

A man with dark hair, wearing large black headphones and a black t-shirt, is seated and playing a light-colored acoustic guitar. He is looking towards the left, smiling slightly. In front of him is a professional microphone on a stand with a pop filter. The background shows a recording studio with wooden walls and other equipment.

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OCTOBER 2013

Red Dirt to High Cotton

Zack Verner's career started with
a song and a dream

French Elegance and Whimsy

At Home With Tom and Cindy Shelton

Plus:

The Six R's
Hearts in Africa
Drafting Her Life Script
More Than Shutters
In The Kitchen
With Michele Fuentes



Community Spotlight

Trinity Habitat for Humanity's mission is building homes and hope in partnership with God's people. To that end, we endeavor to: build and renovate high quality, affordable housing; advocate on behalf of those in need of decent housing; and serve as a partner and catalyst to create healthy and sustainable communities. Tangible evidence shows that the Habitat program makes a difference for this generation and the next. Our partner families work very hard to become homeowners. They complete 250 hours of sweat equity on their homes and other Habitat projects, including 25 hours of Homebuyers College. To learn more about Trinity Habitat for Humanity visit: www.trinityhabitat.org.



Shane Hooper and Debbie Smith of Mansfield Community Bank, enjoy working with Rhonda Harper (Left) on the Mansfield Habitat home built last Spring.



All funds raised in Mansfield are used to build houses in Mansfield. Here is the latest one being built that was completed in September 2013.



The end result of many volunteer hours either helping to build or raising money to build a Habitat for Humanity home



John Teixeira, chairman of the Mansfield Shootout, and Pastor Don Miller, secretary for the Mansfield Build Team, enjoyed the annual fundraiser for Trinity Habitat for Humanity at the Alpine Shooting Range in September.



John Thiel, Nate Bush and his dad, Todd Bush were three of many supporters of this year's Shootout.



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ON THE COVER



*Rocking out on his guitar is what
Zach Verner does best.*

Photo by Vanessa Polozola.

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Editor's Note

Dear Friends,

I love this time of year! When the leaves change colors and a crisp breeze breaks through the heat of summer. This is also the time that we kick off the holiday season, starting with Halloween.


Halloween was fun for me while growing up. We didn't live near a neighborhood, so we would "dress up" by raiding our parent's closet.

Once clad in an oversized men's golf shirt and clogging around in high heels five times my size, I would hide in a corner of the living room with my brothers while my parents buried candy underneath pillows and in between couch cushions. It was always a thrill to pop out in a frenzy to find the best candy.

Although my Halloween looks different now, I still love this time of year. What does your Halloween look like?

Mikaela


Mikaela Mathews
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RED DIRT

— By Rick Hope

Texas red dirt music has been described as a mix of folk, rock, country, bluegrass, blues, western swing and honkytonk, with even a few Mexican influences. Some define red dirt music as “country music with an attitude.” Others say it’s a state of mind as much as it is a sound — a sound that successfully closes the gap between rock and country. For many Mansfield residents, this genre of music is best defined with a name — Zack Verner.

Zack was born in Houston and lived in Hillsboro until the age of 11. His family was then transferred from Texas to Michigan, which was the first of several moves throughout the country. “Music was the one constant in my life,” he admitted. “No matter where we lived, I could always write or play music.

“While other kids were playing football or running track, I was teaching myself to play any instrument I could get my hands on. From the guitar or drums to the piano, it didn’t matter. I would stand in front of the mirror and pretend I was ripping the guitar solos out of Eric Clapton’s own hands.” Zack’s main goal in life was to figure out how he could make money writing and playing music.

Zack is working on how to make his goal come to fruition, but it’s not an easy climb. The music industry comes with a



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“I don’t really care about being a household name, but I would like to be known as someone who always put his heart and soul into his music.”

myriad of choices. Some of those choices include the partying lifestyle and for a period of time, that’s the road Zack found himself on while playing drums for various rock bands. After some struggles with very severe temptations and experiences early in his career, Zack found himself thinking of his young family. “I couldn’t handle the rock ‘n’ roll music scene. I loved the energy and the music,” he admitted, “but I had to stop and think about what environment my children were being raised in and the example I was setting. It just didn’t feel right.”

The answer for Zack was clear — it was time for change. Some time off from the music industry allowed him to get back to his roots and do some soul searching. One day as he was riding with a friend, he heard “American Blood,” a song by the band Reckless Kelly. The



song, according to Zack, was full of energy and attitude. When Zack got home that night, he downloaded every Reckless Kelly song he could find. He also started researching other Texas music artists. "Something clicked," Zack remembered. "I felt like I'd finally found my calling." Zack finally knew the musical road he needed to travel. "That song literally changed my life overnight," he added.

The red dirt genre of music is representative of Zack's home state. "It has a style all its own," Zack explained. "It's a bit edgy and raw, but it sings from the soul and talks to the fan."

Zack is still waiting on his big break, but it looks like it may be on the horizon.

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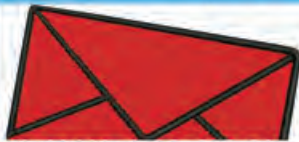


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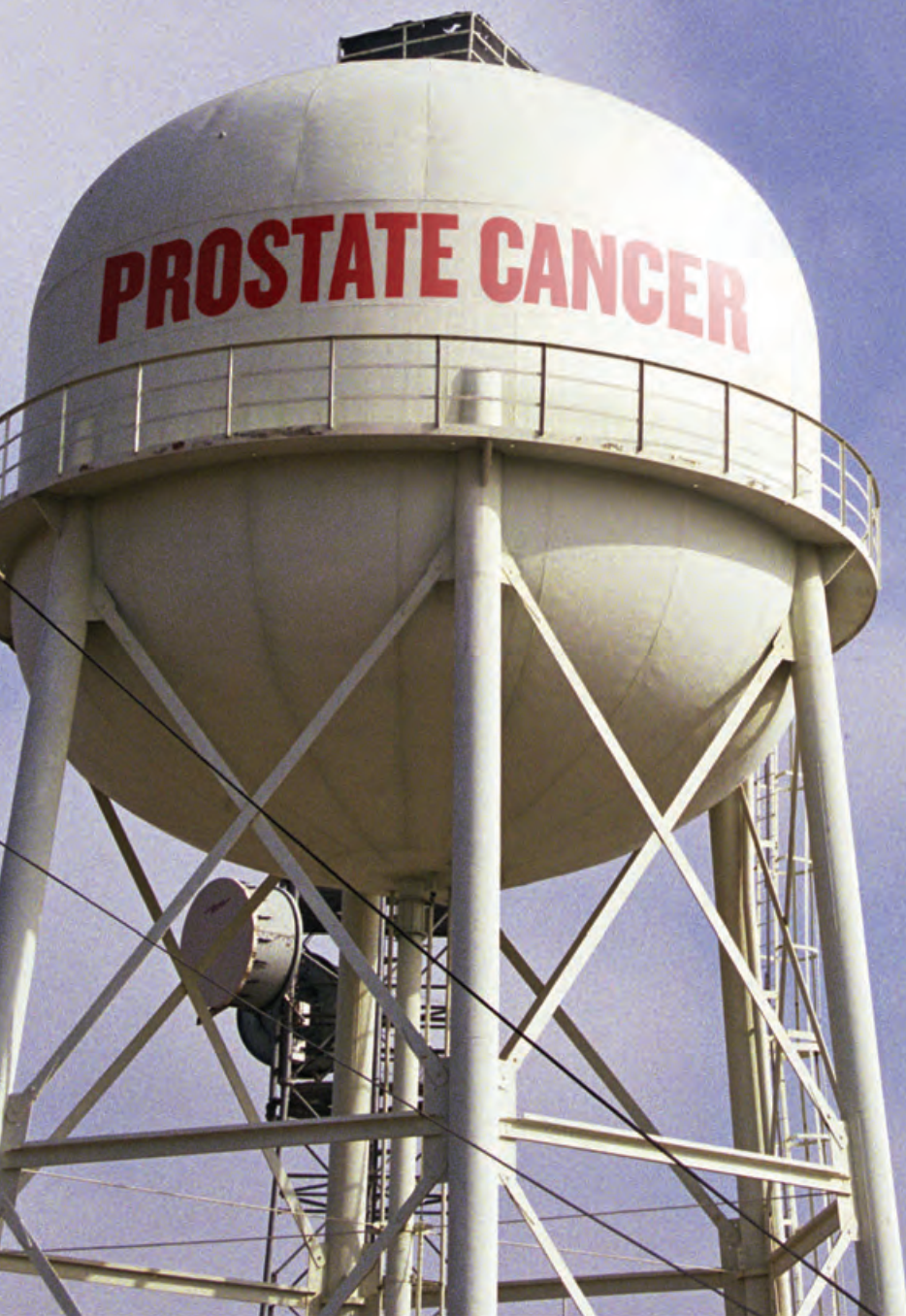
This past spring, he was introduced to Melissa Fredde of Winding Road Music, a popular Texas label. “Getting her attention felt impossible,” Zack said. “All I had to show was my five song ‘EP’ (somewhat similar to a demo album) and a strong drive to succeed.” But get her attention he did, and as of July, Zack Verner became the newest artist on the Winding Road label, with Melissa Fredde, herself, as his manager.

That five song album, *With Her*, was released this past January. With the help of Winding Road, two of the singles, “With Her” and “Fall Back Down,” are making the rounds on Texas radio stations. The album is available on iTunes, Spotify and Amazon. Zack and his band are working on a full-length album they hope to release in early spring 2014. “It’s a process for sure,” Zack admitted.

Over this past year, Zack has had the opportunity to meet some big names in Texas music. “I’ve met and shared the stage with Stoney LaRue, Jamie Richards, Mike McClure and Willy Braun (Reckless Kelly),” Zack recounted. “In the studio, I had the chance to work with Aden Bubeck, the bass player for Miranda Lambert. I’m still the low man on the totem pole, but there are days when I feel like I’m on top of the world!”

So far, this venture has Zack and his band traveling all over the state. They have been as far east as Paris and as far west as Monahans. He also plays in South Texas any chance he gets because, by his own admission, he is “a sucker for the Hill Country.” In addition, Zack has also played acoustic shows in places like Colorado, Wyoming, South Dakota and Montana. “I’ve met Texas music fans all over the place in the northern states,” he smiled. “That was amazing.”

At times, of course, Zack has wanted



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to give up. Providing for his family is important to him, and sometimes he has felt his work was not paying off. However, he would always have his answer after a performance. "It just *feels* right," Zack stated. "This is definitely what God wants me to do."

His wife, Lacie, and children, Chase, 11, and Addisyn, 7, are fully supportive of him in his musical endeavors. Lacie works behind the scenes on marketing, maintaining his website while also handling merchandising and sales. Zack's parents are behind him as well and keep the children while the couple is traveling.

He also has an admiration and respect for each of the band members and considers them part of his extended family. "We have traveled and spent a lot of time rehearsing and performing together. These guys are like brothers to me, and it takes a lot to do what they do."

The red dirt musical journey is just beginning for Zack. He has a passion for what he does and wants to share it with others. And he's far from being finished.

"In 10 years, I hope to have made an impact in the music world and the fans will still be enjoying the music we make. I don't really care about being a household name, but I would like to be known as someone who always put his heart and soul into his music."

Zack plans to let lessons from his past, along with prayer and determination lead him into the future. He will keep playing the music he loves for those who enjoy listening to it — that's what it's all about! **NOW**

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The Six R's

— By Mikaela Mathews

Tameika Sanchez knew that something wasn't quite right. Although her daughter was making both A's and B's in school, she was still struggling with reading comprehension. Her school helped with intervention, but Tameika





knew she still had a role to play.
"During this time, I was thinking,
What can I do as a parent to
help her?" Tameika shared.

While helping her daughter improve her reading comprehension, an idea hit Tameika. She decided to start her own tutoring program called Six R Inc., a nonprofit organization that provides students free tutoring with a twist. Students are required to "pay" with community service hours. Tameika and her team focus on tutoring in the three R's: reading, writing and arithmetic and giving back to the community with the other three R's: reduce, reuse and recycle.

Six R started in 2010 with Tameika's vision and has since grown to a team of 20 tutors and board of directors. Students in need of tutoring can contact Six R and request a time to meet with either Tameika or another tutor. Tutoring sessions typically happen in the local library. "My time is flexible, because I know parents can't always get there at 5:00 p.m.," Tameika explained. "I have tutoring as late as the library is open."

Even though Six R has roots in Mansfield, Tameika and her team will travel anywhere tutoring is needed and even help in other subjects besides reading, writing and arithmetic. "If parents have kids who have issues with science, we won't turn them away," she explained. "We will help them in any way that we can." This dedication for education stems from her belief that



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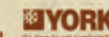
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all students, regardless of race, creed, demographic or gender should have a quality education.

Tameika is a firm believer in having the parents be involved in all aspects of education, including tutoring. On the Six R website, Tameika expresses this belief by saying, "We must not give up and continue fighting for quality education for our children. It is a triple effort: parent(s), child and facilitator."

She often encourages the parents to listen to their children reading, so they know how to help their child throughout the week. "It doesn't always have to be formal instruction," Tameika explained. "It can be informal, too. I try to tell parents all the time they don't have to make it boring for them." Tameika encourages parents to let their child read regularly, even if it's the back of a cereal box or billboard.

Tameika also suggests parents find creative games to teach their children, including one game with a deck of cards. "Parents can get a deck of cards, then get rid of the face cards," she explained. "Then, flip two over and ask them what they are multiplied. The kids won't think they're learning multiplication. They'll think they're playing a game."

When students approach Tameika for tutoring, she often will assess the student. "First, I ask, 'What are they doing outside of the classroom?' and 'What has the teacher told you that they are struggling with?'" Tameika explained. "If the students can bring in previous



work, that's beneficial, too." Tameika, or any of the volunteer tutors, will then listen to the student read or do a math problem to discover their weaker areas. Even if parents only have 15-20 minutes for a tutoring session, Tameika can still help. "You'd be amazed at what you can accomplish with that amount of time," she described. "It's not always about quantity of time, but quality of what we do with that time." Spanish-speaking students can also benefit from Six R's bilingual tutors to learn how to better read and write.

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As an alternative classroom teacher at Ben Barber Career Technology, Tameika strongly believes in the power of education, so much so that she is currently working on her master's degree from Stephen F. Austin State University.

"We must not give up and continue fighting for quality education for our children. It is a triple effort: parent(s), child and facilitator."

"I'm going back to school so that my children can say, 'Hey, momma is still going, and if she can do it and pull straight A's, so can I,'" Tameika explained. Her daughter also inspired her to go back to school to get a certification as a reading specialist.

But going back to school, starting a nonprofit organization, working full time and being a wife and mom is not an easy road. Even though Tameika encounters challenges along the way, she remains dedicated. She credits this determination to her nine-and-a-half years in the Marine Corps.

Growing up, those closest to Tameika would have never guessed she would join the Marines. "My uncle was in the Marine

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Corps, and he just made it sound so fascinating and exciting,” Tameika smiled. “When he came home, he would wear his uniform, and I said, ‘I’m going to have those dress blues. I’m going to join the Marines.’ When I told everyone, though, they said, ‘No, not you! You’re too girly. You’re not going to do that!’” This attitude, though, only spurred Tameika to complete boot camp and become a Marine.

Looking back on her time with the Marines, however, Tameika wonders how she was even able to do it. “In the Marines, I’d be jumping off buildings or rope climbing down from 20 feet high. And to this day, I look back on that, and I would never do that,” she laughed. “But, they teach you to be fearless, to take chances. And I thank the Marine Corps for that.”

Tameika also credits her parents for her success and determination. “I also thank my parents for these lessons, because my mom – there just aren’t words to describe her,” Tameika smiled. “Whatever I need, she’s just always there for me and always has a positive word to say. And, my dad – I just wish he was here to see all of this happening with Six R.”

The lessons Tameika learned during her time as a Marine and from her family have carried over into her dedication for education. “The Marines and my parents taught me discipline, how to be more of a team player and how to help the others,” she explained. “It wasn’t about me. It was about the team. That’s how I look at Six R and education. We’re all in this together.” **NOW**



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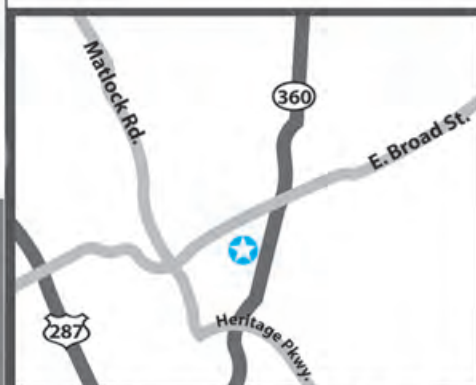


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French Elegance and Whimsy

— By Carolyn Wills

At Home With Tom and Cindy Shelton

Truly, Tom and Cindy Sheltons' elegant 8,500-square-foot home would fit comfortably on a Parisian street or in the lush French countryside, yet for these two native Texans, there is no better place to live than in Mansfield. "We've been here for nearly 30 years," Cindy said. "Our children graduated from Mansfield High School, and we love this city."





Tom and Cindy are the proud parents of two daughters and a son, and blessed with seven grandchildren. "We met in the sixth grade and by ninth grade, we were dating," Cindy smiled. "Tom and I have been married for 42 years and have never been apart."

In 2011, they decided to build a new home. "Tom loves to golf. At the time, we were living in a neighborhood surrounding a golf course. So, we were excited to find a 1-acre lot on a quiet cul-de-sac in an area still close to the same golf course," she said. Working side-by-side with the architect, the builder and a local designer, Cindy designed and decorated the home.

"We moved in on March 12, 2012, approximately one year from groundbreaking," Tom said.

The expansive French-style home with its subtle gray stone exterior is framed by beds of colorful plants and flowers and topped with a roof complete with copper turrets. The custom plan includes a formal dining room, kitchen, living room, five bedrooms, five full baths, three half baths, home theater, wine cellar, game room, playroom, exercise room, office,



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laundry, outdoor kitchen, pool and two garages. Oh, and two special doors for Einstein, the Shelton's beloved 13-year-old Pug. "Everybody knows Einstein," Cindy grinned. "He's the second love of my life."

When they decided to build, Cindy was leaning toward a Tuscan design and Tom toward French. "Tom had always liked one of our previous homes I had decorated in country French," she said. Ultimately, they agreed on what Cindy



describes as French elegance and whimsy. "We wanted this house to be open, welcoming and entertaining," she said.

To imagine the home lacking on any point is difficult, for not only is the outside breathtaking, but every inch of its interior is a work of art. "I'm not formally trained as a designer, but it's something I do often and love," Cindy smiled. "I didn't want dark and oppressive French, so the design needed to be light and whimsical with lots of

room for entertaining, with all common areas on the main floor."

Just inside the home's entrance is a massive, open foyer and formal dining room tiled with Versailles marble. The enormous rectangular and columned area with a 30-foot ceiling features a custom-made dining table on one end and Cindy's baby grand piano on the other. "I didn't want a formal dining room that collects dust," she explained. The wide entryway provides a view of the beautiful

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winding staircase, room for large sit-down dinners, a place to enjoy music and space for art pieces, including a soothing water fountain, plus a wall of cabinetry to house Cindy's grandmother's china.

"In my designs, I like to repeat elements such as color medleys, patterns and finishes," Cindy shared. "In this home, I've used a lot of reds, purples and soft yellows, as expressed in the wall color called Morning Sun, and many accents are displayed in various tones and treatments of reds and purples. I've also used a lot of toile, as well as black and white harlequin."

Each foot of the home reflects a myriad of design decisions that together form a stunning showplace and pay tribute to Cindy's talents. "I'm a big fan of repurposing," she said. "Two of our old formal dining chairs, now in the living room, are painted purple and upholstered in red toile, and the old dining table serves as outdoor dining."

The living area features hand-scraped wood floors, coffered ceilings and a black-tiled fireplace. The sitting area, with a red French-style settee, a whimsical black and white sofa and two houndstooth swivel chairs, is centered around a massive granite-topped coffee table and accented by a stunning rug and lamps resembling French bonnets.

At one end of the central area is a magnificent open kitchen with light cabinetry and the same marble tile floor as in the dining room. The huge kitchen island with a purple base glazed in black is topped with black walnut. "The cabernet-brown granite countertops are

honed,” Cindy smiled. “They draw on the purples and reds.” Unmatched chairs surrounding the round breakfast table are upholstered in various fun fabrics.

The kitchen is to the left of the main room and, to its right, is a room that defines fun. “We wanted the kitchen and living area to be open to a media room,” Cindy said. The home theater is complete with sound/light blocking acoustical drapes, a comfortable couch, swivel chairs, a popcorn machine and a 110-inch screen. “We were watching a movie with our ‘grands’ one night,” Tom laughed. “My son said, ‘Who would have thought you would build such a grand media room and watch *Shrek* in it!’”

Next to the theater is an amazing wine cellar clad in the same stone as the home. “We wanted it to look like an old stone building with a grand home built around it,” Cindy explained. “Tom loves the wine cellar, the game room next to it and the upstairs exercise room. My favorite rooms are probably the kitchen and our master bedroom.”

The Shelton’s master suite features soft shades of the lightest almost gray-purple and silvers. The carpet is 70-percent silk and a beautiful antique couch sits at the foot of the massive king-sized bed.

The main floor also features a second master suite. “It’s for my parents when they visit,” Cindy said. Upstairs are three additional guest rooms and the grandkids’ playroom with sleeping for four. Especially endearing is the tall-backed upholstered story chair positioned in the hallway outside the double-doors to the playroom.

The Sheltons christened their home during Christmas 2012 by hosting an open house for 150 guests. “We opened the doors to the patio and there was plenty of room for people to tour, see the decorations and enjoy live music and a catered French dinner,” Tom said.

“We’re happy to still be close to Tom’s office in Arlington,” Cindy explained. As a successful entrepreneur, with offices across the country, Tom’s company manufactures and distributes industrial fasteners for heavy industry.

“As for our home, I really wouldn’t change anything,” Cindy smiled. “It’s so livable. People tell me it wraps its arms around you and makes you feel good inside, and that’s a big compliment.” **NOW**

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Tessa Pierce is a Certified Public Accountant with over 17 years of experience in accounting and finance. She has worked for small and large publicly-held companies, as an auditor at Deloitte & Touche, and as a VP of a multi-billion dollar private investment fund doing both capital management and financial reporting. Tessa has a BBA in accounting from the University of Oklahoma and an MBA in finance from Dallas Baptist University.

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Hearts IN AFRICA

— By Mikaela Mathews

In 2007, Joel and Claire Verinder knew it was time for an international mission trip. They weren't sure when, how or where they would go, but they still knew they wanted to make it a reality. "It was the start of the year, and we said that we wanted to do a mission trip this year," Claire explained. "And literally, the next day, we got an email from a church where we had been members in Washington, D.C., saying that they had spots open to go to Zimbabwe, and I knew that was the trip we were going to take."

A few months later, Joel and Claire endured a 36-hour trip to southern Africa to serve the people of Zimbabwe. While there, the couple met with local churches, taught Bible lessons and established relationships with the Zimbabwean people. "We spent two weeks there and just fell in love with the people," Claire said. "They're just trying to make a life for themselves, just like us."

Although the Verinders enjoyed their first trip to Zimbabwe, they felt like they could have done more to help the many people living in poverty. "The 2007 trip was a real turning point for the church group we went with," Claire remembered. "We went and visited schools and spent four or five hours there. We felt bad leaving because what we had done was such a drop in a bucket. I think a passion was born then to make those schools we had visited better."

After that trip, the church in Washington, D.C. started an organization called BuyaBrickFoundation, which works to build sustainable schools for children in Zimbabwe, specifically in villages surrounding



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the city of Victoria Falls. The organization locates a village in need of a school and builds it with the help of donations. "If we can build schools and get teachers in these schools, then kids can get an education," Joel explained. "Then, the kids will have a chance to break the poverty cycle."

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the Verinders have helped to build three schools through BuyABrick. In 2010, Claire went back to help finish a school. Joel returned in 2012, followed by a third trip the couple took together in March 2013.

Building a school, however, is rigorous. "All of the work is done by hand," Joel explained. "They have a brick mold into which they pour concrete, mix in some water and let it sit for a bit. Then, they dump the bricks out." In order for the workers to have the water to build the bricks, women from the village must bring it in large baskets on their heads.



"GOD WHISPERED
TO MY HEART,
**"THIS IS IT.
THIS IS IT."**

Nonetheless, Joel and Claire enjoy the sweat and work of manual labor to help others. "We like doing mission trips like this," Claire smiled. "The hands-on projects are our way of relating to people and working side by side with them. It just captures you."

But the Verinders weren't the only ones captivated by the people and



country of Zimbabwe. Sarah Ewart, a friend and fellow church member with the Verinders, started to wonder if she too should join in on the school-building adventures. "It all started a year before I actually went," Sarah explained. "I was doing a book study with our Sunday school class that made me think in a different way about reaching those in need." Sarah soon started to search out how she could help other people both in her community and abroad. With her two

young sons, she visited a local nursing home to connect with the elderly in order to brighten their days.

How she could help abroad didn't come until after Joel had returned from his trip in 2012. "I just remember sitting in the class while Joel was talking [about his trip], and God whispered to my heart, 'This is it. This is it,'" Sarah recalled.

After many discussions and prayers, Sarah committed to going to Africa with the Verinders six months from then, even with all of the risks involved. "It was not an easy process," Sarah shared. With two sons who were at the time, ages 1 and 2-and-a-half, and a husband who worked full time, Sarah knew that the trip would be difficult. Nonetheless, the process grew her faith in God, and Sarah witnessed an outpouring of



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community support. Annette Perry and Boren elementary schools wrote letters to the Zimbabwean students and donated supplies, while members from their church helped raise thousands of dollars.

As a tutor and former teacher, Sarah was able to establish good relationships with fellow teachers at the school in Zimbabwe. One such woman was named Precious, a prekindergarten and kindergarten teacher. "Every morning for seven years, Precious and her sister would pray that God would provide a school for their children," Sarah explained. "So, seven years later, here we come to build a school."



The current school in which the students met was a place where hunters would clean their game. With the help of donations and hard work, Sarah, Joel, Claire and the rest of their group were able to finish construction of the school that holds four classes and a small room where the teachers can sleep and live.

For the Verinders, one of the best parts of their trips is to go back and see the schools they had built on previous

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trips now thriving. "For every trip we take, we spend a day going back through our other projects and visiting those schools," Joel recalled. "We see a lot of the same teachers who were there when we were there. We can see how they're flourishing and what they are doing with the resources God gave them." One of these schools wanted a playground after the group left and creatively constructed their own with rubber tires, tree limbs and old belts.

Even though Sarah remains busy with her family in Mansfield, she hopes to return to Zimbabwe someday. "There is this connection you want to continue to build," she explained. "You want to see your friends and to reconnect with them. There are so many ways to help here or abroad. I look forward to the future and encourage anyone to be open to serving others."

And the Verinders, despite having three children and careers of their own, think they will never stop going. They even hope to go with their children some day when they are older. As Claire put it, "Our hearts are there in Africa." **NOW**

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DRAFTING HER LIFE SCRIPT

— By Sara Edgell



Amanda Granato is quite an extraordinary young woman. She may be young, but she definitely has a unique old-fashioned spirit about her. "I really love old things," she admitted. "My friends and I are like little old ladies inside of young bodies."

American classic movies and music, antiques and Carey Grant are just a few of the things she loves so dearly. She also loves books. She is an avid book collector and admits to having stacks of them piled up on the floor of her room because her shelves are overflowing. For Amanda, there is nothing like the experience of reading an actual book. Turning the pages is part of the experience. And of course, the smell that comes from a bound collection of pages filled with wonderful words cannot ever be replaced by a digital version.

What her old soul desires from music, movies and books, however, greatly contradicts her modern and progressive journalistic mind. This blending of old with new is what makes Amanda such a dynamic individual.

Amanda is a former writer for and editor-in-chief of the Legacy High School's online newspaper, *The Rider Online*. These jobs forced her to transcend her love for all things old and vintage, and embrace the progressive nature of the publication's convergent media format in order to properly

produce the periodical. Convergent media is defined as news telling that merges forms of media for delivery and provides multiple access points for readers. *The Rider Online* is a website offering new content posted every day for the students, parents and staff of Legacy High. Print editions are also published twice a year.

She fell into journalism class in her freshman year completely by accident. When she transferred to Legacy in the fall of 2009, the options for her elective course were extremely limited. Basically, she could choose between communications applications or journalism. "My choice became the best accidental decision I ever made," she admitted. "I picked journalism and soon fell in love."

Over the course of her four-year high school career, Amanda also contributed to the school's yearbook, where she initially thought she would be more interested in writing and editing stories. After a few trial-and-error experiences, Amanda quickly learned because of her strong writing abilities, journalism and breaking news was where she was meant to be.

Through journalism, Amanda has learned how to better communicate with others. Her socialization skills have blossomed as she spent a good amount of time interviewing people who were the complete opposite of her. "Writing has taught me how to interact with people — people I didn't know, people I've never met before, people who are from totally different backgrounds than I — and how to engage them so I could get meaningful information and answers from them."

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decision I
ever made."**

During her time with *The Rider Online*, Amanda saw the publication through many triumphs. The publication was awarded the Columbia Scholastic Press Association Gold Crown award each year for the last four years, which is essentially the Pulitzer of student journalism. The Columbia award is more traditional in that it is judged on technical mechanics by professors in the field. The publication also won the National Scholastic Press Association Pacemaker award in 2012 and 2013. The Pacemaker is more of a progressive award, considered the crowning jewel of *The Rider Online's* collection of awards. "When we win awards and get recognized, watching my staff get to see they are actually doing something worthwhile is really nice."

Amanda had the opportunity to go on several trips last year for both journalism and other academia-based events. She went to San Antonio for the annual Texas Academic Decathlon where she placed third for the state in



art. She also went to Austin for the UIL state competition. Here, Amanda placed second for journalism. On the trip to New York over spring break, Amanda and her staff won the Columbia award. But one of Amanda's favorite moments of the past year was from the trip she took with her staff to San Francisco, California, where her team won the Pacemaker award. After sitting through six hours of awards, Amanda and the team had resigned themselves to not winning. She openly admitted to feeling completely defeated. In tears, she heard their publication's name and immediately wondered why they would torture us that way. "It was a horrifying experience," she confessed. "It was a relief to finally hear our name called."



Dedication was a big part of Amanda's role with *The Rider Online*. Many days, Amanda would arrive at school at 7:00 a.m. only to leave at 7:00 p.m. The



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majority of those hours were spent editing and proofing. The other staff members eventually became like a family for Amanda, especially her mentors and advisors, Leland Mallet and Rachel Dearing. Spending such large amounts of time with other people forces close, personal relationships, and working through disagreements for the common good is normal. Producing accurate stories as quickly as possible was paramount for the staff. Seeing others appreciate the publication was something Amanda enjoyed the most about working so hard.

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The publication was undergoing major changes when she joined the journalism class at Legacy, as it had made the switch from paper to digital media. She has spent so much time working on the website alone, that she cannot simply walk away. The connections that were made from these long hours of dedicated and passionate work will remain.

Amanda's plans for the future are just as bright and dynamic as she is. Currently, she is in her first semester at Baylor University where she is majoring in pre-med biology. She eventually hopes to write for Baylor's school publication, *The Baylor Lariat*, and possibly even minor in journalism. Writing for medical journals one day is another goal of Amanda's. Ultimately, her career plans are to follow in the footsteps of her grandfather and become a pediatric specialist. "I've wanted to be a pediatrician ever since I knew the meaning of the word," she shared. "I want to take care of people, to make them better."

And in a way, that's exactly what journalism has enabled her to do: take care of people by sharing through writing. Because reading and writing are very therapeutic, Amanda has been able to reach out to countless others through her words. Clearly, Amanda's story is not complete. She may have met temporary deadlines such as graduating high school and moving on to college, but her story is far from over. **NOW**



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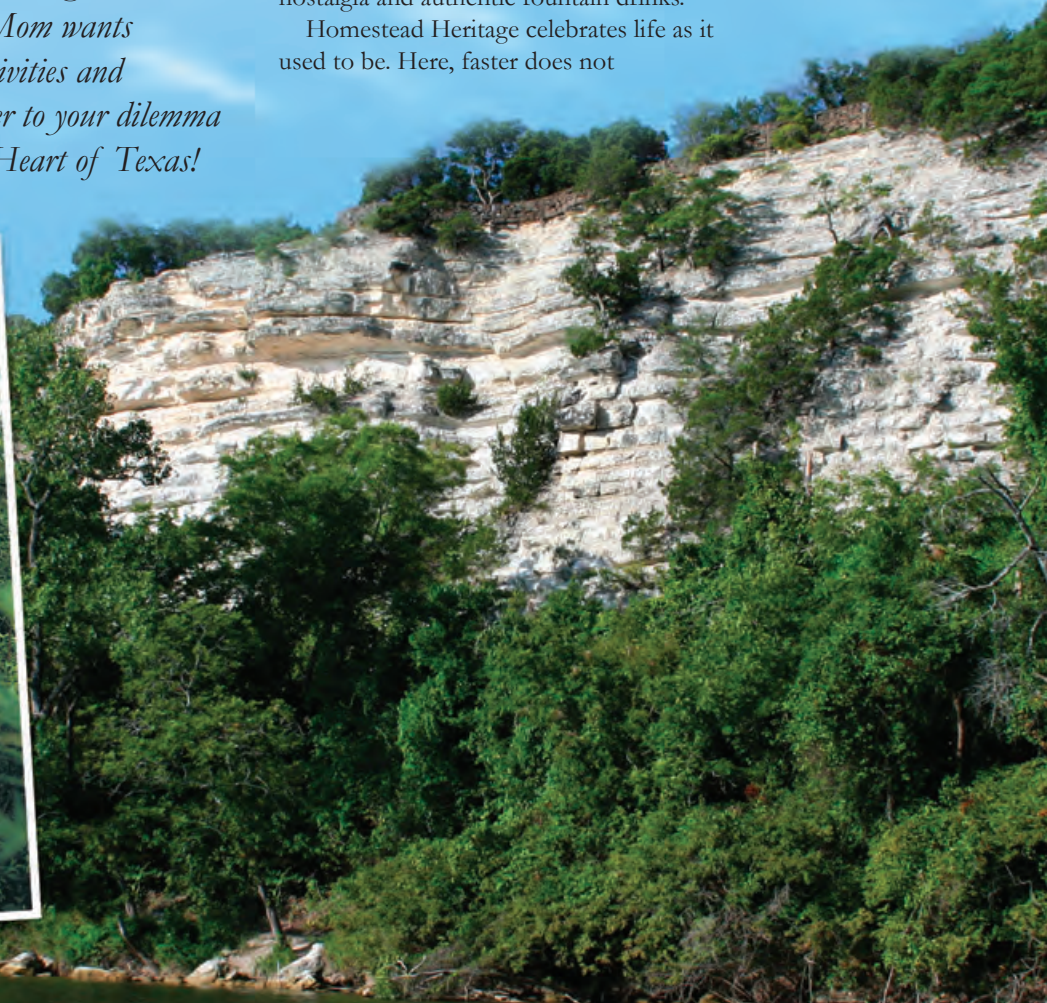
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in the nation. From policing the Wild West to nabbing Bonnie and Clyde, the Rangers have been the elite force of Texas law and order. The Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum is dedicated to the history and lore of these important officers. With the largest collection of Ranger artifacts, including some dating back to their Spanish and Mexican origins, the museum paints a clear picture of Ranger history. The Hall of Fame memorializes Texas Rangers who gave their lives in the line of duty or served with great distinction.

For those into poetry, the Armstrong Browning Library is a must see! The world's largest collection of Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning's original manuscripts, personal items and timeless poetry resides in the Armstrong Browning Library on the Baylor University campus. The building commemorating these British poets is an architectural masterpiece in itself, with 62 stained-glass windows depicting scenes from the Brownings' poetry. The immensely high ceilings and 23-karat gold-leaf dome, intricate woodwork and massive marble columns, polished

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The Waco Mammoth Site is the first and only recorded discovery of a nursery herd of Pleistocene mammoths, according to the National Park Service. This discovery has received both national and international attention by both archaeologists and paleontologists. To date, the remains of 24 mammoths, a molar from a camel and the tooth of a juvenile saber-tooth cat have been discovered. A dig shelter with a suspended walkway allows you a great view of the remains, while protecting the site.

Nature lovers will delight in Cameron Park. Outstanding hiking and cycling trails can be found on the 416 acres, as well as a challenging 23-hole disc golf course, splash pad and playgrounds, fishing and kayaking — along with picnic areas. But the highlight of Cameron Park is the zoo.

The setting is gorgeous: lush grasses, immense ponds, waterfalls and natural shelters create a beautiful setting for animals from around the world. Sumatran tigers, lions and rhinos roam the African savanna. Exotic reptiles live in a world of waterfalls and plants in the herpetarium. The Asian Forest features orangutans and a Komodo dragon. The jungle-like setting mimics a ruined Southeast Asian temple complete with waterfalls, koi ponds, idol heads and broken pillars.

Waco's Mayborn Museum Complex includes a natural science and cultural history museum, a children's discovery center and the Gov. Bill and Vara Daniel Historic Village. In the walk-in dioramas, you can feel the shake of the earth's tectonic plates during volcanoes and earthquakes and walk atop a cast of mammoths from the Waco Mammoth Site.

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second best children's museum in Texas by *Child* magazine, offers 17 themed discovery rooms for invigorating hands-on learning. Kids have a ball in the discovery center playing dress-up with clothes from around the globe, typing on old-fashioned typewriters, grinding corn in Native American tradition, escaping into a giant bubble and creating tornadoes in a whirlwind machine.

Waco & the Heart of Texas has something for every member of your family. To learn more about all there is to see and do, visit the Convention & Visitors Bureau's website at wacoheartoftexas.com or give the Tourist Information Center a call at (800)WACO-FUN (922-6386). **NOW**

By Lori Kasparian. Photos courtesy of Waco & the Heart of Texas.

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More Than Shutters

LaDonnia White works hard to make her customers happy.

— By Mikaela Mathews

For LaDonnia White, her business is more than just providing blinds and shutters. It's about the people. "I want my customers to be happy. That is really important to me," LaDonnia smiled. "And I'll do whatever it takes to do that." She aims to make the process smooth and comfortable so that her clients are thrilled with their purchases.

Blinds and Shutters by LaDonnia provides customers with high-quality items, such as custom shutters, natural woven woods, roller shades, Roman shades, wood blinds and more. Although a majority of these products are interior, LaDonnia also provides solar screens for a home's exterior. "There is really

no window covering I don't offer," LaDonnia explained.

Clients can expect an informative and helpful experience from LaDonnia without being pressured to buy. "I bring the show room to them," she said. "And we take our time to match the colors and home decor." LaDonnia then gives her clients several ideas to ponder by showing them samples and even pictures if the client is more visual. "I'll send them pictures or whatever it takes to help them get an idea. Some people are very visual," she explained. Sometimes, clients are unsure what designs they would like in their home, and LaDonnia also assists them to discover the perfect fit.

After the initial consultation, LaDonnia will give her clients the prices, whether through email or on the spot. "I always tell people, 'Hey, I'm happy to email this to you, so you don't feel like you have to buy right here, right now,'" she described.

When the products arrive and are ready for installation, LaDonnia works closely with well-trusted installers to ensure that her clients are happy. "My installers care. I get nothing but good feedback from my clients [about them]," she explained.

LaDonnia has been selling blinds and shutters for over six years but has always striven to make people happy. Soon after she had her second daughter, she decided to get her license in massage therapy. Although she loved the job and working with her clients, the physical toil of doing deep-tissue massages for 10 years had worn her down.

LaDonnia, however, wanted to maintain flexibility in her job in order to still spend time with her family, which consists of her two daughters and husband. With a leap of faith, she took up a friend's offer to start selling blinds and shutters with another company.

Within three months at that company, LaDonnia was one of the top salespeople. She acknowledges her success is because of her love for people. "People really appreciate you taking the time to fill them in on what they're getting," she admitted. With two years of selling experience, she decided to strike out on her own a little over four years ago.

LaDonnia's persistence to provide a quality experience and make her customers happy has allowed her business to blossom throughout the years. "I'm just a go-getter. I'm not a quitter," she smiled. Truly, she enjoys the whole process, from bringing the show room to her customers to seeing their delighted faces after the installation, and she regularly makes house visits after installation to ensure that her customers are thrilled. "I care. I truly care on both a personal level and a business level," LaDonnia shared. "I enjoy what I do, and I just really love people." **NOW**

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Legacy Homecoming court nominee, Hailey Mitchell, smiles with her family.



Melanie and Charisse display Summit Jaguar school pride at FanFest.



Mary Stanton and Vicki Farmer volunteer their time at the Wesley Mission Center.



Evan Molnar and Ashton Megli enjoy a night outside.



Kelly Hunter with her Great Dane runs Live Cruelty Free, a private animal shelter.



Ms. Judy Miller greets students Luke Whiting, Joseph Douglas and Zoe Douglas on their first day of school at her namesake.



Trey Bates and Ron Smith get ready for their football season with the Legacy Broncos at FanFest.



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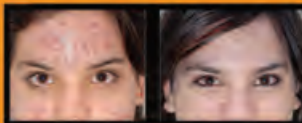
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Consider Your Investment Strategy ... at Each “Season” of Your Life

Fall is almost officially here — and if you're like most people, you're probably wondering how summer went by so fast. Those trips to the lake or the beach are fading in memory now, giving way to helping kids with homework, raking leaves and the other rites of autumn. And just as your day-to-day tasks change with the seasons, so, too, will your money management and investment activities at different phases of your life.

Here's how these scenarios might look:

Phase one: Planning for possibilities — When you're young and you're starting out in the working world, your most immediate financial concerns may be to pay off student loans and then, possibly, save for a down payment on a house. To address both these goals, you'll need to budget carefully. And yet, even at this stage of your life, you should start thinking about saving for retirement — because time is your biggest ally. Consequently, if you work for an employer who offers a retirement plan, such as a 401(k), contribute what you can afford. At the very least, put in enough to earn your company's matching contribution, if one is offered. You may also want to open an Individual Retirement Account (IRA).

Phase two: Gearing up for other goals — As you move through life, and possibly begin a family, you'll likely develop other financial goals, such as helping your children pay for college. You may want to consider investing in a tax-advantaged college savings vehicle, such as a 529 plan. Also, it's important to have enough life insurance to protect your young family.

Phase three: Ramping up for retirement — When you reach the mid-to-later stages of your working life, you may find you have more financial resources available, as your earnings may

have increased significantly, your children have grown and your mortgage may even be paid off. If you are not already doing so, “max out,” if possible, on your 401(k) and IRA. And if you still have money available to invest, you may want to look for other tax-advantaged retirement vehicles.

Phase four: Reaping the rewards — Now it's time to enjoy the results of your lifetime of hard work and your many years of saving and investing. You may have to tap into your retirement accounts, so you'll need to choose a sustainable annual withdrawal rate. The amount you withdraw each year from your IRA and 401(k) depends on a variety of factors: how much you've saved, the lifestyle you've chosen, your estimated longevity, how much you have available from other sources and so on.

Phase five: Examining your estate plans — During your retirement years, if not sooner, you'll want to review your estate plans so that you can leave the legacy you desire. If you have a need to create or update your legal documents, such as a living trust and durable power of attorney, you should consider consulting a qualified estate-planning attorney.

You'll need to make the appropriate financial and investment decisions at many different times over the years. This may sound daunting, but with diligence and discipline, you can discover the paths to take as you move through the seasons of your life. **NOW**

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Todd Simmons is an Edward Jones representative based in Mansfield.


Lesson #3

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Be Breast Aware

Besides fall, football and Halloween fun, each year October marks Breast Cancer Awareness month. It's a good time to reflect on the millions of American women who have battled the disease — remembering those who lost their struggle and celebrating those who are now survivors.

One in eight American women will fall victim to breast cancer in her lifetime. However, through advanced detection technology and better treatments, more women than ever before are surviving their fight. The best way to beat breast cancer, though, is to detect it early. For women with no family history or risk factors for the disease, that means:

- **Monthly self-exams starting at age 20:** Check your breasts every month after your menstrual cycle, or on a date you'll remember, such as the first of every month.
- **Clinical breast exam starting at age 20:** Your doctor should examine your breasts every three years up to age 40 and yearly after that, or as recommended based on your risk factors.
- **Annual mammogram starting at age 40:** Often, doctors recommend a baseline mammogram between age 35 and 40 and yearly mammograms starting at age 40, or sooner if your risk is higher due to family history or other factors.

Should a mammogram reveal a suspicious area, a breast ultrasound or breast MRI may be ordered to further evaluate the abnormality. A breast MRI scan can also screen women who are newly diagnosed with cancer and those with a 20- to 25-percent lifetime risk of the disease. If a woman has a suspicious mass, typically a biopsy — taking a sample from the lump to check for signs of cancer — is recommended.

Risk Reduction

While there is no surefire way to prevent breast cancer, there are ways to manage risk. The most important steps match the healthy living advice everyone has heard many times before:

- Maintain a healthy weight
- Exercise
- Don't smoke
- Eat less fat, especially saturated fat
- Eat lean meat

But there are other ways to decrease breast cancer risk that many women may not be aware of, but over which they may be able to exercise a measure of control:

- Have first child before age 30.
- Reduce use of birth control pills.
- Avoid hormone replacement therapy if possible.
- Breastfeed for one-and-a-half to two years.
- Limit alcohol to less than one drink a day.

Women with a strong family history of breast cancer may want to consider genetic testing to see if they have the BRCA 1 and/or BRCA 2 mutation — which indicates a high likelihood of developing breast cancer — as well as other genetic mutations that correlate with a heightened risk of breast cancer. **NOW**

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October 5

Mansfield Fall 5K Run/Walk: 9:30 a.m., Katherine Rose Park, 303 N. Walnut Creek Dr. \$15 early registration. \$25 pre-registration. \$10 for group/family entry (five or more participants). For more information or to register, visit www.mansfieldchamber.org.

Mansfield Fire Safety Palooza: 10:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m., MISD Center for the Performing Arts, 1110 W. Debbie Ln. For more information, visit www.mansfieldisd.org.

October 14

Robin's Wings for Women: 6:00-8:00 p.m., First United Methodist Church, 777 N. Walnut Creek Dr. Free. Focus will be on healthy living for the holidays. RSVP by **Oct. 7**. For more information, visit www.firstmethodistmansfield.org.

Kayla Lodes Memorial Golf Tournament: 10:30 a.m., Walnut Creek Country Club, 1151 Country Club Dr. To register online, go to www.tssnt.org or call (469) 235-2574.

October 14 — 20

Festival Week in Mansfield: **Oct. 14**, 5:30 p.m., Mansfield Historic Museum, 102 N. Main St., Roland Elbert Duo; **Oct. 15**, 5:30 p.m., Sequel, 117 N. Main St., Brad Thompson Duo; **Oct. 16**, 5:30 p.m., Farr Best Theater, 109 N. Main St., Jim Suhler & Jason Elmore; **Oct. 17**, 5:30 p.m., DayDream Photography Studio, 124 N. Main St., Wendy Colonna & Dave Madden; **Oct. 18**, 5:00-10:00 p.m., Main Street, Wurst Fest; **Oct. 19**, Noon-11:00 p.m., Main and Broad Street, Music & Arts; **Oct. 20**, Noon-6:00 p.m., Main and Broad Street, Music & Arts. For more information, visit www.historicmansfield.net.

October 25

Texans Against Breast Cancer Annual "Kickin' for a Cause" fundraiser: 7:00-11:00 p.m., Western Kountry Klub, Hwy 287 and Lakeway Rd., Midlothian. Tickets are \$15 at the door. For more information, call (214) 205-1798. For reservations, call (817) 800-4585.

October 31

Trunk or Treat: 6:00-8:00 p.m., Mansfield

Bible Church, 2351 Country Club Dr. Go to www.MBCchurch.com for more information.

November 1, 2

Bob Noel Tennis Classic: Walnut Creek Country Club, 1151 Country Club Dr. For more information contact Scott Kissinger (817) 473-9886 or visit www.mansfieldareatennisassociation.com.

November 2

Mansfield 10 and Under Tennis Tournament: 9:00 a.m., Mansfield Summit High School. For more information, visit www.mansfieldareatennisassociation.com.

November 9

Jog for Dogs 5K Benefit Run: 8:00 a.m., Midlothian ISD Multi-Purpose Stadium. Proceeds go toward the cost of Joshua Seller's diabetic alert service dog. Visit www.facebook.com/jogfordogsmidlothiantx for further details.

Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your current event details to mikaela.mathews@nowmagazines.com.

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In The Kitchen With Michele Fuentes

— *By Mikaela Mathews*

Michele Fuentes didn't always love to cook. Although she enjoyed baking, it wasn't until she married into a family with a deep love for cooking that her passion began. "My husband and his family are all great cooks, and we all get together often for great meals," she shared.

The Fuentes family makes holidays a special time to cook. "My sister-in-law and I love coming up with new menus for every holiday," she explained. "I guess our tradition is to top last year's menu."

In addition to her in-laws, Michele's grandmother and great-grandmother also sparked a love for working in the kitchen in her. "Baking is something my grandmother taught me to do," she described. "I still use her rolling pin and my inspiration comes from my great-grandmother's cook books." **NOW**

Chocolate Bourbon Pecan Pie

3/4 cup white sugar
1 cup light corn syrup
1/2 cup butter
4 eggs, beaten
3 Tbsp. bourbon
1 tsp. vanilla
1/4 tsp. salt
1 cup chopped pecans
1 deep dish pie shell
1 cup dark chocolate chips

1. Preheat oven to 325 F.
2. In a small saucepan, combine sugar, corn syrup and butter. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until butter melts and sugar dissolves. Cool slightly.
3. In a large bowl combine eggs, bourbon, vanilla and salt. Mix well.
4. Slowly pour sugar mixture into egg mixture, whisking constantly. Stir in pecans.

5. Line bottom of the pie shell with chocolate chips; pour the sugar and egg mixture over chocolate chips.
6. Bake for 50 to 55 minutes, or until set and golden.

Oopie Goopie Tomato Soupie

Makes 8 servings.

1 28-oz. can crushed tomatoes or 4 large ripe tomatoes, chopped and seeded
1 celery stalk with leaves
1/2 large red onion
1 garlic clove
1 Tbsp. parsley
3 Tbsp. butter
1 Tbsp. sugar
1 Tbsp. all-purpose flour
1 tsp. seasoned salt
1/2 tsp. white pepper
1 12- to 14-oz. pkg. chunk mozzarella,

room temperature
2 5-oz. pkgs. mozzarella string cheese, room temperature
3 1/2 cups whole milk
1 cup cream
Salt and pepper, to taste

1. Chop vegetables as much as necessary to fit in your blender/food processor; puree the tomatoes, celery, onion, garlic, and parsley until smooth and transfer to a large, nonreactive soup pot.
2. Stir in the butter, sugar, flour, salt and pepper. Cook over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until mixture comes to a boil. Lower heat.
3. Set out warm bowls and put 1 chunk (about 4 oz.) of mozzarella in each bowl.
4. Tear 1 string cheese and put in each bowl.
5. Pour the milk and cream into the pot; stir thoroughly.
6. Cook 10-15 minutes on medium heat but don't boil. When the soup is steaming, ladle it into the bowls.

Pork Roast

Makes 8 servings.

4 lbs. boneless pork loin roast
1 Tbsp. vegetable oil
1 1/2 Tbsp. dried thyme, divided use
1 1/2 Tbsp. garlic powder, divided use
1 1/2 Tbsp. onion powder, divided use
Salt and pepper, to taste
3 Tbsp. olive oil
1 large yellow onion, quartered
1 package of baby carrots
8 medium red potatoes, quartered

1. Preheat oven to 350 F.
2. Dry the pork roast with paper towels; rub with oil, 1 Tbsp. thyme, garlic powder and onion powder; salt and pepper to taste.
3. In a hot pan, sear all sides of the pork roast.
4. Place the roast on a rack in a shallow roasting pan; cook for 50 minutes.
5. In a large bowl toss together the olive oil, onion, carrots, potatoes and remaining thyme, garlic and onion powder. Season with salt and pepper.
6. Take roast out of oven and arrange vegetables around the roast.
7. Cook for an additional 50 minutes or until thermometer reads 145 F.
8. Remove from heat and cover in a foil tent.
9. Let the pork cool for 15 minutes before serving.

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