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M A G A Z I N E

OCTOBER 2012

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A woman with long brown hair, wearing a bright red dress and a large, wide-brimmed pink hat with a wavy pattern, is the central figure. She is wearing yellow-tinted sunglasses and is looking towards the camera. She is sitting on a dark, textured surface, possibly a rock or a rug. The background is a solid red color.

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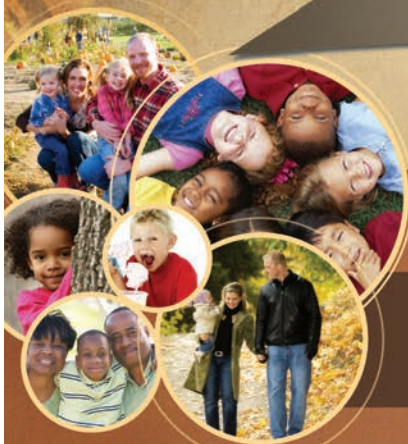
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ON THE COVER



Amanda Madu created *Style Me Freely* in 2012. It's "her version of *Vogue*!"

Photo by Opaque Visuals.

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Editor's Note

Hello, Southwest Friends!

Fall has brought some interesting changes to our NOW magazine family — we've grown! This month, we launched our 10th magazine: *GranburyNOW*! Granbury is an interesting, historic town and tourist haven, and we are pretty excited to welcome them into our family of community magazines.

Once again, many of you will participate in Country Day on the Hill in Cedar Hill, as well as many harvest and Halloween festivals. If you are more of a homebody, grab an apple and a copy of this month's issue of *SouthwestNOW* to see if one of your neighbors is in our Around Town feature or find a recipe you'd like to try or just enjoy one of our stories.

As always, I'd love to write about someone you know whom I haven't met yet, so be sure to send me story leads on your favorite people!

Thanks for letting me represent you as editor!

Beverly

Beverly Shay
SouthwestNOW Editor
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Carving Her Niche

— By Rick Hope

Amanda Madu is not one who wants to do things in a conventional fashion. She doesn't want to follow a roadmap. She'd rather, in her words, "carve out her own niche." Perhaps that's one of the main things the Discus Foundation recognized about her, and why they gave her the opportunity of recognition, as well as the chance to win various scholarships.

According to their Web site, the Discus Awards honors students who do not always get the recognition they deserve by awarding college scholarships to “well-rounded high school students and their families.” Traditional awards programs focus on the numbers found in test scores, grades and win-loss records. But college admissions offices know that it takes more than academic success and athletic prowess to predict real-world success in and out of the classroom. The Discus Awards recognizes uncommon students whose character and passions are anything but average.

“By focusing on the whole student, the Discus Awards gives high school students the opportunity to earn recognition and scholarships for being great at the things they love to do,” per their Web site. The award highlights 10 major categories, or attributes, where students can make an important contribution during high school. Every Discus Award winner has a proven track record in at least three of those attributes. Amanda chose art, academics and community service for her three attributes.

Although she hasn’t always considered herself an artist, Amanda discovered she had a talent for painting two years ago when she was taking an art class. Right away, her art teacher noticed Amanda’s talent. Amanda has experimented with different types of painting but prefers to work with portraits (including self-portraits), flowers and abstract drawings. She mainly uses acrylic paints and stencils.

Dancing is also an art form that Amanda, a recent graduate of Cedar Hill Collegiate High School, passionately embraces. When she was 8 years old, she joined Ultimate Dance Studio in Duncanville. “I was never good at sports, and I wanted a project I could take on after school,” Amanda admitted. She soon discovered she loved dancing in all its forms, including: ballet, tap, jazz and hip-hop. Before too long, she was on the competition team. “I love to perform on stage,” she shared.

When the studio closed two years ago, Amanda began to look for another dancing outlet. Last summer, she was approached about and able to attend an



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Essence Dance Camp. This has allowed her to continue to perform and learn the craft. She has even performed at some school assemblies.

Amanda is also a strong advocate of community service. She stays strongly involved in community outreach activities through the local church she attends. Recently, she has been part of a group of people who are trying to start a Boys & Girls Club of America in their area. Amanda wants every student to have a place where they can feel safe to go until their parents get home.

For Amanda, the journey to this point has just been one door opening after another. After being accepted into two early-college high schools — Waxahachie Global High School and Cedar Hill Collegiate High School — Amanda decided to attend Cedar Hill Collegiate High School largely because it was closer to home. Under this school's intense academic program, Amanda has already completed two years of college classes, earning an associate of arts degree from Cedar Valley College. She will spend two years at Baylor University as a student and, if all goes well, will have her bachelor's degree at that time. Amanda naturally speaks well of her school. "It's an opportunity everyone should take advantage of," she stated.

When a teacher nominated her for the Discus Awards, she decided to take full advantage of the opportunity. Although no guidelines were specified as to how long the essays should be, Amanda put everything she had into her writing. On April 30, she got an e-mail informing her she was one of 43 Texas students who would receive the award. "You should be proud of your accomplishments. We encourage you to continue pursuing the passions that make you uniquely special," the e-mail read.

Amanda is the youngest of four children born to Robert and Evelyn Madu. They are very proud of their daughter, her accomplishments and of her faith. "Amanda's dad and I are first of all proud that she acknowledges Jesus as her personal Savior. She has always been inwardly driven to succeed and excel in everything she does," Evelyn said. This attitude to do well and succeed is



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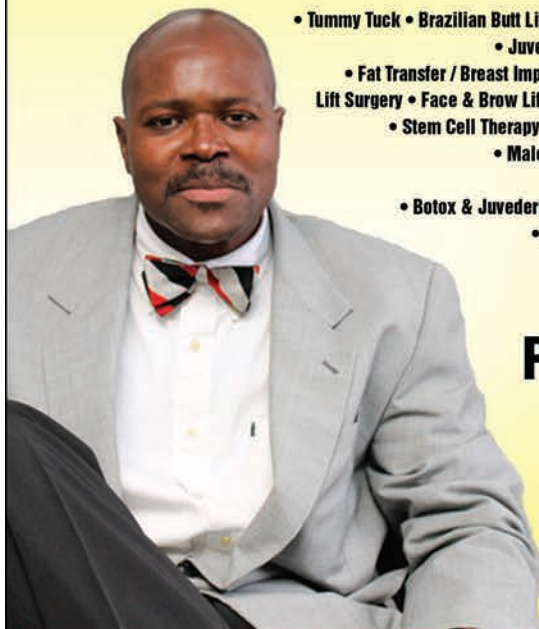
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something they, as parents, have instilled in all their children. The family mantra could easily be: “Good is not always good when better is expected.” Amanda has lived that motto over the course of her entire school career. “She has always been an A-student, from elementary through high school. She achieved her high school diploma and associate degree within her last year of high school,” Evelyn said. “She was also in the top 10 of her senior class.”

While at Baylor University, Amanda plans to major in accounting. However, the Baptist institution in Waco was not her first choice. Her faith played a big part in her decision. “I have always wanted to serve God, but never felt led to work at a church or go on the mission field. We went to tour the Baylor campus, and the tour guide was a finance major who talked about using his skills to help out on a recent mission trip. I then realized that any job can be a ministry, and that Baylor would encourage that,” she explained.

The bright, vivacious young woman has many dreams for her future. She would like to open her own business someday and maybe even develop her own line of clothing or jewelry. And she plans to never leave the field of dance. She is quick to express it will always be a part of her life. Amanda is a dancer, an artist, an accounting student, an A-student and a driven achiever. Although these are good descriptions of who Amanda really is, they don't seem to completely describe her. As she settles into college life and begins working on her chosen career, one thing is for sure — she'll have her own game plan. She's gotten good at carving out her own niche. **NOW**

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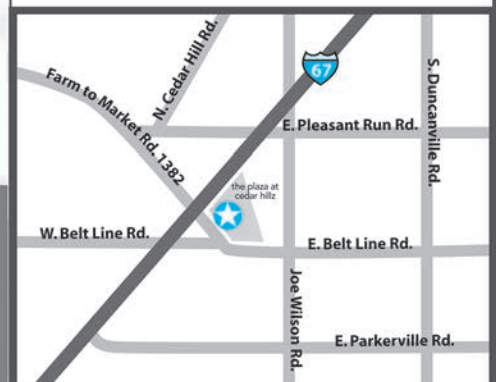
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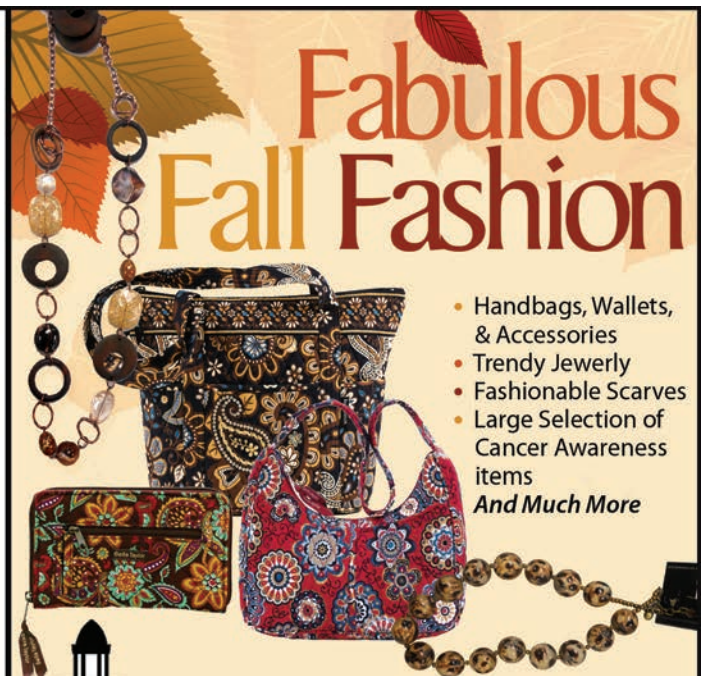
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Board approved 2012-13 budget; 1% raise

The DeSoto ISD Board of Trustees approved the 2012-13 balanced budget of \$61.48 million, a reduction of \$2.3 million from last year. The reductions came from all areas in the district including general department funds, employee non-duty stipends, longevity pay, 37 district positions through attrition, contracted custodial services, energy savings, reductions in travel, and many smaller items.

At the same time, the district recognized the need for salary increases starting with 1% this year and adding 1% for each of the next four years for a compounded 5% raise. Administration is also exploring an Incentive Pay Plan where employees could earn 1% or higher bonus checks for campus or student ratings and attendance next year.



Texas A&M University President R. Brown Loftin visits with the top 25% of the DeSoto High School senior class about Texas A&M's rich heritage and admissions / enrollment process.

Who Knew?

DeSoto ISD received the **Technology Lending Program Grant for \$100,000**. The one-time grant will be used to provide each middle school with 50 laptops to 'lend' to students through selected criteria. The students will be able to use the laptops at home and in school as a part of *Bring Your Own Device*.

The DeSoto ISD Office of Parent Engagement, in conjunction with Strong Fathers-Strong Families, is holding a Strong Families Institute on Saturday, October 6 from 8-11:30 a.m. in the DeSoto High School Academy Cafeteria. All families are invited to join us for this special event. For details, contact Parent Engagement at 972-223-6666.

The District launched **Go GREEN Fridays** this fall to encourage the community, parents, students and staff to get ready for games on Friday night and support education. Watch for posters in your local restaurants and businesses offering discounts for **Go GREEN Fridays** started Sept. 21.

Have you joined the PTA at your school?

All DeSoto ISD parents, employees and community members are encouraged to join a DeSoto ISD PTA and support the organization. Contact the campus for details on how to join. Also, visit the Web site for upcoming Parent Engagement activities and take a parent survey about school involvement.

The annual DeSoto ISD Seniors Prom for DeSoto ISD residents age 60 and over will be held Saturday, October 27 from 6-8:30 p.m. in the DeSoto High School Academy Cafeteria. Call DeSoto ISD Communications at 972-223-6666 for tickets.

Calendar of Events

Monday, October 1 – Staff Development Day, DeSoto ISD No School - State Fair Day

Saturday, October 6, 8-11:30 a.m. – Strong Families Institute – Raising Safe, Smart and Strong Students, DHS

Monday, October 8 – DeSoto ISD Early Release

Friday, October 12, 7:30 p.m. – Eagles Football vs. Timberview at R.L. Anderson Stadium, Mansfield

Saturday, October 13 – The Classic: DHS Marching Band Competition, Eagle Stadium

Friday, October 19, 7:30 p.m. – Eagles Football vs. Midlothian at Eagle Stadium (Homecoming)

Friday, October 26, 7:30 p.m. – Eagles Football vs. Duncanville at Panther Stadium

Saturday, October 27, 6-8:30 p.m. – DeSoto ISD Senior Prom for DeSoto ISD residents age 60 and over. Call 972-223-6666.



Hope From a Bread Truck

— By Cindy Malone

Imagine a scene between two people just meeting, sharing stories about their lives, speaking about their mutual passion for helping the homeless and their dreams of someday opening a shelter and making a real difference in the world. Now imagine those two as unemployed 50-somethings in line for a polygraph test at a job placement agency, talking about helping others while both in need of help themselves.

Gwen (Ingram) Sledge met Jesse Sledge at AARP employment services. While talking about their someday dreams, Gwen learned that she wasn't alone when she said, "I think I would

eventually like to open a shelter and feed the homeless. I can't explain why, but I am drawn to it."

Jesse responded unexpectedly, "I have been homeless, jobless and destitute. I have been in trouble and learned from my mistakes, and by the grace of God, I am still here and ready to serve. Opening a shelter would be a dream come true for me."

Gwen laughed, "I have been married once and have two children and five grandkids. I never thought I would get married again. And now, a year-and-a-half later, I am married." Jesse also has two kids and five grandchildren. DeSoto residents both working now, the Sledges use every resource and minute available to help others



through their organization, Homeless Coalition of Dallas.

Jesse's brother sang at St. John's Baptist Church in Carrollton. Gwen was accustomed to a much larger church but jumped at the chance to see Jesse and his brother sing together. "I immediately fell in love with the pastor and congregation, all 20 of them," Gwen remembered. Together, Jesse and Gwen spoke to the pastor and asked for permission to begin a homeless ministry through the church. The next daunting task was to ask a small congregation with limited funds for startup donations.

In addition to the church, the couple also advertised in the community and began getting small donations of money, clothing and food. About a month into fundraising, Jesse heard Mrs. Baird's sometimes donates bread to charity. And he heard right. Mrs. Baird's began donating bread, and now they receive over 2,000 loaves every week. "We love that bread. We baby that bread. I know the people who are getting it are needy,

"You would be surprised how many people lined up just for fresh bread."

but we don't want to eat crunched up bread, so we don't crunch up *their* bread," Gwen said. With each delivery, one or both of the Sledges take the bread and drive to their small storage-room-turned-distribution center and pack it in plastic crates they bought themselves.

Along with the bread, they also purchase food from Crossroads Community Services using monetary donations. The Homeless Coalition of Dallas helps families in at least three ways: First, they donate bread to other churches in the area, including Kingdom Baptist Church and Faithful Few, who



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then distribute it to their needy members and surrounding churches. About 150 families have filled out applications to receive food packages from the group each month. Secondly, using the food they buy from Crossroads along with the food they get from donations and, of course, the bread, Gwen and Jesse box up groceries every second Monday for each family individually, thinking of each family's unique situation. Do they have an oven or stove? If so, perhaps spaghetti noodles, sauce and other soups and frozen foods go into their box. Do they have children in need of sack lunches for school? That family would then



receive lunch meat, peanut butter and jelly, snacks and juice. Third, they take food to the areas where homeless people congregate and hand it out directly to them. "We started with just loaves of bread. You would be surprised how many people lined up just for fresh bread," Gwen explained.

Now, the Sledges bring what they can, when they can, where they can. Each weekend, they go to South Dallas and Carrollton and bring a pack of volunteers along. Jesse said, "That has been the most amazing part of our journey — the number of people who come out each weekend to help. If they can give, they do. If not, they are waiting for us to get there so they can help set up tables and prepare the bags." Some weekends they need a small amount of help, but on the fourth Saturday of each month, the couple can use all the help they can get.



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The fourth Saturdays, everyone meets in Carrollton where the food is stored. Around 10:00 a.m., Gwen, Jesse and several car loads of volunteers head out to the park at Martin Luther King and Gould to distribute a long list of things: a bag of food each person can use for the week; a snack bag of food that can be eaten anywhere, which is a bit more special than what they normally get; clothing that has been separated on a table by gender and size; and one hot meal. "During the winter, we bring huge pots of soups and stews," Gwen said. "During the summer, it's hot dogs and bags of chips." They sometimes have fresh fruits and vegetables that are donated from The Gospel Mission. Last but not least, they take bottles of water in coolers.

"Many weekdays after work, Jesse and I run around filling individual orders," Gwen said. "Sometimes, churches will call with an emergency — a family in need of short-term immediate help — and we will run up to Carrollton and make up a box to take it to whoever needs it."

Both Gwen and Jesse dream of seeing their small food distribution service turn into a full-fledge homeless shelter with services including: food, shelter, job counseling, training and placement, along with therapy and GED preparation. They feel strongly about mandatory drug testing and even more strongly that people deserve the opportunity to turn their life around. "I've been there," Jesse said matter-of-factly. "I didn't change until I wanted to, until I hit rock bottom. And these people we are serving — some of whom I have slept next to — deserve to eat, to stay alive. With faith and God's help, they can turn their lives around."

"Right now we are building, but absolutely enjoying the ride," Gwen said. "We have volunteers who care as much as we do. We are feeding people of all races and religions. We haven't missed a weekend since we opened." The Sledges truly have a passion for feeding the homeless, and with that passion, an amazing group of volunteers and a truck load of bread, they are making a difference in their community. **NOW**

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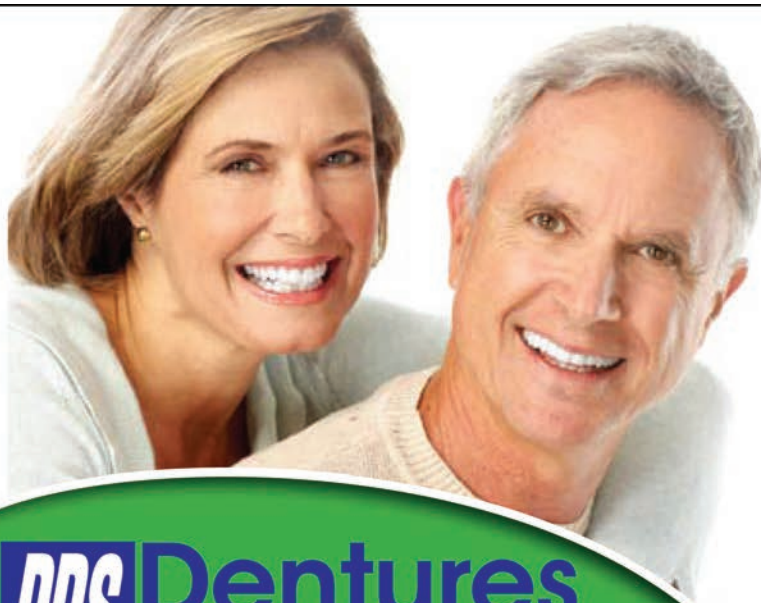
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Known for innovation in education, Duncanville ISD is one of only 23 Texas school districts to be selected by Texas Commissioner of Education Michael L. Williams to participate in the Texas High Performance Schools Consortium. The selected districts will begin working together in October to help develop next-generation learning standards, assessments, and accountability systems that could transform Texas public education. Duncanville ISD has been hard at work transforming traditional classrooms into 21st Century learning hubs for the past

several years. One key factor of success is training teachers to design engaging work that is relevant and meaningful for students. The district has invested in staff training in an effort to deliver integrated Project Based Learning (PBL) experiences, and this year parents and students will see PBL fully implemented at selected grade levels. This focus makes Duncanville ISD an ideal district to serve as a member of the newly-formed Texas High Performance Schools Consortium.

Parent/Teacher Conference Days

As part of the district's commitment to enhanced parent communication, Duncanville ISD has designated two days in the 2012-13 school calendar for Parent-Teacher Conferences. All Duncanville ISD schools will host Parent-Teacher Conferences on October 18 and 19. Teachers will be available to meet with parents on Thursday evening, October 18, from 5:00 to 8:00 pm and on Friday morning, October 19, from 7:30 am to 12:00 noon. Regular classes will be in session on Thursday, October 18; however, there will be no classes for students on Friday, October 19.

Parents of students in all grades may schedule appointments by directly contacting teachers or schools. Parents of students in grades 7-12 may also use the online scheduling process, through their Home Access Center (HAC) account, to set up an appointment with their child's teacher(s).

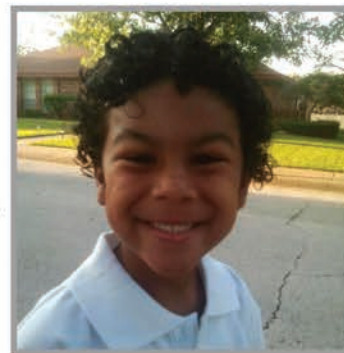
Please know that if parents wish to meet with a teacher but October 18 or 19 are not convenient times, an alternate day and time can be scheduled with teachers at any time during the school year. For more information, please visit the district website at duncanvilleisd.org.

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We Have a Winner!

Our annual First Day Photo Contest winner for 2012 was Barron Tatum, a kindergarten student at Smith Elementary. Our thanks to everyone who participated!



Duncanville Parent Network



The Duncanville Parent Network is hosting a Special Education Services meeting Thursday, October 11, from 6:30 to 8:00 pm in

the Reed Middle School library (530 East Freeman). Presenters from the ARC of Dallas will be on hand to answer questions about their services, advocacy, state programs, waiting lists, and the organization. All interested community members are invited to come, and refreshments will be served.

To RSVP to attend or for childcare at the event, email duncanvillepn2011@hotmail.com.

The Duncanville Parent Network is an independent support group of parents of students in special education in our district. This parent-led group was created in 2011 and is assisted by the district's Support Services staff in securing venues and speakers for meetings.

Never Really Retired

— By Rick Hope



In the early 1950s, a branch manager for Capitol Records was in his office when a young man walked in with a paper sack. He said he wanted the manager to take him to radio stations to help promote a monologue he had recorded. The manager agreed, and the record was an overnight success in the Charlotte area. This prompted the manager to call Capitol's main office in New York and convince them to sign on the young comedian. The record was called What It Was, Was Football! The comedian was Andy Griffith. The record company executive was Duncanville resident, Warner "Pug" Pagliara.

That was the beginning of a career for Pug that spanned 50 years. Along the way, he became acquainted and met several artists including: Johnny Mathis, Nat King Cole, Peggy Lee, Perry Como and Henry Mancini, to name only a few. He has maintained communication over the years with Dolly Parton and Charley Pride. Pug's time in the music industry had him

Duncanville **NOW**

living in North Carolina, Michigan, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Missouri, New Jersey and Dallas. Prior to that, he served his country during World War II. His tour of duty included: the United States, Australia, New Guinea, the Philippine Islands and Japan. The last part of his tour of duty involved serving as a captain in the United States Army, where he worked at a Japanese prison camp, which housed some notorious inmates, including General Tojo.

But when Pug lists his most enjoyable career, neither his military career, nor his time in the music industry is mentioned. What Pug enjoyed the most was his time with the Duncanville Police Department. After retiring from 50 years in the music business in 1986, Pug became bored really quickly. "I had the cleanest garage and nicest yard in town," Pug said. "There was nothing else to do." Finally, he decided to volunteer at the Duncanville Police Department. After a few short years, Chief Michael Courville offered him a job with the department under the title of volunteer coordinator. "I was placed in charge of all the volunteers." This was exciting to Pug as one of his earliest childhood ambitions was being a policeman. "Back then, you had to be at least 5 feet 9 inches tall," Pug explained. "I was too short."

Pug served in that position for 14 years under Chiefs Courville, Long and Brown. Pug has a plethora of memories from those 14 years. One involves a missing Alzheimer's patient. "The department informed me they had been looking for some time and wanted the Citizens on Patrol (COPs) to come and help," he shared. Within minutes, Pug turned a corner and saw the man sitting under a tree. Pug received a commendation in 1998 from the Duncanville Police Department for that event.

Pug considers the Citizens on Patrol program to be one of the most important functions of the volunteer program. They participate in neighborhood and business watch patrols, which provide extra eyes and ears for the police department. In addition to patrolling, the COPs help the police department during parades, project graduation and



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Every year, the volunteers and COPs save the city in excess of \$150,000 to \$200,000 by taking on duties that would normally be assigned to a police officer. Pug himself has volunteered more than 3,000 hours. In addition to the commendation mentioned earlier, he was given the Volunteer of the Year award in 1994 and the Civilian of the Year award in 2001 from the Duncanville Police Department. He also has been awarded three civic achievement awards and more than eight commendations and certificates of appreciation.

If there is any doubt about Pug's contribution, there's no need to look further than those with whom he served. Former Chief Courville had this to say on the occasion of Pug's retirement in 2007: "For the last several years, I believe Pug was the glue that has held the volunteers together. Officers changed, but Pug held the ship steady, and the voyage has been very helpful and productive for the police department and the city."

Former Chief Long has always admired Pug's work ethic. "Pug had to make sure special events, such as parades and other major activities, were supported by volunteers who had been trained to assist the police department with crowd control," Chief Long stated. "He helped to make sure things were safer for our citizens at these events."

Then Assistant Chief Brown referred to Pug as a "living legend." At his retirement, Chief Brown said of Pug, "He's an abundance of resourceful



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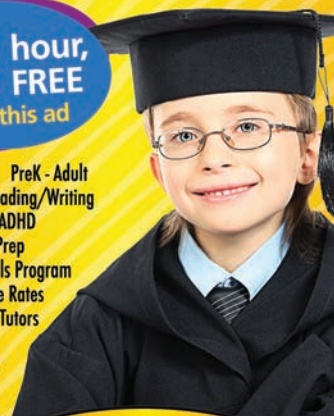


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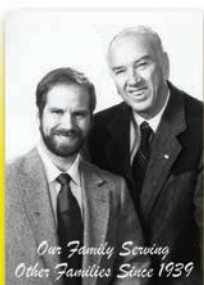
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As much as the men and women of the department admire Pug, the feeling of admiration is mutual. Early in his time with them, Pug found out that many of the officers were fascinated with the 40 gold records he had accumulated during his career. So, whenever an opportunity presented itself, he would present them with one of these gold records from his collection. "Chief Brown used to always ask about Charley Pride," Pug said. "So, I gave him my gold record from Charley's song 'Kiss An Angel Good Morning.'" Pug was quick to add that his part in the gold records was only being part of a team of many who helped the record achieve that status.

Out of all the celebrities Pug has come to know over the years, there is one his story would not be complete without mentioning. When time came for Pug's retirement, a reception was to be held in his honor. Pug wanted to ask local television personality, Gloria Campos, to speak at the event. She readily accepted, and Pug's study now has an autographed picture of her on the wall.

Pug is also very proud of the volunteer work he's done at the Dallas/Fort Worth National Cemetery. "I've put in more than 700 hours at the cemetery since it opened in 2000," he shared. "I've slowed down a bit. Now I just volunteer at the cemetery the first Sunday of each month."

Still living in Duncanville with his wife, Carlene, Pug enjoys his retirement. But at 91, he doesn't plan on sitting still for very long. He needs something more to occupy his time, but he doesn't know yet what that something will be. Whatever it is, it will no doubt benefit the whole community. **NOW**



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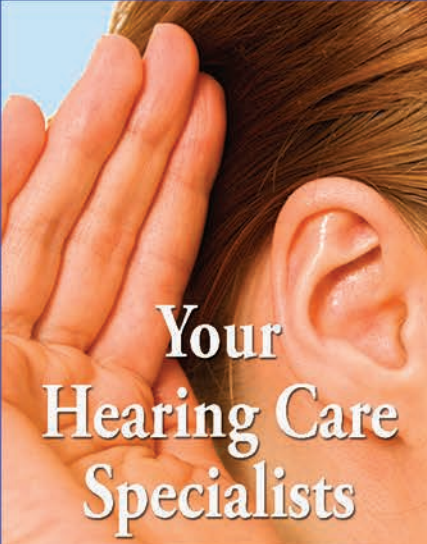
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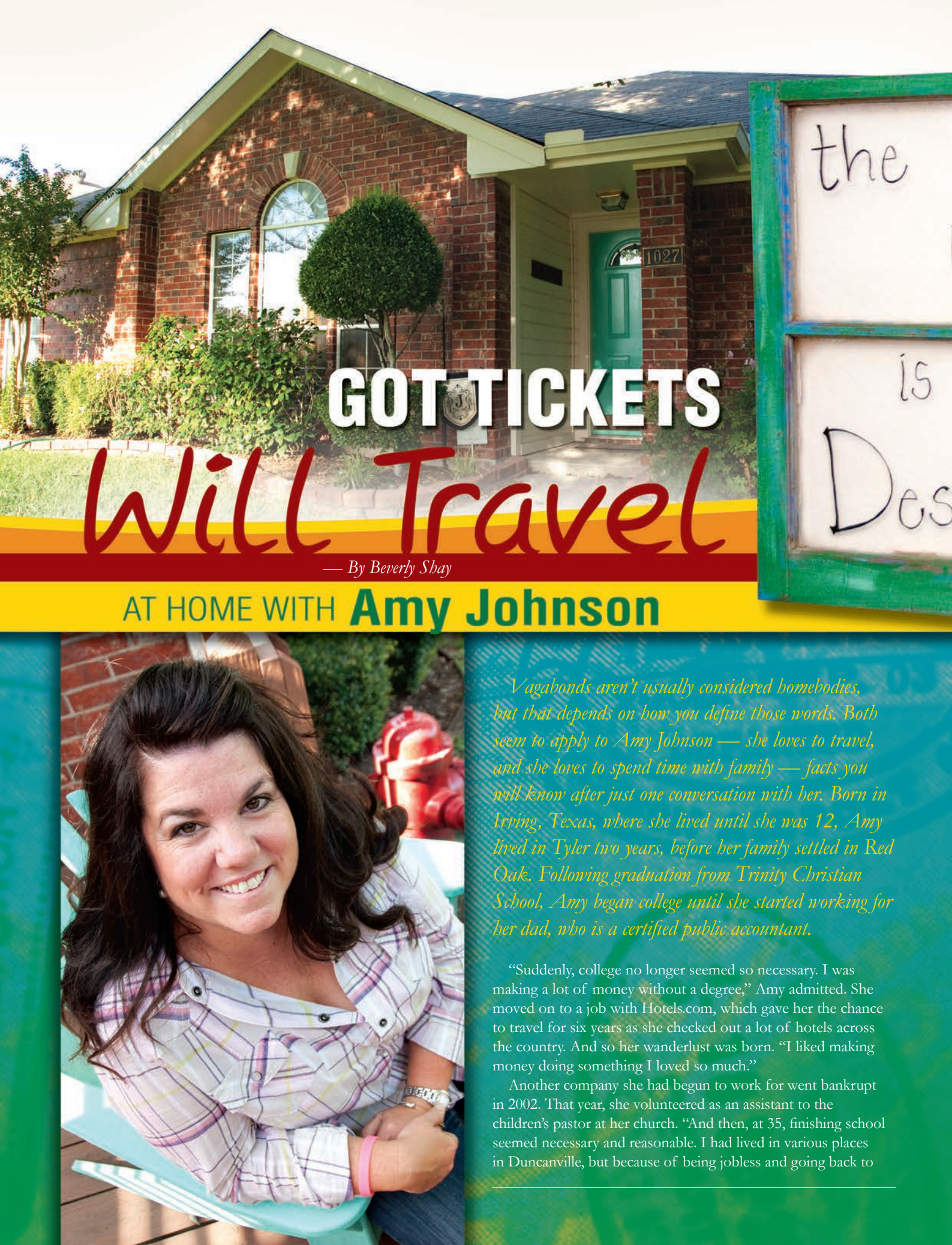
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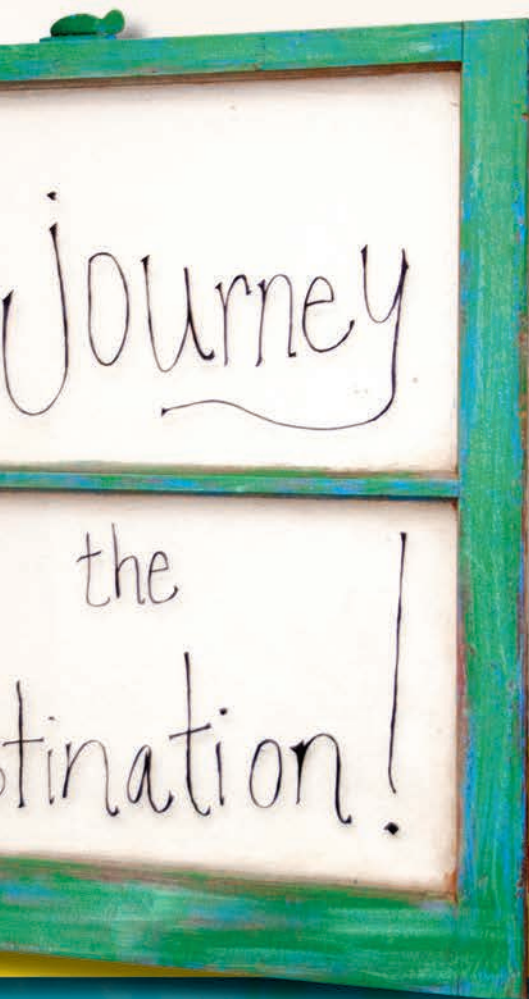
AT HOME WITH **Amy Johnson**



Vagabonds aren't usually considered homebodies, but that depends on how you define those words. Both seem to apply to Amy Johnson — she loves to travel, and she loves to spend time with family — facts you will know after just one conversation with her. Born in Irving, Texas, where she lived until she was 12, Amy lived in Tyler two years, before her family settled in Red Oak. Following graduation from Trinity Christian School, Amy began college until she started working for her dad, who is a certified public accountant.

“Suddenly, college no longer seemed so necessary. I was making a lot of money without a degree,” Amy admitted. She moved on to a job with Hotels.com, which gave her the chance to travel for six years as she checked out a lot of hotels across the country. And so her wanderlust was born. “I liked making money doing something I loved so much.”

Another company she had begun to work for went bankrupt in 2002. That year, she volunteered as an assistant to the children's pastor at her church. “And then, at 35, finishing school seemed necessary and reasonable. I had lived in various places in Duncanville, but because of being jobless and going back to



school, I moved back in with my parents,” Amy recalled. In three-and-a-half years, Amy earned her Bachelor of Science in interdisciplinary studies with a certification to teach early education (through fourth grade) from The University of Texas at Arlington (UTA). “I planned to teach fourth grade but was hired as a kindergarten aide, which counted for my student teaching. Following such invaluable experience, I knew I wanted to teach kindergarten,” Amy recounted.

After graduation from UTA, Amy subbed in Red Oak. When Life School opened in Cedar Hill, she was hired as a kindergarten teacher. She was shifted to second grade and then first grade, which she has taught for three years. “I ended up living on my own again, still intent on travelling. I had gone to Africa in 2006 to visit some missionary friends, which reminded me how much I loved to travel. So when my church began taking summer Girlfriend trips — “Girlfriends” is the name of our women’s ministries — I began going. I think I have been on all

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but one," Amy said. "I traveled with them to Belize, Jamaica, Dominican Republic and now Argentina."

Amy has always been very close to her family, especially her sisters and nephews. "When my father's business went through hard times, they lost their house in Red Oak. Once he regained his business, they bought this house about 11 years ago," Amy said. "When the unthinkable happened, and my mom died last



October, following a period of illness, my father just didn't have the heart to stay here in this big old, 1,900-square-foot house by himself. So I bought it."

While her father took most of the furniture, traces remain of Amy's parents' influence in what is now her home. "One thing that really reminds me of my mom and has become my current personal motto is the statement I have written in marker on this window," Amy stated,

indicating the center window of three on the living room wall, where she wrote, "The journey is the destination," in part because life is our journey. "We never know how long that journey will be or when it will end." The other two salvaged windows frame random boarding passes from Amy's various travels, with a globe below. "Every room in the house carries the theme of travel and the world, because that makes up a big part of my

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heart," she shared. "My nephews like to find the places I have traveled."

Each room shows off mementos of her close-knit family. The front sitting room has her grandmother's antique upright organ, which passed to her parents and now her. "It has been in my sister's home as well," Amy stated. "Actually, we pass most of the pieces along as we no longer need them." The sitting room also holds an antique gum ball machine, her grandparents' grandfather clock and a SCRABBLE board ready for play on a small table.

Tall, white cupboards add light to the kitchen, which opens to a breakfast area with a round, tiger oak, claw-footed table that can open to seat 12. "International magnets cover the freezer and stateside magnets the fridge — all from places I have traveled. My parents put in the laminate flooring and the dark, faux-granite countertops," Amy explained. "I want to paint the walls soon — probably green, since that's my favorite color."

"I love the backyard. It's the main reason my parents bought this house. My dad loved the landscaping." The courtyard nestled between the house and the garage features a deck with latticework above, from which hangs a kiddie swing for one of Amy's nephews. An old fire hydrant guards the yard, which is dominated by a large tree with a tire swing. "My parents spent a lot of pleasant time out here. I hope to keep everything growing," she laughed. "There's something blooming back here during every season."

Most of the walls in the home are neutral in color. The den has a brown



leather couch and bricked fireplace. A geometric-patterned rug in burgundy, gold and brown resides near a large queen chess piece on the floor, and books adorn the mantel.

Amy is in the process of turning what was her mom's sewing room into her office. Maps and flag posters hang on the walls, and a shelf holds souvenirs from her travels, like the mate cup she received in Argentina. Across the hall is the playroom for her three nephews: Will, 6; Nathan, 4; and Jack, 1 1/2. The room has a small table and chairs, a toy chest, wooden train set and a rack of purses. "Those purses are mine, not the boys," Amy quickly qualified with a laugh.

The spare room features a wooden ladder hung on the wall and a quilt Amy's mom made of a Dick-and-Jane print reminiscent of the first-grade readers of decades ago. Amy's hope chest, which her grandfather made, vies for center of attention with an old-fashioned, wicker bunny stroller and innumerable stuffed bunnies. "The boys have so much fun playing with those bunnies. They kind of remind me of me!" Amy said.

Several rooms display stacks of old-fashioned suitcases — some closed, some opened, some filled with books. In the master suite, the bed is adorned with an ivory duvet and the headboard is made from an old fence. Wicker chests and an antique chest of drawers — a graduation gift from Amy's parents — counterbalance the old walnut wardrobe left behind for Amy's TV. "I can definitely say," Amy remarked, "that I benefited from my mom's expert interior design." **NOW**



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The 2nd Street District is home to the W Hotel and Residence and *Austin City Limits Live* at The Moody Theater Austin's newest music venue. This state-of-the-art theater is home to the longest running PBS series *Austin City Limits* and is the world's first fully integrated 3D production and performance facility. *Pollstar* ranked it the "Best New Major Concert Venue" in 2011.

Just south of downtown and across Lady Bird Lake is South Congress (commonly known as SoCo). This eclectic district is lined with vintage shops, chic clothing and jewelry boutiques, cool coffee shops and one-of-a-kind dining. Politicos, students and visitors come together to visit this essential hip strip of the city.

One of Austin's most culturally rich neighborhoods is East Austin, which is home to a wide range of historic landmarks, art galleries, family-owned restaurants, food trailers and music venues. Once a destination for soul musicians passing through on the Chitlin' Circuit, East Austin still has a strong identity as a hub for African-American culture. If something unique and innovative is going on in Austin, chances are, it's happening here. It doesn't take long to recognize that this area is brimming with change and creativity.

The city provides artists and their fans a truly amazing backdrop for live performances. Nearly 250 live music venues offer rock, blues, country and



Tejano shows nightly. The Broken Spoke, known as the last true Texas dance hall, features great country acts — and guests can also take a Texas two-step lesson. The Continental Club has showcased blues, rock and folk music since 1957, earning it the title: Granddaddy of the Austin music venues. Antone's, Austin's home of the blues, is where Stevie Ray Vaughan cut his proverbial teeth. Newer stages like those at The Mohawk and



Club DeVille showcase local acts alongside big-name touring artists. A guide to Austin's music scene, including a list of famous musicians from Austin and great musical attractions, is available at www.austintexas.org/music.

Austin is fast becoming a foodie destination. Locals know, no matter where you are in the city, you're close to one of the nearly 2,000 mobile food vendors. A must-do for Austinites, this inexpensive *haute trailer cuisine* movement means

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Austin is a playground waiting to be explored. The city's beautiful natural surroundings lure nature lovers and outdoor enthusiasts. There are more than 14,000 acres of nature trails, parks and wilderness preserves to discover. Lady Bird Lake runs through the center of downtown and is bordered by 10 miles of breathtaking hike and bike trails. For a uniquely Austin experience, try yoga on a stand-up paddle board or take a dip in Barton Springs, a natural spring fed pool, where the average yearly water temperature is 68 degrees. As the sun sets, head over to Congress Avenue Bridge. Austin is home to the world's largest urban bat colony of 1.5 million Mexican free-tailed bats. From April through October, these nocturnal wonders emerge from under the Congress Avenue Bridge for a nightly show.

Whether you're observing the bats, listening to an acoustic guitar player in a jewelry shop or eating the best crepes you've tasted in years — served from an Airstream trailer — your visit to Austin will be something to treasure. For more information, visit austintexas.org. **NOW**

Text and photos by the Austin Convention & Visitors Bureau.



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As the new General Manager at Waxahachie Autoplex, it's my job to change that perception.

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Thank you for taking time to read this letter and please feel free to submit any comments and suggestions directly to myself or one of the staff at Waxahachie Autoplex.



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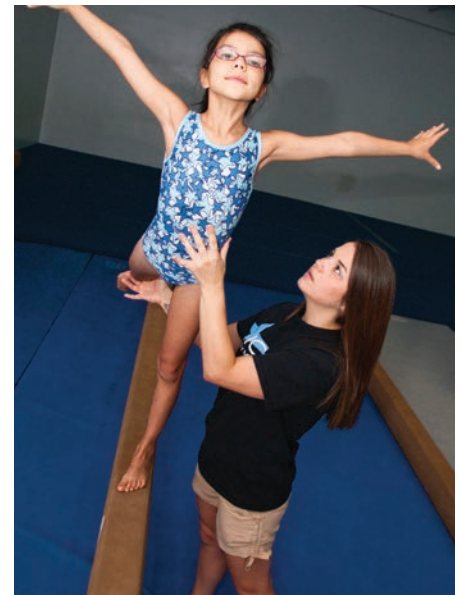


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Monday - Friday: 3:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Saturday: 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
See monthly calendar on web site for class and events schedule.



Top left:

Top left: The staff at Nova Gymnastics truly enjoys encouraging little gymnasts.
Above: Rina Trotto works with a competitive level four student, Randi, during a private lesson.



Balancing Gymnastics and Fun

Nova Gymnastics exists to create a safe atmosphere for gymnasts of all levels, while empowering them to develop their full potential and promoting the sport of gymnastics. — By Beverly Shay

Whether you are looking for a place where your kids can safely tumble and rumble to burn off excess energy or for some serious skills to set your child on his or her way toward Olympic gold, Nova Gymnastics can offer you a place and time in their gym that will satisfy your requirements. Owned by David Offutt and his daughter, Rina Trotto, the gym is not only a family business, but could be described as a family habit. “I began taking gymnastic classes at age 2,” Rina said, “and continued taking lessons until I was 17. I began coaching when I was 15 and didn’t stop until my daughter was born. When she was 3, I wanted to get back into coaching, but I wanted my own gym.”

“We try to provide the perfect balance between gymnastic skills and fun,” David inserted, with a look of pride and

experience. While he isn’t a gymnast himself, he has watched Rina, now a mother of two, move through all the levels of fun and skill to coaching and now business partner. David’s background includes a bachelor’s degree in information technology from DeVry University and 25 years of experience in the IT field. David handles the business side of the gym, overseeing accounts, payroll, facilities, janitorial and the new construction, while Rina keeps track of classes, competitions, coaches and the kids.

“We offer recreational classes for kids starting at 15 months through age 18. With our expanded facilities, we now have a separate 2,000-square-foot gym for preschoolers (through age 4). Three levels of development are offered for preschoolers

to build motor skills and coordination, while learning to socialize with the other kids. Themed weeks, such as space week, keep the kids interested,” Rina explained. The preschoolers have all the same equipment seen at the Olympics, only it is sized down. They also use a trampoline and balls to develop coordination. “At age 5 and up, they can choose between gymnastics or tumbling classes. In this age range, there are four levels of skill-development, with each level being self-paced. At some point during their development, some gymnasts may be invited to join one of the competitive teams.

“Gymnastics is part of human nature.”

“We compete all over the U.S. — throughout Texas, Colorado, Nevada and Oklahoma. In Texas, our level eight boys’ team ranked second, and our 7- to 9-year-old level five boys’ team ranked third, while the 10-and-up level five boys’ team placed second. Our girls will start competing at level four this year,” Rina stated with obvious pride.

“Gymnastics is part of human nature,” David remarked. “Kids are going to try all sorts of stunts somewhere, so we provide a safe place for them to do what comes naturally and teach them how to handle themselves properly.” The coaches are all CPR and first aid certified, as well as being certified in various programs through the Gymnastics Association of Texas (GAT). “We bring our entire staff to training camps with GAT,” David said. Every staff member goes through a background check, and the competitive coaches are USA Gymnastics (USAG) pro members. “Our gym is a USAG member club.”

Nova offers private 30-minute lessons for special needs children, and schools can come on field trips. They also offer sibling discounts of \$5 off the monthly fees of \$60-70 for recreational classes. Open enrollment means there is no contract, just a one-time enrollment fee of \$10/child or \$35/family. Come on out and join the fun! **NOW**

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Connie Mathieson relaxes while getting a pedicure at 1st Solar Nails in Cedar Hill.



Some of the senior adults from Duncanville First United Methodist Church rest while on a trip to the Arboretum.



Lynne Teubner and Kathy Nichols enjoy lunch at Tosbios in Duncanville.



Debbie Chang finds the perfect tomato at Cox Farms in Duncanville.



Laura Cabill, poster girl for the Moseley Pool Special Events Challenge in DeSoto, is thrilled to meet Greg Fields.



Dr. David Harris greets Charles Timmons at Ruby Young Elementary in DeSoto on the first day of school.



Dr. Tarron Richardson, Police Chief Costa and Lamar Vines are ready to hit the links during the DeSoto City Manager's Golf Challenge.



Duncanville Chamber members host ribbon cutting for the Applebee's Grand Reopening.



Loreal Jones searches for the perfect pair of new shoes for her son while shopping Cedar Hill.



Mike Ferrar finds a favorite Jeff Beck album at Half Price Books in Cedar Hill.

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Stocks versus Bonds

— By Dennis Brock

Market and Economic Review:

The third quarter has many on Wall Street hoping that the Federal Reserve (Fed) will again conduct another round of “quantitative easing” (i.e. QE 3), because the economy is still very sluggish with economic growth this year around two percent. Besides the slow economy, investors are also concerned about the recession in Europe, slowing growth in China and the “fiscal cliff” (the automatic tax increases and spending cuts starting January 2013).

Investment Outlook:

Despite the lackluster economy, the stock market is up double digits year-to-date and, over the last 12 months, has handily beaten bond funds. While the stock market has done well over this time period, investors have pulled at least \$100 billion out of stock mutual funds, putting it into safer bond mutual funds instead. Unless you have a short-term investment horizon, this will likely be a mistake.

Stock versus Bond Investments:

While stocks can be volatile day-to-day and even week-to-week, this type of news-driven volatility may have little effect on the longer term. True, bonds don't have the daily volatility

of stocks, but bonds currently pose risks often overlooked by investors: inflation and taxes. Considering that 10-year Treasuries yield less than two percent and with expected inflation of two percent plus taxes on your interest, your safe investment will likely make you financially worse off. Stocks, on the other hand, even in a slow-moving economy may return four-five percent over the long-term, which will at least give you a positive return after inflation and taxes.

Annuities:

If you want to avoid the stocks versus bonds debate, you can simply buy an annuity. There are many different types of annuities. Some allow you to participate on the gains in the stock market without the volatility/risk of the stock market and other annuities can be used to generate income. Also, earnings grow on a tax-deferred basis allowing your principle to grow at a faster rate. **NOW**

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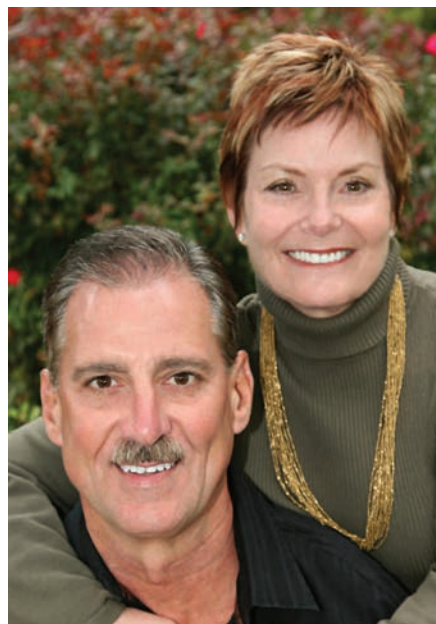
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When Hearing Hurts

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

Babies cannot speak our language yet, but their actions speak volumes. Grabbing or tugging at the ear with accompanying symptoms of general fussiness and a fever may indicate an ear infection. Ear infections are common in children. According to the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, three out of four children will have an ear infection during their first three years of life. It is the most common reason mothers take their children to the doctor.

Most ear infections (*acute otitis media*) will heal on their own without medical intervention, but some will require antibiotics. Frequent infections in the ear can interfere with hearing. Persistent fluid in the ear (*otitis media with effusion*) can also cause hearing loss. Not being able to hear correctly can cause speech problems. The ear needs a way to drain the persistent and excess fluid and also to allow ventilation of the middle ear. If medication does not solve the problem, tiny, cylindrical ear tubes surgically inserted through the ear drum can accomplish this process.

Ear tubes become necessary when the Eustachian tube loses the ability to drain properly. The Eustachian tube is nature's natural drainage canal that connects the middle ear to the nasal passageway. When it is blocked or swollen from an ear infection, whatever fluid or mucus has accumulated in the middle ear has no way to escape.

Fluid in the ear interferes with hearing because the eardrum cannot function as it was designed. The buildup of pressure in the ear causes pain. Once ear tubes are inserted, the middle ear can drain and be ventilated once again.

Hundreds of thousands of ear tube surgeries are done every year with the goal of decreasing ear infections, restoring or improving hearing and decreasing painful pressure in the middle ear. It is rated as the second most common surgery for children. Since the insertion of ear tubes is a surgical procedure, the decision to do so is not made lightly. Your practitioner will examine your child to determine the need for tubes and the child's general health. They will look at the frequency of ear infections and the length of time fluid remains in the middle ear among other conditions.

Insertion of ear tubes is day surgery, and the actual procedure takes minutes. Children usually recover quickly from the anesthesia and are able to leave the hospital within a few hours, able to look forward to less pain, fewer complications with ear infections and better hearing. **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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October 2

DeSoto ISD Parent and College and Career Readiness Seminar: 6:00-8:30 p.m., McGowan Middle School.

Cedar Hill National Night Out: gather in neighborhoods to celebrate the benefits of getting to know each other and working with police to help keep our community safe: cedarhilltx.com/NNO. Register for organizational kit: nno.org/nno/reg.html.

Duncanville National Night Out: Bob Knight Field House.

October 3

Duncanville Women's Club monthly luncheon meeting: 11:00 a.m., Hilton Garden Inn in Duncanville. Cost: \$21. Victor Sobers, Edward Jones Financial Representative: how to make investments last through retirement. Reservations/information: Barbara: (972) 296-4601.

October 6

Bridges Safehouse Breakfast: 8:00-11:00 a.m., Ninth Grade Center, Cedar Hill. Cost: \$7; kids under 5: free; craft/gift item booths www.bridgessafehouse.org/events.

Williams Chicken HS Battle of the Bands: 8:00 a.m., Beverly D. Humphrey Tiger Stadium, 200 E. Wintergreen, Lancaster, featuring regional high school marching bands and cheerleading Squads presented by: GSU Alumni Association and Lancaster High School. Cost: presale: \$10; at gate: \$15.

Strong Families Institute: Raising Safe, Smart and Strong Students: 8:30-10:30 a.m., DeSoto High School.

Hampton Road Baptist Church Women's Conference: 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., 400 N. Hampton Rd., DeSoto, featuring guest speaker, Thelma Wells. (972) 223-5070.

October 8

Duncanville ISD Student Fair Day/Staff Development: no classes.

October 10

Duncanville Chamber Luncheon: 11:10 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Methodist Charlton Medical Center. Speaker: Dr. Ray Guest on the state of Duncanville ISD.

October 12

Old Settlers Reunion: 5:30 – 8:00 p.m. under the tent on Cedar Street in historic downtown. Cost: \$5/adults: includes dinner/bingo card, extra cards: \$1 each. Dinner (beans and cornbread): 5:30 p.m.; crowning of King and

Queen on the Hill: 6:30 p.m.; bingo: 6:45 p.m. DeSoto Night Out: 7:00-9:00 p.m.

October 13

75th Country Day on the Hill: 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., historic downtown Cedar Hill. Park at the high school, ride shuttle; parade, live entertainment on three stages all day, 5K Fun run, chili cook-off, over 100 craft vendors, food, contests, did I mention food? Visit: cedarhillcountryday.com.

October 18

Duncanville ISD parent/teacher evening conferences.

October 19

Duncanville ISD parent/teacher morning conferences: no classes.

DeSoto High School Homecoming: Eagles Football vs. Midlothian: 7:30 p.m., Eagle Stadium.

October 20

Duncanville Chamber of Commerce Auction: The Mad Hatter's Auction: 6:00 p.m., Hilton Garden Inn.

October 24

DeSoto Chamber of Commerce 7th Annual Health and Wellness Conference: 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Hilton Garden Inn, 800 N. Main St., Duncanville. (972) 224-3565.

October 16, 23, 30 and November 6

DeSoto Public Library's free computer classes: 6:00-7:30 p.m. Register one week in advance: (972) 230-9661. **Oct. 16:** Computer Basics; **Oct. 23:** Basic Word I; **Oct. 30:** Basic Word II; **Nov. 6:** Internet Basics.

October 25, 27

CenterStage Productions of Hopkins Senior Activity Center in Duncanville presents *Virgil's Wedding*, a musical comedy with a cast of 34 seniors: **Oct. 25:** 7:00 p.m.; **Oct. 27:** 3:00 p.m. The wedding is in the town of Licksillet, where family and friends are busily preparing with the help of a big-city wedding coordinator. The bride and groom are having prewedding jitters. But when the groom doesn't show up at the church in time for the wedding, everyone is feeling frantic! Tickets: \$10 at the senior center office, 206 James Collins, Duncanville. (972) 780-5073.

October 26

The Lecture Luncheon Club of Duncanville is celebrating their 60th anniversary: 11:30 a.m. guest speaker: Katherine Homan, past president of League of Woman Voters. Linda Harris: (972) 224-8762.

October 27

Scare on the Square: 3:00 p.m., historic downtown Cedar Hill. Hear scary tales at the Old Lumber Yard on Broad St. Costumes encouraged; no cost for all children accompanied by an adult. Trick-or-treat at downtown merchants: 3:45 p.m. (972) 291-5100 ext. 1084.

Duncanville Fun After Five: 5:00-7:00 p.m. hosted by Duncanville Community Theatre (DCT), co-hosted by Subway, at DCT, 106 S. Main St.

DeSoto ISD Senior Prom: 6:00-8:30 p.m. for DeSoto ISD residents age 60 and over. Call (972) 223-6666 for details.

Fall Family Festival: 6:00-9:00 p.m., Cedar Hill Recreation Center, 310 E. Parkerville Rd. Free family event featuring games, bounce houses, crafts, food and more. (972) 291-4837 or cedarhilltx.com/specialevents.

October 29

Southwest Dallas County Parkinson's Group meeting: 6:30-8:00 p.m., Trinity United Methodist Church, 1302 S. Clark Rd., Duncanville. Topic: Parkinson's and Driving. Exercise and speech classes also available. (972) 298-4556.

October 30

Cedar Hill Recreation Center Member Appreciation Day: 6:30 a.m.-9:30 p.m., Cedar Hill Recreation Center, 310 E. Parkerville Rd. Members will be honored throughout the day. cedarhilltx.com/specialevents.

November 1

The Friends of the Duncanville Library invite you to the 16th Annual Author Appreciation Gala: 6:30 p.m. James Donovan, author of *The Blood of Heroes*, will be honored at the D. L. Hopkins Senior Center, 206 James Collins Blvd. Tickets: \$20/each or a table of six/\$120: www.duncanville.com/library or cbryan@ci.duncanville.tx.us.

November 10

Friends of the DeSoto Public Library are sponsoring a Harvest Craft Fair and Market fundraiser: 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., 211 E. Pleasant Run Rd., DeSoto (in the outside breezeway next to the library). www.desototexas.gov/friends or (972) 230-9665.

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



In The Kitchen With Mary Luttrell

— By Beverly Shay

Mary Luttrell's favorite meal to cook is a hearty, high-protein breakfast. She also enjoys making salads with homemade dressings. "I like using organic produce and cheeses with whole grains, both for health and flavor," Mary remarked. She cooks three great meals each day and homeschools her children. "I cook in large batches and freeze meals, which I often send with my husband for lunch on the job.

"Cooking goes back several generations in my family," Mary shared. "I still have an original menu from my grandmother's café near Waco, where Bonnie and Clyde once ate. My mother, a great cook, taught cake decorating and candy making and taught my four brothers and me how to cook. We all still enjoy cooking." **NOW**

Vegetable Cheese Casserole/Strata

6-8 slices whole wheat bread, buttered
2 large tomatoes, sliced
1 small sweet onion, thinly sliced
4-5 medium summer squash, thinly sliced
1 lb. sharp cheddar or Swiss cheese, grated
2 red bell peppers, roasted and diced (see recipe at far right)
1 pkg. turkey bacon or 1 lb. ham, sliced to bite-size pieces
Salt, to taste
8 eggs
2 cups milk

1. Preheat oven to 325 F. Spray 9 x 13-inch dish with cooking spray; line dish bottom with bread, buttered side down. Layer next 6 ingredients in order. Lightly salt.
2. Beat eggs with milk; pour over layers.

Either cover with foil and refrigerate overnight before baking, or bake immediately for 45-50 minutes.

Bacon Quiche With Potato Crust

2-3 medium potatoes
3-4 Tbsp. butter
Salt, to taste
8 strips bacon
1 small onion
2 Roma tomatoes (optional)
1 Anaheim pepper, roasted
1 clove garlic, minced or crushed
8 eggs
Salt, to taste
1/2 cup cream or milk

1. Wash and grate potatoes; blot very dry with paper towels (not cloth).
2. Melt butter in heavy-bottomed, 10-inch quiche or pie pan.

3. Add potatoes; salt liberally; toss. Pat to form crust along bottom and sides of pan. Bake at 375 F for 15 minutes.
4. Dice next 4 ingredients; add in garlic.
5. Beat eggs with salt and cream or milk. Add in diced mixture; stir well; pour into crust.
6. Bake at 375 F for 10 minutes; lower temperature to 350 F; bake 5-8 minutes more, until center is barely firm.
7. *Variations:* Bake in individual custard cups. Instead of bacon, use 2-3 roasted peppers and layer 4-5 oz. grated Colby or Swiss cheese before adding egg mixture.

Migas

4 stalks celery, finely diced
1/4 onion, diced
1 Tbsp. butter
1/2 to 3/4 cup tomato, diced
4 tortillas, chopped
3/4 cup milk
1/2 tsp. salt (or to taste)
1/2 cup picante sauce
6 medium eggs, beaten
1/4 lb. cheddar, grated

1. Sauté celery and onion in butter until clear; add tomatoes; cook until soft.
2. Add tortillas, milk and salt; cover and cook over medium heat until tortillas are softened.
3. Add picante, eggs and cheese; stir well; cover and cook over medium-low heat until eggs are done.

Roasted Peppers

Bell, Anaheim, Hatch, jalapeño or poblano peppers

1. Wash and pat peppers dry.
2. To grill: place peppers directly on grill over open flame; rotate peppers until all sides are black and blistered. Remove from grill.
3. To oven roast: place peppers 1/2-inch apart on cooking sheet; broil until skins blacken and blister, about 3 minutes; turn and broil 2 more minutes.
4. Place peppers in covered dish, paper bag or wrap in foil for 10 minutes to steam skins loose. Wearing gloves, seed and peel, leaving some charred bits for flavor. Coarsely chop. If not using immediately, store in plastic bag and freeze.

To view recipes from current and previous issues, visit www.nowmagazines.com.



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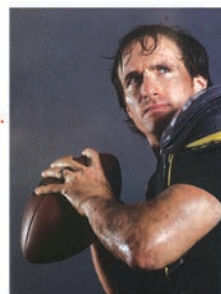
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For ten years, Drew Brees has been committed to AdvoCare. He began as an endorser and in 2010, became the company's first official AdvoCare National Spokesperson. "As a professional athlete, I have to trust what I put in my body and since 2002, I've put my trust in AdvoCare. AdvoCare products are scientifically formulated and independently tested and can help you get results with sports performance, weight management and overall wellness," Brees said. "And the financial benefits can be just as rewarding for those who want more and decide to build their own AdvoCare business."



Brees was first introduced to AdvoCare while he played in San Diego. Looking for safe and effective nutritional supplements, his strength and conditioning coach suggested he try AdvoCare. "Advocare products work. They are proven to give results. And, I feel like the products help me play at a championship level." See our World Class Athletes and Champion Endorsers at Team Advocare in the Advocare Magazine. Athletes include: Coaches, Track & Field athletes, Pro Football & Baseball players, USA Wrestling Champions, Martial Arts, PGA Golfers, Team USA Weightlifters and many other athletes that are proud to add their name to Team Advocare.



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