Economic Development Committee for the city of Midlothian allocated the funds for the upgrades, and the city council approved



it. So, we are all excited. The building has been here 10 years, so it's time these things take place. In an economy where everybody is trying to get funding, we felt very privileged they chose to upgrade us. It also includes all new china. So now, if people want to do events here, we have the china, flatware and glasses for up to 400 people. And we can wash it for them!" That kind of service makes it easier to have everything done in one place, and residents of Midlothian receive a special rate.

"We are a great choice because we are affordable, and we are a beautiful facility with complimentary parking," Cyndi said. "I encourage everyone to come out here, sit down, have a cup of coffee and see how we can do business!" **NOW**

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Lexie, Abbie, Mandie and Mollie Adams pose before going back to school.



Legacy DeMolay participates in a one act play at their State Convention.



Destiny, Angelina and Whitney look good on the first day of school!



Left to right, Officers for American Business Women's Association Midlothian Chapter: Julia Garcia, Toni Engram, Shirley Franklin and Elizabeth Smith.



Mrs. Garippa's third-graders enjoy a Verb Safari throughout Irvin Elementary.

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# Tunnel of Pain

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

Popular thinking says carpal tunnel syndrome is found mostly in women who work with computers entering data. Well, popular thinking is half right. Carpal tunnel syndrome is more common in women, but data entry personnel have to wait their turn on the list for those afflicted.

You have a nerve in your wrist called the median nerve. This nerve is what gives you feeling and movement to parts of your hand. Carpal tunnel refers to a passageway that contains connective tissue and nerves. This passage is very narrow, so if there is any swelling in the tunnel, the median nerve is compressed, and there is your genesis for carpal tunnel syndrome.

Scientific data is conflicting when suggesting repetitive or lengthy activities, such as extensive computer work or even prolonged video game play, cause this syndrome. These activities can cause irritation in the wrist. However, carpal tunnel syndrome may not be the definitive diagnosis. This syndrome can be caused by any number of factors that irritate or compress the median nerve in the carpal tunnel. A few examples are: trauma to the wrist area, such as, a fracture or sprain; pregnancy, because of fluid retention; rheumatoid arthritis due to inflammation of the area and even metabolic disorders, such as diabetes, can cause damage to the nerves. Unfortunately, in some cases, a cause cannot be found.

Determining if you have carpal tunnel syndrome as early as possible can help avoid nerve and muscle damage. Symptoms of tingling, numbness, burning, weakness and pain begin gradually. Sometimes, someone affected with this will shake their hands in an attempt to restore normal sensation. Some may notice the symptoms at night because of sleeping with flexed wrists. If you have symptoms in your other fingers but the little finger feels fine, that may be a sign you do have carpal tunnel syndrome. As symptoms worsen, the pain and weakness become more pronounced. You may find difficulty in grasping objects and drop things unexpectedly.

Initial treatment focuses on reducing any further damage to the area. Ice packs may be applied for swelling and inflammation. A splint for immobilization, as well as resting the affected area for a few weeks, may work for mild or moderate cases. Sometimes medication, such as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and the injection of corticosteroids can help with the pain by reducing inflammation. If symptoms persist, surgery is an option. Physical therapy to regain strength in the area after surgery is very helpful.

Because carpal tunnel syndrome can occur because of multiple factors, there is no one preventative. If you feel you are at risk, consult your health care professional for guidance. **NOW**

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

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## How it works:

November 1, 2, or 3, from 9-5, bring your child and the unopened candy you want to donate to **Legacy Dentistry, 151 Walton Way, Ste 102 in Midlothian (next to GameStop).**

We will weigh the candy and pay your child a dollar per pound of candy (5 lb. per child maximum). Your child will receive a new toothbrush, and the candy will be shipped overseas.



If you have any questions, call 972-723-1148, visit [www.legacydentistry.com](http://www.legacydentistry.com), or "Like" us on Facebook



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# Calendar

OCTOBER 2011

## October 1, 15, 16

Free yoga events at Dynamic Yoga and Fitness by Yoga 4 Love: 10/1 - Free community round robin yoga class at Lululemon North Park, by the Origin Magazine Ambassadors; 10/15 - Free Thai Yoga Bodywork and Reiki Healing Therapy Demo class, Lisa Ware and Naomi McDonald; 10/16 - Free Acro Yoga in Red Oak Park. Contact Lisa Ware at (469) 437-1334.

## October 8

Lord's Acre Festival: 8:00 a.m., First United Methodist Church of Midlothian, 800 South 9th Street. Activities: garage sale, silent and live auctions, second-hand book sale, children's activities, turkey dinner and more. Visit [www.fumc-midlothian.org](http://www.fumc-midlothian.org) or call (972) 723-3993.

## October 14

Texans Against Breast Cancer: 7:30 p.m.-midnight, Western Kountry Klub, Hwy. 287 & Lakeview Dr. (FM 661). \$15.00 per person, (BYOB), children under 13 free, Mack & Dyan Band, silent auction and raffle. Call (214) 205-1798 or e-mail: [bdetailer@msn.com](mailto:bdetailer@msn.com)

## October 15

The Midlothian Chamber of Commerce's Fall Festival: 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Midlothian ISD Multi-Purpose Stadium, 1800 S. 14th Street.

Vendors, entertainment and other activities. Call (972) 723-8600 or please visit [www.MidlothianChamber.org](http://www.MidlothianChamber.org).

## October 22

Paws for Reflection Ranch free fall festival for families with special needs: 2:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m., 5431 Montgomery Road. Games, prizes, hayrides, horse rides, refreshments and more. Contact Melode Seremet at (972) 775-8966 or visit <http://www.pawsforreflectionranch.org>.

Longbranch Elementary PTO Fall Festival: 1:00-5:00 p.m. Climbing wall, mechanical bull, dunk tank, pony rides, petting zoo and more. Portion of proceeds benefits the Senior Citizens Food Pantry.

## October 28-30

The Waxahachie Community Theatre presents *Bye Bye Birdie*. Performances on **Friday and Saturday**: 7:30 p.m.; **Sunday**: 2:30 p.m., Chautauqua Auditorium, Waxahachie. Advance tickets: \$10 seniors/students and \$12 for adults. Preschool children: free with paid adult admission. Tickets at the door: \$2 more. Purchase tickets online at [www.waxahachiecommunitytheatre.com](http://www.waxahachiecommunitytheatre.com). Contact the WCT Box Office at (972) 646-1050 or [wct.texas@gmail.com](mailto:wct.texas@gmail.com).

## Ongoing:

### Tuesdays

Midlothian Rotary Club meeting: noon, Midlothian Civic Center, 224 South 11th St. Call (972) 775-7118.

### First Tuesdays

The Midlothian Area Historical Society, 7:00 p.m., Community Room at Citizens National Bank, 310 N. 9th St. E-mail us at [midlothianhistory@hotmail.com](mailto:midlothianhistory@hotmail.com).


### Second Tuesdays

American Business Women's Association Midlothian Chapter (ABWA) meeting: 6:30 p.m.-8:00 p.m., Ladies Nite at Ace Hardware. 25 percent off entire store. Contact information: (972) 775-1039 or you can e-mail us at [abwainfo@yahoo.com](mailto:abwainfo@yahoo.com).

### Third Fridays

Veterans Networking Group For Ellis County: 6:00 p.m., 1804 W. Hwy. 287 Business, Waxahachie. RSVP to Mike Lamb at (214) 763-0378 or visit [vetsnetgrp@att.net](mailto:vetsnetgrp@att.net).

*Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your event details to [btryon.nowmag@sbcglobal.net](mailto:btryon.nowmag@sbcglobal.net).*



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## In The Kitchen With Junell Crawford

— *By Betty Tryon*

When her husband's Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma returned two years after treatment, Junell Crawford subsequently determined that eating organically was the only way to go. "What was causing it?" she wondered at the time. "We started reading and found out there were many carcinogens all around us in foods, skin care and body care [products]." Around this time, her daughter started having problems with her skin. She began to eat foods that were more organic and saw improvement.

As an esthetician at Edge Studio, Junell decided to make a commitment to eat organically. Shopping at Sprouts and Cox Farms, she found, "We can change any recipe to organic. That is what I have done. Some recipes you are familiar with. We just use organic ingredients. Remember use nothing processed!" **NOW**

### Chili

- 1 lb. ground venison, buffalo or grass-fed beef**
- 2 tsp. organic chili powder**
- 2 tsp. organic garlic salt**
- 1 garlic clove, pressed**
- 1/2 cup onion, chopped**
- 1 can Ro\*Tel tomatoes**
- 1 can organic black beans**

- 1.** Cook meat over medium to medium-high temperature, until done.
- 2.** Drain the grease.
- 3.** If using venison, you may need to add 1-2 Tbsp. olive oil.
- 4.** Add chili powder, garlic salt, garlic and onion; cook for 3-5 minutes.
- 5.** Add remaining ingredients and simmer for 30-60 minutes.

### Chicken and Rice

- 3 Tbsp. olive oil (walnut, coconut)**
- 1/2 lb. grass-fed chicken strips**
- 1 clove garlic, pressed**
- 1 pkg. frozen spinach or 1/2 bag organic spinach**
- 1/2 red onion, finely chopped**
- 1 Granny Smith apple, chopped in small pieces**
- 1/2 - 1 tsp. sea salt or garlic salt**
- 1/4 red bell pepper, finely chopped**
- Organic vinaigrette dressing or dressing of your choice**
- 1 pkg. cooked brown rice**

- 1.** Heat the oil on medium heat.
- 2.** Add chicken and cook until done, about 3-5 minutes.
- 3.** Add garlic and spinach and cook for 3 minutes.

- 4.** Remove from heat and add the rest of the ingredients.
- 5.** Mix well.

### Crock-Pot Roast

- 1 3- to 5-lb. grass-fed roast**
- 2-3 tsp. Better Than Bouillon (beef flavor)**
- 1 cup water**
- 1 bag organic carrots, cut into 3-inch pieces**
- 3 potatoes, cut into pieces**
- 15-20 fresh mushrooms, stems removed**
- 1 garlic clove, pressed**
- 2 onions, quartered**

- 1.** Sear the roast in a hot skillet until brown.
- 2.** In Crock-Pot, add all ingredients ending with meat on top.
- 3.** Cook on low for 8-10 hours.

### Fried Chicken Strips

- Coconut oil**
- 1 lb. grass-fed chicken strips or venison**
- 1/2 cup coconut flour**
- 1/2 cup flax seed meal**
- Sea salt**

- 1.** Heat oil on medium heat.
- 2.** Put chicken or venison in flour and flax meal and coat each piece evenly.
- 3.** Fry until brown for about 5 minutes.
- 4.** Add salt, as needed.

### 7-Layer Dip

- 1 can Amy's refried black beans (tastes like regular bean dip)**
- 1 small can chopped black olives**
- 2 avocados, mashed**
- 16 oz. light sour cream**
- 1 pkg. Hidden Valley Southwest dip**
- 2 tomatoes, chopped**
- 2 cups cheddar cheese, shredded**

- 1.** Spread beans evenly on the bottom of a 9 x 9-inch baking dish.
- 2.** Layer olives, then avocados over beans.
- 3.** Mix sour cream with Hidden Valley Southwest dip and spread over top.
- 4.** Add a layer of chopped tomatoes; top with shredded cheese.
- 5.** Refrigerate at least one hour or overnight. **VARIATION:** Green onions with chives may also be sprinkled over top before refrigeration.





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As a former oncology nurse with a family history of cancer, Amelia Lucio knew the dreaded disease well. Still, she was in disbelief when she received the results of her mammogram at Baylor Waxahachie. “Just the word ‘cancer’ by itself is so scary. It’s almost like hearing a death sentence,” says Amelia. While breast cancer is never an easy diagnosis, Amelia’s was caught early, before it had a chance to attack healthy tissue. After a lumpectomy and follow up treatment at Baylor, she’s a breast cancer survivor. She now encourages women to have a mammogram if something feels different in their breast. “It could be nothing, but then again it could be the ‘big C.’”

To schedule your mammogram or for more information about cancer care services, call **1.800.4BAYLOR** or visit us online at [BaylorHealth.com/WaxCancer](http://BaylorHealth.com/WaxCancer).

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