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OCTOBER 2011

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Tyler Bonner gets one step closer to his goal of becoming a law enforcement officer.

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On The Cover



Tyler Bonner is ready to serve and protect.

Photo by Amy Ramirez.

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Subscriptions are available at the rate of \$35 per year or \$3.50 per issue. Subscriptions should be sent to: NOW Magazines, P.O. Box 1071, Waxahachie, TX 75168. For advertising rates or editorial correspondence, call (972) 937-8447 or visit www.nowmagazines.com.

Editor's Note

Hello Waxahachie!

Autumn came and went last month, but I "feel" winter – it's just right around the corner. After all those record breaking, 100-degree days we lived through during August and September, I'm ready for all the colder temperatures the winter months have to offer.

I've also circled a couple of really important dates on my October calendar. Since National Boss Day is celebrated October 16, I think I'll be sharing my sentiments with my bosses, yes, I said bosses, on the Friday before. If you know me, you know early is so much better than late. I've also got something special planned on October 27. It's my mom's birthday, and I think she deserves a day that's just for her – and me, of course. I envision several hours of mindless shopping, lunch at the place of her choice and a relaxing pedicure. Birthdays don't get much better than this!



Sandra

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Learning to by Exam



— By Sandra Strong



Lead mple



“I’ve learned so much about law enforcement since becoming an Explorer.”



Do you remember playing cops and robbers as a child? If so, you will also recall that the good guys were always chasing the bad guys. Tyler Bonner, now 17 and a senior at Waxahachie High School, no longer has to wonder about his childhood game. Thanks to the Explorer programs offered locally, his childhood game has come to life. “I saw the City Explorers at a National Night Out event,” Tyler remembered. “I thought they looked cool, so I started asking some questions.”

Tyler became a law enforcement explorer with the local police department in August of 2008 at the age of 14. “I didn’t have a clue what law enforcement was,” he admitted. “The only thing I knew about police work was that a police officer carries a gun and drives a fast car with lights on it.” After 12 months with the police department, Tyler decided to apply for the Sheriff’s Explorer Program soon after Sheriff Johnny Brown brought it back as an option for young adults. Tyler has been flourishing ever since under Sheriff Brown, who leads by example, as well as the close guidance of Lt. Matt Murrey, who also happens to oversee and manage the Sheriff’s program.

During his second year, Tyler went from team member to team leader. As explorer captain for Post No. 106, Tyler leads 15 to 20 explorers at any given time. He is following close in the footsteps of Sherriff Brown and Lt. Murrey, as he too leads by example. Just this past summer, Tyler got one step closer to his goal of becoming a full-time law enforcement officer.

When word came that Tyler had the opportunity to attend the National Law Enforcement Exploring Leadership Academy in Washington, D.C., he didn’t waste any time completing the



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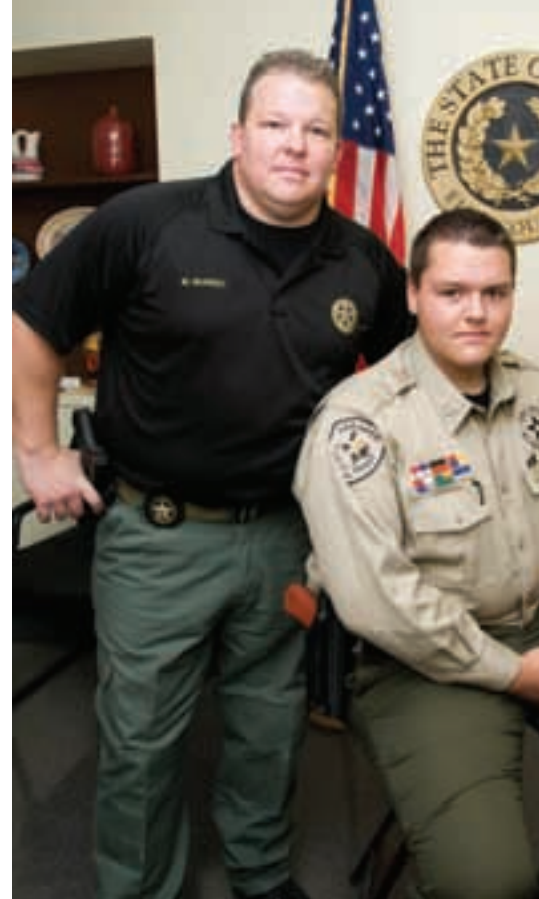


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application process. The process was lengthy, but Tyler feels it was worth it. "I had to complete an application," he said, "and I also had to submit a statement on 'What Law Enforcement Exploring Has Meant To Me.'" The National Law Enforcement Exploring committee selected 30 explorers for each individual academy offered, which included the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the U.S. Marshals Service, the U.S. Army Military Police and the U.S. Secret Service. Three thousand applicants vied for a spot at the FBI academy. "I got three choices, and the FBI Academy was my first," Tyler said.

"Yes, the FBI Academy is the most sought after one of them all," Lt. Murrey explained. "Tyler was one of only 30 chosen, and one of only two from Texas."

Tyler kept a daily journal while he was at the FBI Academy. The journal entries began on Saturday, July 2, and continued through Saturday, July 9, when Tyler boarded a plane for home. He shared so many things about the academy. He spent his first evening touring Washington, D.C. One memory that brings a smile to everyone's face happened on his second day. "We went shopping at the Pentagon City Mall," Tyler explained. "I found a store that sold police patches from all

around the country. I would have bought some, but I guess the lady selling them thought they were made from diamond thread or something. An NYPD patch was \$13."

Tyler's group had another rude awakening toward the end of the second day. They thought since the first day and a half was relaxed, the academy would be also. "Boy, were we wrong," Tyler admitted. "We took too long forming a line, so we had a little reminder that Janet Ambrisco, our squad leader advisor, does not like waiting. The FBI Academy wasn't boot camp, but we had strict rules we had to follow."

The busiest day for Tyler,



based on the words in his journal, was Wednesday, July 6. They traveled to Maryland to the Secret Service training facility. Tyler got to experience a rare moment that few Explorers see while at the academy involving two black SUVs, a black helicopter and several men in suits. "I didn't think anything of it," Tyler stated, "that was until the SUVs surrounded the helicopter. The men in suits with guns hopped out and escorted someone from the helicopter into one of their cars and drove off very fast." Only after all this excitement was the group cleared to enter the air unit area and complete the tour.

Lt. Murrey has been able to share Tyler's journal with Sheriff Brown, as well as others who play an integral role

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in the success of the Sheriff's Explorer Program. Chaplain Bruce Stayments was once a chief of police in New York and also a death scene investigator. Sgt. Donnie Reeves has a 40-year career in law enforcement. Dr. David Gardner is a Reserve Deputy. Lt. Murrey has a lengthy career in traffic, narcotics and investigation. Between just these four, there is well over 100 years of combined law enforcement experience. Tyler took full advantage of all they had to teach him, making him a prime candidate for the FBI Academy.

Effort will most always lead to success. The effort the 25 young adults in the Sheriff's Explorer Program exude is a fine example of the results that come with dedication, commitment and hard work. "I treat them like they are junior officers," Lt. Murrey shared. "I give them as much responsibility as I think they can handle. The older ones get to train and become the intermediaries. There's class time, hands-on scenarios and competitions with other Explorer groups."

Sheriff Brown and Lt. Murrey are so proud of the man Tyler has become. "I wanted to work with kids, show them a different way," Sheriff Brown said, referring to his desire to bring the Explorer Program back not long after he took office. "Tyler was our first Explorer. He's the whole package — plus!"

In the beginning, Tyler was in a group of five. Now that the program has hit its stride in the past two years, Tyler is one of a group which averages 25 members. Tyler is thankful for the examples in leadership he's found within the Sheriff's Explorer Program. "I've learned so much about law enforcement since becoming an Explorer," Tyler confessed. "But, I've also learned so much about core values."

"It's those core values," Sheriff Brown added, "that will help Tyler be successful as an adult, no matter what branch of law enforcement he chooses to pursue."

Tyler will always remember his week at the FBI Academy, which gave him the headstart he needed to continue his journey in law enforcement after high school with confidence, education and insight. He only wishes it could have lasted another week. **NOW**

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House and Home

— By Randy Bigham

Waxabachie's builders of tomorrow are cutting their teeth on construction sites around the city, gaining practical knowledge of the field while learning lessons in teamwork and community service. Habitat for Humanity's new president, Mikel Craig, wouldn't have it any other way. His investment of time and interest in the students who make up the construction management classes at Waxabachie High School is hands-on for a good reason. He's not just their supervisor on-site; he's also their teacher in the classroom.



In that sense, Mikel was a natural choice to head up the local branch of the Christian-based, national organization devoted to providing safe and affordable housing for low-income families. Mikel not only has the necessary building experience, but an ability to inspire young people to create, to pool their skills in a combined effort to aid those in need and to be a part of the camaraderie that comes with volunteerism. "As far as we're concerned, the cooperation between Habitat and the building classes at the high school is a win-win," Mikel said. "We can't lose. The kids are serving the community, they're getting first-hand knowledge and they are rubbing elbows with pros in the field who are




volunteering their time along with many others who are giving back to help needy families become homeowners."

A graduate of TSTC-Waco (Texas State Technical College) and UNT (University of North Texas) in Denton, Mikel has been a building trades teacher at Waxahachie High School for 24 years. Building is apparently in the Craig family blood. "My dad was a contractor," he said, "and I've been interested in construction all my life." But education has become his calling, even if it happened on a whim. "After college I got a call from one of my old instructors,

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saying he had a job lined up for me as a teacher at Waxahachie High the following morning," Mikel recalled. "I didn't have time to change my mind. I was hired on the spot." Mikel hasn't regretted the spur-of-the-moment decision that turned into the rest of his life, and he takes pride in the classes he teaches in construction management and principles of architecture and construction.

His association with Habitat for Humanity is a similar source of pride. "This is a wonderful organization that really inspires people," Mikel enthused. "It's amazing to see churches and other groups come in, ready and willing to help. We have people lined up to help, whether it's doing repairs on existing Habitat homes or working with us on our current project on Dunlap." Mikel's 80 students have now joined the rotating shifts on that site, soon to be the home of the Ramirez family. "The Ramirezes are outstanding," he added. "They have already put in 200 hours, maybe more. All future homeowners have to put in 'sweat equity,' as we call it, and this family has."

Mikel enjoys working with his students on the Habitat site, the latest of five houses his classes have had a part in building. "It's not just great watching them learn technical skills," he qualified. "The community service aspect is also a crucial part of the experience. They are working with other volunteers from across the county, as well as the homeowners, getting to know one another and forging friendships. What's not good about it?"

Mikel credits local merchants for their support of Habitat for Humanity. "Lowe's has been great to us," he said. "They donate tools and supplies, and for the last Habitat house they donated



a lot of the framing. All we had to do was pick it up. I can't sing their praises enough." He also singles out the city of Waxahachie for its role in making a difference in the lives of families sponsored by Habitat. "I can't stress too much how supportive and involved the city has been," Mikel said. "For instance, the city paid all the impact fees [charges associated with off-site needs that come with a new development] for the Ramirez family."

The contributions made by Mikel's construction management classes have been equally critical to the success of local Habitat projects but, as the instructor points out, the confidence instilled in the students as they hone their craft brings a sense of personal achievement that is invaluable. "When you see a kid come alive through the work, using their hands and being able to create a product, it's exciting to me," Mikel admits. "I love seeing another builder being born. I tell my guys, 'I don't care if you start building professionally. I'd love it if you do, but that's not the point.' The point is to learn the craft of building while learning to cooperate with others. On top of that, my students are learning skills that won't leave them, and they can be put to good use someday when they have their own home or maybe want to build a tree house for their kids."

Mikel stressed that all his students are required to pass safety exams before working on any job site. "We have to go through safety courses before anything can be done. Before the guys can even touch a tool they have to pass a 10-hour safety class that includes knowing how to identify and use 75 tools. So it's intensive." In addition to safety

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precautions, construction management students learn all aspects of building work. Besides carpentry, plumbing and electrical wiring are taught. "We touch on all the building trades," Mikel clarified. "We're also getting more into energy-efficient and green home building, which can be one and the same, but not necessarily. Blending those two are what we have to do, whether for a Habitat house or not, and I'm excited about it."

As these skill sets and new technologies are being brought to bear on Habitat for Humanity home projects, Mikel sees an increasingly bright future for the program in Ellis County. "It's getting better and better," he said, although the level of pride is already at a premium for himself and fellow board members, whom he said are integral to the steady progress Habitat is making. "I don't know what we'd do without them," he added.

As to keeping motivated as president of the local Habitat, Mikel is quick to ascribe his dedication to the palpable result of the group's efforts. "Seeing the families' faces light up at the dedication is what does it for me," he said. "Seeing Mom and Dad and the kids together, experiencing their home for the first time, is a good feeling. So it's a passion, and as I always say, 'If you don't love it, you better get out of it.'" There's no doubt about Mikel's commitment to the work he loves. He's in it for the long haul. **NOW**

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Pieces *From the* Past

— By Sydni Thomas

From the curb of the three-bedroom, two-bath home, it's easy to note the owners appreciate pieces from the past. On the front porch visitors are greeted by an old school desk worn from years of sitting, a bird house repurposed with old pieces of wood and a doorknob and a porch swing tucked away in the shade. Billy and Darene Walker bought their home 25 years ago and have since made major changes to its layout and aesthetic. For this couple, who enjoy entertaining as often as possible, the antique pieces placed in their home make great conversation starters.

*At Home With
Billy and Darene Walker*





Darene finds many of her treasures locally through flea markets and estate sales. However, she has traveled quite a bit to find some of the pieces she was missing. Billy enjoys traveling with his wife of 31 years to find antiques for their home. When he doesn't go with her on these trips, Darene's friends will join her. Canton's First Mondays are like a candy shop for Darene. With acres and acres of antiques, it's next to impossible for her not to come across a special item to add to their home.

After years of shopping there, Darene has discovered the best times and places to visit. "By chance, one time we went on a Thursday," Darene shared. "We didn't know if much would be set up. Nearly everything was and there weren't



many shoppers around. Hands down, Thursdays are the best days to go."

From furniture to art, Darene finds a large variety of items on her treasure hunts. One of her favorite purchases is

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the matching couch and rocker set in the living room. The medium, overstuffed, orange couch seats two people. She likes to sit in the rocker across the room. The set is from the 1940s, but looks in top shape. It's placed next to a newer couch and shows that Darene has an eye for furniture placement. Her mix between vintage and new gives the room a timeless look. She also adds family heirlooms into the mix to make things more personal. The photograph of her great-great-grandfather hangs in the room. George Washington Schwartz was the owner of a blacksmith shop in Palmer, Texas. "I love this photograph of him," Darene said. "I've had it for a while and I've had a hard time getting it hung"

Just off of the foyer is a hallway that leads to the guest bedrooms and bathroom. The first guest room transports you back in time with its shabby chic style. An aged, white wrought iron bed frames the room and is covered in a simple quilt. A china hutch filled with shell pink milk glass from the late 1950s sits in the corner. This collection took the couple years to find. Darene started



with a few pieces and would pick up more as she found them. The guest room down the hall is in the process of getting a makeover and will more than likely be filled with more of the Walker finds.

On the other side of the foyer, the office is tucked away behind French double doors. On occasion Billy, who has worked for The Coca-Cola Company for 34 years, will work from home, but the office mostly serves as a room for reading or time on the computer. The room has not escaped Darene's special antique touch. An old adding machine sitting on the desk is easily one of the room's focal points. "We don't work too much in here," Billy admitted. "It's more of a room for relaxing."

The master bedroom also has touches of antique details. Next to the bed is an old desk fan that Darene found on

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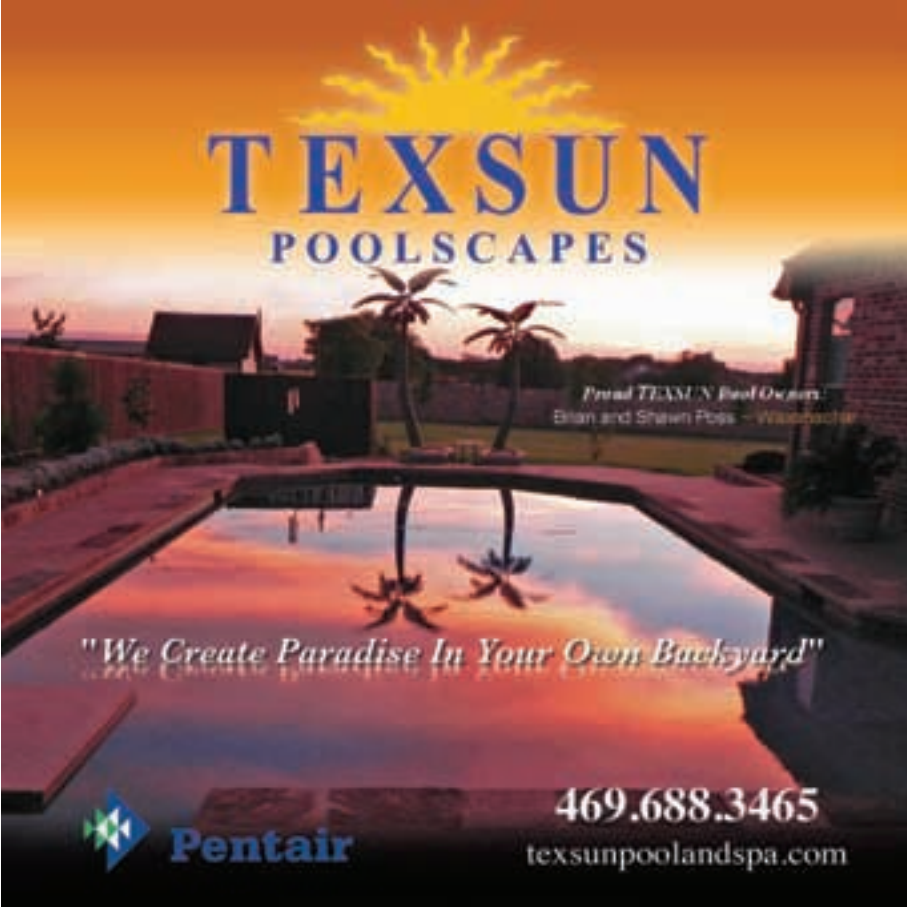
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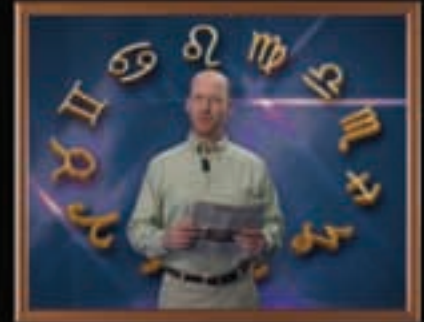
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a trip. Like all the other rooms in the house, Darene put extra thought into the little details that complete the room. She surrounded herself and Billy with things that trigger memories and are unique.



The living room, dining area and kitchen follow an open living format. It wasn't always set up this way. In fact, the living room and dining room didn't even exist when the Walkers purchased house. They undertook that project many years later. The dining room table sits just behind the seating area of the living room, which offers a view straight into the kitchen.

The fact that Darene enjoys cooking is evident in the way she has laid out her kitchen. Bright colored mixing bowls, books and appliances line the counter tops. The kitchen is large enough for friends and family to hang out while



Darene cooks something up for the gathering. "I really enjoy spending time in the kitchen," Darene confessed. "My favorite thing to do is try out new recipes."

Billy and Darene moved to Waxahachie from the Palmer and Maypearl areas, respectively. They chose to move there in 1986 when their son, Jeremy, was

5. Both of their children, Jeremy and daughter, Jessica, attended Waxahachie schools from kindergarten through high school graduation. Jeremy and Jessica are both coaches and teachers now. "Jeremy

lives in Waxahachie and is the Maypearl baseball coach," Billy stated, "and Jessica lives in Waxahachie and is the softball coach in Dawson, Texas." With the children grown and gone from their childhood home, Billy and Darene's minds turn to the future. "I can't wait to have grandchildren fill this house," Darene said with a smile.

Texas weather permitting, the couple spend as much time as

they can together on the porch or out back by the pool. The porch has plenty of seating for any visitors or neighbors who stop by, too. From the porch swing to the patio chairs, all of the seating faces



toward their quiet cul-de-sac. "We don't have a lot of traffic in this area," Darene explained. "It's usually pretty quiet. I like to come out here to drink my coffee."

On mild to warm days, the couple likes to hang out by the pool. Darene works part time, so on days when she isn't working, running errands or antique hunting, she will relax outside. While she enjoys having a pool so close, sometimes Billy is not so sure it was a good idea. "If I could change one thing about our house, it'd be the pool," Billy said. "I'd get rid of it altogether."

From having a home with children running around to their now empty nest, the Walker house is always evolving. In their spare time, Billy and Darene are always on the lookout for unique pieces for their home. Walking through its doors is like walking through the best parts of the past. **NOW**




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Because spinal bones continue to grow well into the early 20s, if left uncorrected, scoliosis often worsens. Unfortunately, the most common treatment approach has been to wait and see how bad it gets, resorting to unsightly braces or eventually surgery, if it progresses too far.

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Left to Right: Carly McGuire (sister), Cindy Smith (mom) and Stephanie Smith

More THAN AN EMBLEM

— By Janice C. Johnson



Stephanie's grandmother, Lou Turner

Even after all the blossoms have fallen from the deep-pink crape myrtles in front of Stephanie Smith's house, you can still see glimpses of pink in the flower bed. In a concrete stepping stone, a broken-tile mosaic forms the familiar "pink ribbon" emblem. On the other side of the walk, a similar ribbon logo adorns the two-tone pink, Susan G. Komen for the Cure banner waving from a metal hanger.

She wants people to know “there is something you can do — you don’t have to sit and wait.”

The ribbons hold a special meaning for Stephanie and her mother, Cindy Smith. They represent great strides in medicine, which have made their own fights against breast cancer successful. Margaret “Lou” Turner, Stephanie’s maternal grandmother, was diagnosed with early-onset breast cancer at age 36. Two years later, the disease claimed her life. Cindy was only 34 when she learned she, too, had the disease. Cindy ultimately won her fight against cancer. Knowing her family history, Stephanie always felt a sense of dread, especially because of the age at which the women contracted the disease. “My grandmother was only 36 when she was diagnosed,” she said, “and Mom was two years younger at 34. I felt sure that I would be diagnosed with cancer, and it would be two years earlier, when I was 32.”

No wonder the Smiths are supporting Waxahachie’s Pink Out event this month. Established in 2009 by the Waxahachie Independent School District (ISD), Pink Out aims to raise both awareness and funds to someday defeat breast cancer for good. Organizers would like to see

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everyone in town wearing pink all day on Friday, October 21. In case your wardrobe does not include any pink shirts, the Waxahachie Fire Department will be offering Pink Out shirts, with proceeds benefiting the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure and Waxahachie's Dinah Weable Breast Cancer Foundation for cancer survivors. The official festivities, including both city and county proclamations, will take place at Lumpkin Stadium prior to the home football game that evening. All breast cancer survivors will be invited to gather on the football field and be honored with a balloon tribute.

It is easy to become skeptical about winning the fight against such stubborn and prevalent diseases as cancer. Rest assured, though, funds raised for breast cancer research have been well-invested. In 1990 and 1994, researchers discovered naturally occurring mutations of two human genes, BRCA1 and BRCA2, which appear strongly linked to early-onset breast cancer. A simple blood test reveals whether someone carries the mutated gene. If your mother — or father, since the gene may be carried by either parent — does not have the gene, then you have no need to get tested. Perhaps contrary to popular assumptions, not only can fathers pass the gene down, but men can get breast cancer, too.

After their mother tested positive for BRCA1, Stephanie went with her sister, Carly, for testing and genetic counseling. Both learned they also carry the mutated gene. Two options are available for those with a positive result: they may have a bilateral (double) mastectomy followed by reconstructive surgery or they may choose the more conservative approach of having semiannual exams, alternating between an MRI and a mammogram. Both Stephanie and Carly chose to have the surgery and be done fretting about it.

Stephanie scheduled her initial surgery for seven months after testing, at age 28. But then, despite her worry about developing cancer, she postponed it



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by two months. "It was scary," she explained. "I needed those two months to really think about it."

Her treatment consisted of a three-step procedure over several months: the initial mastectomy, requiring a two-day hospital stay, followed by two reconstructive surgeries. This approach may sound radical, especially for someone who has no symptoms of cancer. Stephanie's doctor, however, told her that the mutated BRCA1 gene put her at an 80- to 85-percent risk of early-onset breast cancer compared to about a 12-percent breast cancer risk among the general population. The surgical approach cuts that risk to two to five percent.

For some time after surgery, Stephanie continued to feel nervous about getting cancer — from sheer force of habit, she believes. These feelings faded over subsequent months.

"I feel good now,

and I finally have peace of mind. Life is back to normal, except without that anxiety." As to the physical changes, she doubts they will affect her in the long run. "There are some differences, but I'm used to it. I have no regrets," she said, adding that she would not hesitate to do the surgery all over again.

Despite Stephanie's constant awareness of her breast cancer risk, her reserved nature earlier found it too embarrassing to talk about the disease. But since her surgery, she is more willing to bring up the subject. "I'm not scared to talk about it," she said. She wants people to know "there is something you can do — you don't have to sit and wait."

A diagnosis of breast cancer is always hard to hear, and once meant a death sentence. However, medical advances even in the past decade have made it very treatable. As Stephanie pointed out, "Technology has come so far — I mean, it's only been 28 years since my grandmother died." Reconstructive surgery, once dismissed as unimportant, now improves the outcome even more by




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Even so, the Smith family cannot completely let their guard down. The mutated BRCA1 gene, which they carry, is the more aggressive of the two. (BRCA2 is more prevalent among women, but seems less likely to cause cancer, than BRCA1.) The



gene mutations that raise the risk of breast cancer are also linked to higher rates of ovarian cancer. In fact, doctors recommend that female patients carrying a mutated BRCA gene should have their ovaries removed by age 40. Stephanie also mentioned that her brother would need to be tested for the gene mutation.

However great the medical advances in treatment, early detection is still essential. Local advocates like her mother have helped spread the word, but Stephanie was pleased to note celebrities have also started speaking out about breast cancer. Their wider audience allows them to raise more awareness, encouraging more women to get screened for cancer. So when you see a pink ribbon, remember the simple emblem stands for both the losses and the victories of fighters like the Smiths.

You can expect to see Stephanie wearing a pink shirt on October 21. And if you ask her for advice, she has some to offer: "Awareness, awareness, awareness," she stated. "You have to know your own body. Get your checkups, but remember, a lot can happen in a year." **NOW**

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Art Ma

An accomplished Waxahachie artist is counting his blessings, not for the recognition he's received, but for the opportunity he has to share his success with local youth. Carl Block's ceramics are sought after by leading collectors and hailed by critics, but the prestige means nothing compared to the joy he derives from motivating students as a Waxahachie High School art teacher. Carl interprets the personal glory that comes from seeing his pottery designs featured in Southern Living magazine or having them acquired by the Smithsonian as a tool for inspiring his classes. "I like to make stuff that jazzes my students," he explained, "because if I'm legit and getting publicity, that just helps me show my students what they can do with art. Maybe they will listen one sentence longer because I've done something with my own work."



— By Randy Bigham

ters

A Waxahachie Independent School District teacher for 26 years, Carl has applied his creativity to more than pottery, painting and sculpture. He has directed it toward a vision for a better learning environment. As the retiring chair of the high school's fine art department, he has high hopes for a district he believes is improving every year. "My dream is to have teachers who do what they teach – a science teacher who goes home and works in his own lab, or an English teacher who's an author. It's important because the people who inspire are the doers."

He also believes in infusing new blood into the establishment mentality of academia, which is why he stepped down as art chair this year. "It's time to give younger people a chance," he admitted, mentioning with pride that the teacher who will succeed him is a former student of his, Sean Cagle. "Sean's great, super

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sharp, and we're really excited for him to have this opportunity," he added.

Meantime, Carl's devotion to his students and to his craftsmanship as a potter remains as undiminished as it was when he started his dual career in art and education in the mid-1980s. Even before that, he knew art was where life would take him. "I was the kid who always drew in class, sitting in the back of the room sketching instead of paying attention," Carl laughed. "I took some art classes and a clay class in high school, and I ended up majoring in art with an emphasis in ceramics at the University of North Texas."

But he realized helping others learn art was also an interest, and on receiving his teaching certificate he joined the faculty of Waxahachie High School. "I've been here ever since," he enthused. "I love teaching as much as I love making." Along the way, Carl married Christine, also an artist and teacher (voted Teacher of the Year at Marvin Elementary this past year), and the pair has two daughters, Emily, 20, and Sarah, 17. "Our girls aren't artists, but I would say they are masters of their own craft," Carl chuckled, pointing out that since they have been surrounded by art their whole lives they "really couldn't care less" about it.

That's not to say Carl's kids aren't proud of their artistic father. His accomplishments are indeed impressive. As a potter, his work has been acquired by the illustrious Chinati Foundation,

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a contemporary art museum in Marfa, Texas, and the Museum of the Southwest, located in Midland, Texas, in addition to the Smithsonian Institution, which chose five of his ceramic pieces from Herbert Hemphill when the famous art connoisseur bequeathed his entire collection to the museum in the 1990s. "The Smithsonian auctioned some things they didn't consider historically significant," Carl remembered, "but they kept all my pieces so I was flattered!"

Carl is best known for his so-called "face jugs," a modernized adaptation of old moonshine containers. The most recent history of these ornamental jugs dates to the American South in the 19th century but Carl, who is as steeped in



history as he is in art, points out the tradition of putting faces on a pot goes back to ancient Egypt. "It's a vessel that looks like a head, and you just want to put a face on it," he said. "Any creative person, regardless of the era, is going to put a face on it!"

What separates Carl's examples of face jugs from those of the past is his colorful, fluid designs based on a theme at once native and whimsical. Working in earthenware, he uses special glazes and bright colors of his own mixing that have since become hallmarks, such as a sky blue and a pinkish beige set against darker blue or green backdrops. Art historians have raved over Carl's pieces, claiming he's "taken a traditional Southern art form to the next level." And if it's true that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, then Carl is being flattered to pieces. At least four or five other potters have taken their cue from his work and are producing their own versions of his low-fire clay pots with

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colored glaze.

Carl isn't worried about copyists and continues making his signature pieces with their historical references and tribal overtones. "I tell my students to have one foot in tradition and one foot going forward," he said, qualifying that although his love of history informs the process of his work, it doesn't dictate the result. "I love history," he confessed, "and I do draw on my interest in it, but creating is an organic process. When I'm sculpting or decorating pots, if I try to think about what I want them to look like they become trite. So I blank out and let each one take its course." Carl considers the principles of design – negative space, patterns, etc – but lets the ultimate creation "balance itself out." He stresses the importance of allowing "the personality of the piece to shine, to let it become itself." For Carl it's a treat to see the final product. "I don't always know what it's going to look like," he said. "I know what basic design it is, but each individual piece is different."

For inspiration, Carl looks to disparate sources, but while these may constitute what he calls a "spiritual" impetus to his work they are seldom detectable visually. "For instance, I love Japanese pottery," he said, "and I have probably absorbed their beauty, but my own work doesn't look Japanese." Carl insists the most fulfilling aspect of his work is "seeing something through the process, from start to finish, getting every step correct." He admits real craftsmanship is hard, noting that if it were easy it wouldn't be so rewarding. "To create something from nothing is a high," he said. "Not everyone gets to experience that. The best job anyone can have is to create. It's such a blessing to get to do that." **NOW**

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Down, Set, Hut

— By Zachary R. Urquhart



Sports are about more than just games and competition. Especially at the youth level, sports can teach valuable life lessons and instill character in developing young minds. Under the leadership of the sports director, Tammy Blake, the Waxahachie YMCA is using a slate of new and growing programs to help local youth reach their potential. “My job is to ensure compliance, maintain facilities and organize sports for youth and adults,” Tammy said. With a passion so palpably evident, Tammy exudes enthusiasm for the programs she is overseeing at the Y.





Tammy came into her position through a process that started several years ago. She played softball through college, but a fluke accident left her with broken bones across her face. She remained active in sports by officiating and umpiring for several sports: basketball, softball, baseball and volleyball. Tammy's role as an umpire and official led to her being progressively more involved with the Y as an official and then as a volunteer for about five years. Last year, she took on the role of sports director, and now she does all she can to give back to the kids and the community she loves so much. "The most important thing about this job is giving back to these kids and this community," she admitted. "If we aren't doing anything for the community, then who are we?"

She is not alone in serving though; she cites wonderful bosses and a great staff working with her to ensure fun, safety and growth through sports programs. "Our people make all this work," she added. "I have a great staff, and we have countless volunteers. We couldn't do it without them." She stresses that in addition to doing background checks and following safety protocols, the facility focuses on finding staff and volunteers

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who want to help kids succeed. “The best part of the job is seeing kids do things they usually wouldn’t be able to do,” she stated.

Tammy can recount story after story highlighting the accomplishments of the kids she serves. One of her favorites is a certain young man who has learning disabilities, as well as physical handicaps. He has played several sports with the Y, but his highlight came in basketball. “He got to make an important shot in one game, and the whole crowd gave him a standing ovation. More important than the basket he made, that young man will always remember the support he got from an auditorium full of people.”

Though her job is certainly rewarding, Tammy admits she faces her share of challenges and difficulties in doing what she does. “The hardest thing is juggling the hours with my family life and my commitment to God,” she confessed. “I



don’t have nearly as much time to help my church as I would like.” Though Tammy and the YMCA focus on “bringing Christian values to what they do,” she regrets not being able to spend as much time with her church as she once did. She volunteers when she can and

ministers at a summer camp where she helps guide children in both activities and Bible study.

In her first year as sports director, Tammy has worked hard to improve and add to the athletic offerings available through the Y. She is especially excited about the start of the tackle football program, which began in August. In listing off the countless coaches and volunteers, Tammy expressed the overwhelming support she has seen for this new endeavor.

The kids are split into teams by age, with the 4-6 year olds playing flag football instead of tackle. They practice several times a week, even in the heat, with a water hose offering frequent hydration. "This program is trying to instill rules and skills," Tammy said, "but also might be able to help build Waxahachie football

"The most important thing about this job is *giving back* to these kids and this community."

as a whole." The kids play against other area teams, getting to play games both at home and away. The goal is for kids who might not be able to afford other youth football programs to have a venue to play football.

Along with the football programs, Tammy is equally excited to offer new programs for the young ladies as well. Tammy explains that though the Y has offered cheerleading before, "it is new in that it's revamped. The girls have camp, are entered in competitions and get to perform at Waxahachie's homecoming." The cheer squads are assigned to one of the football teams, and cheer at home and away games.

For some of the older girls, the Y has a completely new drill squad, called the Dazzlers. Girls age 7-12 are able to learn the basics of a drill team. The girls perform at halftime of all home YMCA football games, though they do not yet travel to the away games. "Even though we want them to do well, we focus on



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having fun," Tammy clarified.

In addition to the programs geared specifically to getting kids actively playing sports, Tammy has installed several initiatives aimed at giving the kids great life experiences. "A while back, we took a group to the Ballpark for a Texas Rangers game," she shared. "And our football teams got to play at Cowboys Stadium." The visit to Cowboys Stadium was a highlight of Tammy's year in her relatively new position. On August 21,



the entire Waxahachie Y football, cheer and drill programs were invited to visit the Stadium. They got to tour the facility, meet some of the Cowboys' team and ended the experience playing an actual game on the field. More than any game or practice, Tammy is proud so many of her youth were able to have that experience.

Overall, Tammy is focused on helping kids, teaching through sports and ensuring that the Y is an asset to the community. In an effort to both raise support, and garner community involvement, Tammy has overseen fundraisers ranging from standards like popcorn and cups to a Facebook auction. She is still learning the best way to accomplish these goals. "I really do care about these kids and this community," she explained. "I might make mistakes, and I often get more complaints than compliments, but my focus is to give back to our kids."

Tammy shared yet another story proving the value of what she's doing. "We have a girl who has Cat Eye Syndrome, a curved spine and several other physical ailments. She had seven major, corrective surgeries before sixth grade. She would normally never get to be involved with sports. All year though, she's been playing sports with, and like, every other kid." Isn't that what it's all about? **NOW**

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From left:

L to R Katie Pettitt (legal assistant), Cindy Ermatinger, Gregg Lundberg and Tianta Schwartz (legal assistant). Not present - Jamie Ermatinger (private investigator).

Partnership Between Friends

Aggressive, effective representation gets the job done.

— *By Sandra Strong*

Cindy Ermatinger and Gregg Lundberg were friends long before they became business partners. Their initial meeting involved a car and a bobcat. “I was driving down Ashford Street in Midlothian when this bobcat jumped out and hit the side of my car,” Cindy laughed. Once she realized the bobcat was still alive, she took a deep breath, counted her blessings, called her husband, Bob, and did as he advised. “I went to the nearest house and knocked on the door,” Cindy explained. “The house belonged to Gregg and his wife, Laurie.”

“I guess you could say the bobcat introduced us,” Gregg added.

The friendship between the two families grew. They watched high school soccer games together. Vacations were planned and

taken together. “Laurie and I are BFFs (best friends forever),” Cindy said. “Gregg and Bob are best buddies.”

While they were all still just friends, Gregg’s desire to once again practice law grew into an idea. The initial idea for the partnership came during the election in 2010, when Cindy was running for judge of the 40th Judicial District Court. After the election and following the sale of Maxwell Wholesale Plumbing Supply, the family business, which brought the Lundbergs to Texas from California, the two became one at Ermatinger & Lundberg, Attorneys at Law.

Earlier, as a single mom, Cindy had worked full time during the day and spent her evenings in law school, in order to earn her law degree from Texas Wesleyan School of Law in 1994.

Gregg earned his MBA from Loyola Marymount University, in Los Angeles, California, and then he completed his Juris Doctorate from Southwestern University School of Law in California, graduating with honors in 1987. As partners, they bring over 40 years of valuable experience to the practice. The main goal at Ermatinger & Lundberg is making people comfortable. The family-oriented atmosphere lends to the success of this goal. "Clients come to us, and they're apprehensive and nervous," Gregg said. "We have real empathy for them."

"Yes, they come to us worried and scared about the future," Cindy said. "They need someone they can trust with their life. Once the free consultation is complete, they know we will protect their rights until the very end, whatever the end may be."

Offering clients the full package includes help from legal assistants, Tianta Schwartz and Katie Pettit, as well as the expertise of their investigator, Jamie Ermatinger, with Joplin Private Investigations, who also just happens to be Cindy's daughter. When it comes to criminal defense, juvenile and family law, civil litigation, bankruptcy and education matters, Cindy and Gregg are at the top of their game. Three words best describe this team – experienced, aggressive and innovative. "We are extremely thorough when it comes to preparation," Gregg stated.

"And we are extremely tough when it comes time to appear in court," Cindy emphasized.

They smile again as they recall the first trial they attended together as partners. Cindy sat in the lead chair, while Gregg took second chair. It was a criminal case where their client was found not guilty. "We'll never forget it," Cindy admitted. "It was our first trial as a team, but the last trial to be held in the old downtown courthouse."

The friendship between Cindy and Gregg has grown with the partnership. Their views and practice methods have meshed very well. They still know how to have fun while offering the best in aggressive, effective representation. **NOW**

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Sandra Strong, Michelle McIntosh, Darlene Skoda and Helen Skoda enjoy ice cream at the Women of Faith Conference.



The Waxahachie Chamber holds a ribbon cutting for Waxahachie Ex-Students Association.




Belinda Flores and her daughter, Analysa, talk about Scentsy products at Oktoberfest.




Presley Ann Helton, daughter of Jacquelyn and Greg Helton, enjoys her first birthday.

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Are Your Hormones Out of Balance?

— By Mike Boyd and Mary Boyd, Rph., Rph.

Unbalanced hormones can affect anyone at any stage of life. Teenagers going through puberty, middle aged women facing menopause, men on the edge of andropause, otherwise healthy men and women can all suffer from a variety of conditions and symptoms caused by unbalanced hormones. The adrenal, thyroid and sex hormones all work together to create balance and harmony throughout your entire body. When one or more of these hormones are out of balance, it creates stress and can lead to debilitating conditions, such as: Premenstrual syndrome (PMS), moodiness, hot flashes, bloating, weight gain, endometriosis, sleep disturbances, decreased libido, painful sexual intercourse, fibrocystic breasts, irritability, lack of energy and depression.

These conditions affect millions of men and women. Adrenal fatigue and chronic stress have also been linked to many of these symptoms. Fortunately, there are several tests available through your physician and select pharmacies that are simple to conduct and which are a reliable means for detecting unbalanced hormones. Saliva and/or blood spot testing can provide a comprehensive hormone profile. These test results are key to detecting,

monitoring and correcting imbalances. Every person's needs are different. These tests allow physicians to treat each person as an individual and prescribe the exact medications needed to treat that person.

There are many commercially available products; however, these products tend to be "one-size-fits-all." While these products may be sufficient for some, the compounded products are customized for each individual based on that person's unique needs. Physicians can work closely with compounding pharmacists to maintain a bio-identical hormone replacement regimen that will bring the patient's hormones back into balance.

Bio Identical Hormone Replacement Therapy (BHRT) has many advantages over traditional methods. BHRT closely mimics what your body has been doing naturally for years. It simply brings those natural hormones back into balance and thus eliminates many of the symptoms. The physician is able to prescribe the exact strength and dosage forms, including: capsules, topical or vaginal creams, gels, foams, suppositories, sublingual drops or troches. If needed, these dosage forms can be formulated to include several medications in one dose or even eliminate


painful shots, thus, improving patient compliance.

Once a patient begins therapy, the pharmacist and physician will work closely with the patient to be sure the BHRT is working correctly, adjusting dosages if necessary to ensure the medication is correct. Sometimes, as a person matures or faces stressful life situations, their needs may change. It's important to build a trusting, caring and personal relationship with pharmacists as well as physicians.

Anyone experiencing some or all of these symptoms should consult their physician and ask if hormone replacement therapy might be appropriate for them. Often your local pharmacies, libraries and/or certain Internet sites will have information about BHRT therapy. Don't suffer in silence. The answer to your symptoms may be as simple as applying a cream daily or taking a supplement to boost your immune system. This treatment may not only address your current medical symptoms but can help lead to a healthy, happy and more fulfilling life. **NOW**

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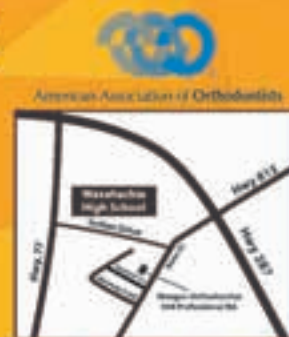
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October is Great Tree-planting Time

— By Nancy Fenton

Fall is one of the very best times for planting trees or shrubs of any size. The cooler weather gives the tree a much better chance to develop strong roots. Container-grown plants, including trees, can be planted any time of year, but the fall is still a much better time since not as much watering is required. Trees, like most plants, shock easily when moved around. The roots start to dry out the minute the soil is pulled away. This makes careful planting a must.

The tree guys at Texas A&M tell us the width of the planting hole is vital. The hole should be three times the width of the pot and no deeper than the container in which the tree is planted. If you are looking at a tree that is bare rooted (no soil), just make sure the hole is good and wide. Plenty of room is needed for the roots to spread out. Good looking trees in containers often have lots of roots in a very small space. A good soaking will often loosen the container and the soil around the roots. If that doesn't work, try a good sharp knife

to cut through and loosen the roots.

The depth issue is one that has changed over the years. The root flare of the tree should be just above the level of the surrounding soil with the roots spread around it. The main issues in North Central Texas are our alkaline soils plus the uneven moisture levels. Refilling the hole with the same soil that came out and topping with two to three inches of coarse mulch is recommended. The less air exposure to the roots, the less chance there is of shock. Regular watering after the fact (even after the temperature drops) will also help.

For more information and a list of great trees for North Central Texas, call the Master Gardeners at the Texas AgriLife Extension officer, (972) 825-5175. **NOW**

Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener.



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Fear of Losses May Lead to Negative Investment Behavior

— Presented by *Tanisha Wilson*

Like every other investor, you prefer not to see the value of your investments drop. But at some point they will fall simply because of the ups and downs of the market. And how you respond to short-term losses can help determine if you enjoy long-term investment success.

Investors' feelings about losses can be complex. In the field of economics, an area of study is devoted to "loss aversion" — the concept that people dislike losing money so much that, given a choice, they'd prefer to avoid losses rather than take gains. For example, if you have a high degree of loss aversion, then you will find greater dissatisfaction by losing \$100 than you'd get satisfaction from taking a \$100 profit.

Loss aversion can lead to various forms of negative investment behavior. Here are two of the most common results:

- **Seeking "risk-free" investments** — When you think of investment losses, the first thing that probably comes to mind is a drop in stock prices. If you're really loss-averse, you might seek to avoid this situation by simply avoiding stocks and placing all your money in other investments. While some of these investments may seem "risk free," you must consider factors such as inflation risk — the possibility that these investments may provide returns that don't keep up with the rate of inflation.

- **Holding "losers" too long** — From time to time, you will own investments that, for whatever reason, underperform. If you're highly loss-averse, though, you may have a tough time acknowledging the losing nature of these investments, so you may be tempted to hold on to them until they "bounce back."

But if the investment's fundamentals change, or if the investment no longer aligns with your goals, it may be time to sell it and look for other opportunities. Conversely, you may want to hold on to quality investments whose price has dropped in the short term, because these investments may well recover.

How can you avoid these types of behavior? For starters, you'll need to recognize the symptoms of loss aversion in yourself — and then resolve to overcome them. Accept the fact that short-term losses are part of investing and that every single investment carries some type of risk.

This doesn't mean, of course, that you should do nothing to reduce your risk. One effective risk-fighting measure you can take is to diversify your holdings by investing in a variety of stocks, bonds, government securities, CDs and other investment vehicles. If you had all your holdings in only stocks or bonds, a downturn primarily affecting one of those assets could lead to a big hit for your portfolio. But by spreading your dollars among a variety of investments, you're also spreading the risk. Keep in mind, though, that diversification by itself can't guarantee a profit or protect against loss.

Investment losses, even short-term ones, aren't much fun. But by not overreacting to these losses, and by diversifying your portfolio in a way that best meets your individual needs, you can look past today's losses toward tomorrow's possibilities. **NOW**

Prepared by Edward Jones for use by Tanisha Wilson, Financial Advisor, Waxahachie, TX.

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October 8

Blessing of the Animals in celebration of the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi: 10:00 a.m., St. Thomas Church, 901 Park Street, Ennis. Ellis County SPCA, along with Tails of Hope Pet Rescue, will microchip pets for \$20. All pets are welcome, but make sure they are on a leash or in a crate. For more details, call (972) 875-2423.

October 14

Ellis County Big Picture Luncheon: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Southwestern Assemblies of God University. Free luncheon for those in Ellis County who want to get involved with Big Brothers Big Sisters through volunteering and donations. For more details, contact Diana Phillips at (972) 573-2420 or dphillips@bbbstx.org.

October 15

Nicholas P. Sims Library Fall Festival: 10:30-11:30 a.m., library lawn. Pumpkin decorating

and crafts for all ages. Call (972) 937-2671 for more information.

Waxahachie Fun Run Car Show: 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Getzendaner Memorial Park. Entry fee is \$20. Contact Mark McClain at (214) 725-7258 for more information.

Ride of Champions: 3:00-5:00 p.m., Campfire Creek Therapeutic Riding Center, 767 Bethel Rd. (972) 937-7265.

October 16

Celebrate Your Boss Day

October 21

Pink Out Event: Everyone is encouraged to wear pink for breast cancer awareness.

October 25

WRC Pregnancy Center of Ellis County Fundraising Dinner: 7:00 p.m., Creekside Church on Highway 287 between Waxahachie and Midlothian. Guest speaker is Kerby Anderson, national director of Probe Ministries and radio host of *Point of View*. Tickets are complimentary, but reservations are required. Call (972) 938-7900 or (972) 878-0784.

October 28-30

Bye Bye Birdie presented by the Waxahachie Community Theatre: **Friday and Saturday:** 7:30 p.m.; **Sunday:** 2:30 p.m., Chautauqua Auditorium in Getzendaner Park. Advance tickets: seniors/students: \$10; adults: \$12. Preschool children: free with paid adult admission. Tickets at the door: additional \$2. Tickets must be purchased online at www.waxahachiecommunitytheatre.com. Advance tickets are also available at the Waxahachie Chamber of Commerce, the Ellis County Museum in downtown Waxahachie and at the offices of Dr. Jerry Ellis, DDS in Midlothian. Contact WCT Box Office: (972) 646-1050 or wct.texas@gmail.com.

November 4 and 5

Heart of Texas Arts and Craft Show: **November 4:** 2:00-8:00 p.m., **November 5:** 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center. Admission: Adults \$4; children 12 and under are free. Visit www.heartoftexasshow.com.

Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your event details to sskoda.nowmag@sbcglobal.net.

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In The Kitchen With Lynn Thornhill

— *By Sandra Strong*

Lynn Thornhill's earliest memories in the kitchen are sitting on the counter licking the cake batter spoon. "I loved being in the kitchen with my mother and grandmother," Lynn admitted. "They made cooking fun." Lynn wanted the same memories for her three children, so she spent time teaching them to cook, too. "Today," she said, "the cooking tradition continues with the grandchildren."

Her mother and grandmother mainly cooked from memory, sometimes inventing recipes as they went along. "I often pull from the pantry," she confessed, "and cook with whatever I have on hand, making sure to taste as I go." When the family gets together, they have so much fun in the kitchen – singing, playing the guitar and telling stories. "It doesn't get much better than that." **NOW**

Meatloaf

1 pound ground beef (recommend Laura's Natural Beef)
1 egg, lightly beaten
1/2 cup club crackers, crushed
1/2 cup onion, chopped
1/2 cup bell pepper, chopped
1 1/4 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. ground black pepper
1 tsp. Lawrey's Seasoning Salt
1/4 tsp. Lawrey's Garlic Salt
1/4 tsp. chili powder
Few splashes of Worcestershire sauce
8 oz. canned diced tomatoes with juice, divided
1 small can tomato sauce, divided

1. Preheat oven to 375 F
2. Combine the beef, slightly beaten egg, crackers, about half of the onions and bell pepper, salt, pepper, seasoned salt, garlic salt,

chili powder and Worcestershire sauce in a large mixing bowl.

3. To create the topping, scoop out about half of the tomatoes from the can and combine in the meat mixture, along with half of the can of tomato sauce.

4. Shape into a loaf. Do not pack the meatloaf too tightly. Make 2-3 small holes in the top of the meatloaf.

5. Pour the remaining canned tomatoes with juice and tomato sauce over the top of the meatloaf. Sprinkle the remaining onions and bell pepper on top.

6. Cover with aluminum foil and bake for 1 hour. Remove the foil and bake for an additional 20-30 minutes.

7. Remove from oven and let stand for a few minutes before serving.

Mashed Potatoes

2 pounds russet potatoes, peeled and

cut into large chunks
Kosher salt, to taste
1/4 cup butter
3/4 cup whole milk
Fresh ground black pepper, to taste
Salt, to taste

1. In a large saucepan combine the potatoes, salt and enough cold water to cover. Bring to a boil over high heat. Lower the heat to a simmer and cook until tender (testing with a fork), about 20 minutes.

2. Drain potatoes, leaving just enough water in the pan to cover the bottom.

3. Place potatoes into a bowl, add butter and use an electric mixer to mash them to the desired consistency.

4. In the microwave, heat the milk until just hot, not boiling (check every 30 seconds). Heating the milk will make the potatoes smooth and creamy. Gradually stir the milk into the potatoes, adding as much as desired.

5. Season with salt and pepper to taste and serve immediately.

Just Like Grandmother's Peach Cobbler

4 cups peeled, sliced peaches
2 cups sugar, divided
1/2 cup water
8 Tbsp. butter
1 1/2 cups self-rising flour
1 1/2 cups milk
Ground cinnamon, optional

1. Preheat oven to 350 F

2. Combine the peaches, 1 cup sugar and water in a saucepan; mix well. Bring to a boil; simmer for 10 minutes. Remove from heat.

3. Put the butter in a 3-quart baking dish and place in oven to melt.

4. Mix remaining sugar, flour and milk slowly to prevent clumping. Pour mixture over melted butter. Do not stir.

5. Spoon fruit on top, gently pouring in syrup. Sprinkle top with ground cinnamon.

6. Batter will rise to top during baking. Bake for 30 to 45 minutes.

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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.’”

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