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ON THE COVER



Knights stand guard at the Ingersoll home.

Photo by Amy Ramirez.

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Editor's Note

Autumn greetings, Midlothian!

It's that time of year again when restraint is thrown out the window and overindulgence is celebrated. October is only the beginning, and to punctuate the point of intemperance, there are two days in the month to anticipate mouthwatering yumminess. October 18 is designated as Sweetest Day and Halloween is October 31. Although Sweetest Day is primarily celebrated in the Midwest and Northeast, there is no reason we can't be

part of the fun. Two days to eat ourselves into a blissful stupor. Could life be more perfect?

Of course there's more to the month than sweets. Our Fall Festival is also celebrated on the 18th at the Midlothian ISD Multi-Purpose Stadium. Plan on meeting your neighbors and getting some early shopping done.

On a more sober note, October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. This is a great reminder for women to get their mammograms scheduled before the end of the year.

Betty

Betty Tryon
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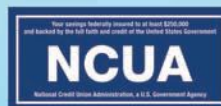
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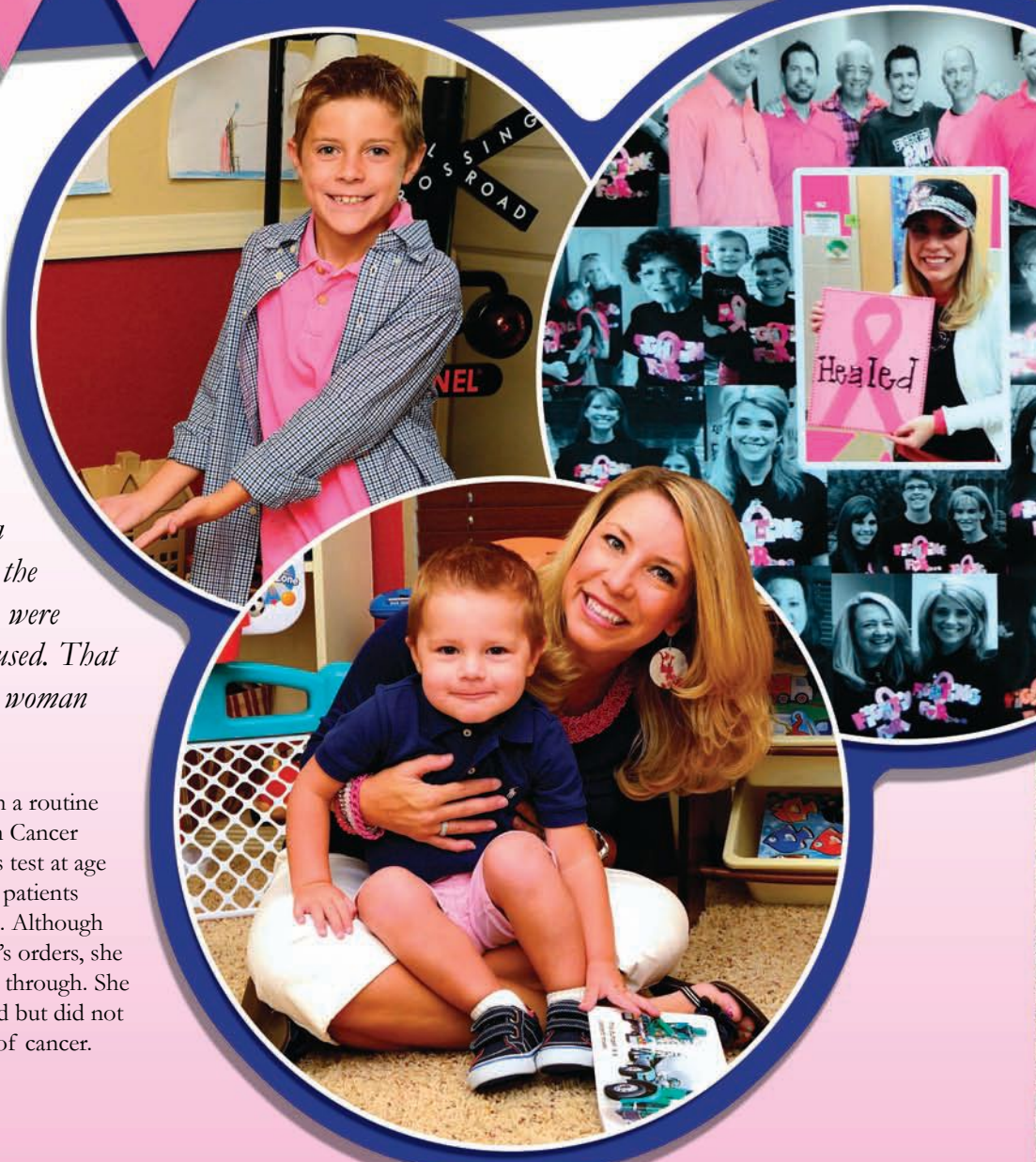
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Awareness Saves Lives

— By Betty Tryon

The day began like any other. Amy Marcontell had no way of knowing that by day's end her entire life would be changed forever. As a teacher of ESL and a reading interventionist, Amy was busy in class with her students when she received a message to take a phone call in the office. "I thought it strange they were getting me out of class," she mused. That call started her on a journey no woman wants to take.

It all began in December 2012 with a routine baseline mammogram. The American Cancer Society recommends women take this test at age 40, but Amy's OB/GYN insisted her patients have that first mammogram at age 35. Although Amy was willing to follow her doctor's orders, she became pregnant and failed to follow through. She remembers being unable to breastfeed but did not know at the time that it was because of cancer.







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Two years later, Amy went to Baylor in Waxahachie and had her baseline mammogram. The day after the procedure, she was pulled out of class for the phone call. "In speaking to the lady from Baylor," Amy recalled, "she told me that I needed a follow-up exam and to come in on Thursday. I told her I couldn't come Thursday, because I had to work. The lady said, 'Ma'am, we suggest that you come in.' So I went back for my follow-up mammogram. This was still in December." After her follow-up, a sonogram was performed. Following those results, the radiologist suggested a biopsy.

Amy admits to being temporarily thrown into confusion about what to do next. After her biopsy was completed, the waiting period for a verdict began. "I didn't know where to turn," she explained. "I didn't know where to go. By January 2, I got the call that I was diagnosed with breast cancer. You immediately go into forming a team of doctors. It all happens within a matter of days. For a person who has breast cancer, I'm extremely young, so none of my friends had been through this before." Amy was diagnosed with high grade, level three ductal carcinoma in-situ (DCIS). DCIS is the presence of abnormal cells in the milk ducts of the breast and in its initial form the cancer is noninvasive.

Amy discovered that based on the size of the tumor, her age and the increased



“I chose
to be
positive
and take
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likelihood of it returning, she was a candidate for surgery. At the age of 37, she had a double mastectomy, a daunting prospect for anyone but particularly so for a mother with a 9-month-old baby. “Before the double mastectomy you really don’t know if it’s contained or not,” Amy pointed out. “I was rushed into scans to see if it had metastasized to my bones. However, I didn’t know if it was in my lymph nodes. There is a period of two to three weeks when you don’t know if you are living or dying. For anyone, that is hard to take and you have to come to reality with it. I could’ve chosen to

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be mad, bitter, resentful and negative. I chose to be positive and take the road God has given me."

Amy's positive attitude prevailed even when she went in for surgery. Before the operation, she handed out breast cancer ribbon cookies for the doctors and nurses. Amy stressed how important it is to have a support system when one is going through such an experience. "They helped me keep my family afloat," she said. They all celebrated when the results of her surgery yielded good news. Her lymph nodes were clean, so she did not have to undergo chemotherapy. After four months of recuperation, Amy had breast reconstruction surgery.

Although it was a great comfort to have support from her family, she needed to talk to someone who understood her experience. "I had to find someone who had been through what I had been through," she said. "Being diagnosed is very lonely, because no one knows what you're going through." In looking for a support group, she wasn't able to find one in which she felt comfortable. "Normally the groups are women who are 20-30 years older than me. There is a lack of 20- and 30-year-old women with young children who have been diagnosed."

Because of the lack of support groups for women in her age bracket, Amy wants to offer her support to others. "For people my age who are diagnosed, I want them to see that it's not a death sentence," she said. "Look at me. I look

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Charles Leach, M.D., specializes in internal medicine and accepts Medicare patients. He enjoys working with patients on a wide range of their healthcare needs. Dr. Leach is a founding member of the former Medical Clinics of North Texas (MCNT), where he practiced for 14 years. He and his wife live in Arlington, and enjoy movies, books and traveling. They have two sons.

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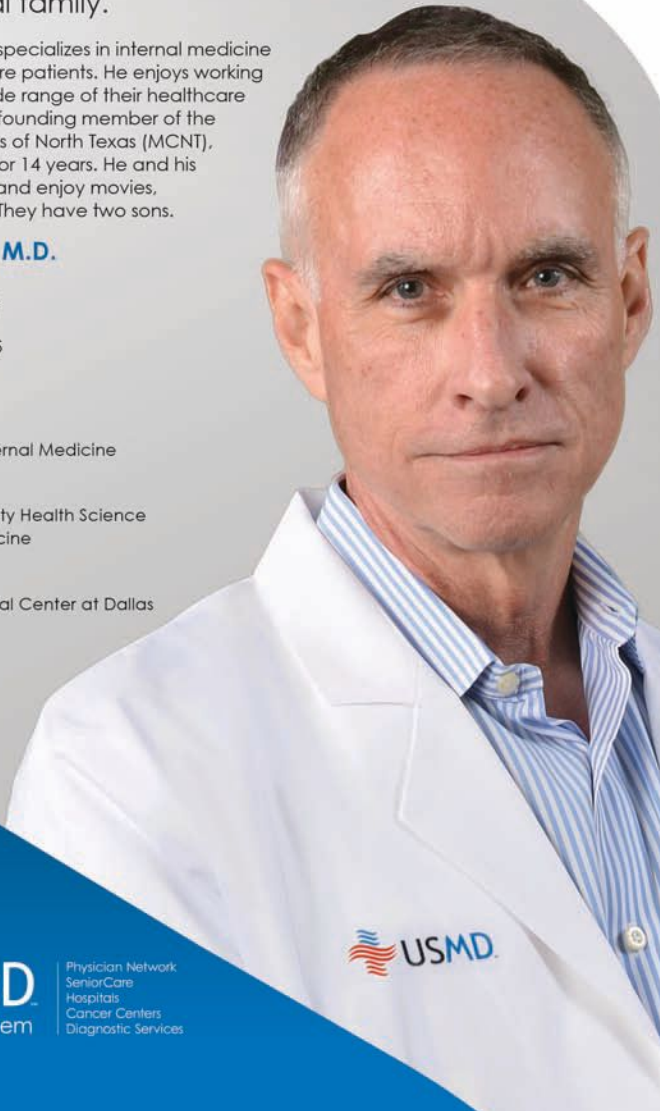
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normal in clothes and in a bathing suit. If I can do it, you can do it. Most of the people I talked to were a lot older than me. I needed someone who was younger and raising kids. I wanted to know if I would look normal. I know it sounds like a vain thing, but we are women and we wonder how we will look.”

Since sharing the news about her diagnosis, Amy has had the opportunity to reach out to others. “It’s amazing how breast cancer survivors find each other,” she remarked. “I get texts from people I don’t know and Facebook messages.” Amy started a blog to tell her story and has received 13,000 hits from all over the world. She has also spoken to groups of women about early detection.

“The main thing I want to share is that early detection can save your life,” she challenged. Thankfully, my doctor orders a mammogram at age 35. Most people don’t have that first one done until age 40. If I had waited until then, my life span would’ve been much shorter.”

Having a potentially fatal disease can change the way people look at life. Amy says she now looks at her children differently. “I remember watching them so intently with such love and admiration,” she said. “When you’re given a diagnosis that might mean you won’t be there for them, petty things in life are pushed to the side. You look at your life and your family differently. This is a path I have to go through, and I’m going through it for a reason. My goal is to get people to have those mammograms done. I’m not one to share everything, but I feel I have a duty to help save other people’s lives.” **NOW**

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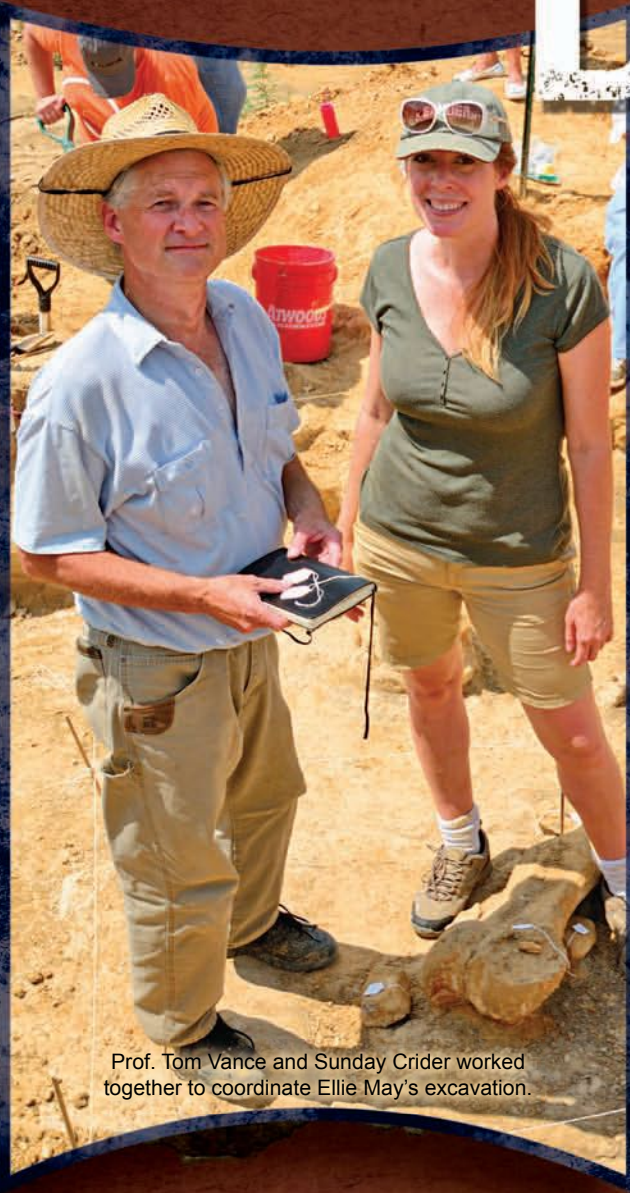




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LAND OF DISCOV

— By Virginia Riddle



Prof. Tom Vance and Sunday Crider worked together to coordinate Ellie May's excavation.



It was an otherwise ordinary day for Ellis County gravel pit owner Marty McEwen. But while using a backhoe to remove sand and gravel for sale this past May, he became aware of bits of bone in the mix. Wisely halting his work, he discovered a partially buried prehistoric bone and tusk. Marty contacted a friend, Ken Wolaver, who then consulted with Prof. Tom Vance, his former biology professor at Navarro College-Corsicana. A visit to the site prompted Tom to put his love of paleontological research to work by organizing a controlled excavation of the ancient skeletal remains.

During this past summer, Sunday Crider of Midlothian, having met Tom on a previous dig in Limestone County, worked as liaison between Tom and groups of five to eight volunteers at a time, who gathered at the excavation site each weekend. Communication was through a Facebook page that Sunday created. Following their paleontology passion, volunteers traveled from the Metroplex, Waco, Limestone County and from all over Ellis County, to work in the hot temperatures. Volunteers had to be at least 16 years old and sign a nondisclosure agreement as to the location, since it was a goal of the group to protect the remains from harm. "When Tom invited me to dig with him, I had no idea what to expect," Sunday admitted. "Once we gridded off the area, we began the systematic digging. As we exposed the second tusk, skull and intact neck vertebrae, I just knew that we had an intact specimen."

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With dental picks, trowels and brushes, volunteers painstakingly uncovered what is believed to be an 18- to 20-year-old female Columbian mammoth. These mammoths date back to the Ice Age and probably resembled today's elephants with a shoulder height of 12-15 feet. Named temporarily for Ellis County and the month of May in which she was found, Ellie May's story may become clearer from lab results that are yet to come. The bones have been protectively wrapped in a way similar to the casting of a broken arm and have been sent to the Perot Museum of Nature and Science in Dallas.

Unlike the Waco Mammoth Site in which a herd of mammoths died trapped in a ravine during a flood, as of yet, there is no indication, such as mollusks or other fossils to indicate that Ellie May died in a flood. Shark teeth have been found, because at one time, this area was completely underwater. The theory that predators killed her seems unlikely since there are no indentations on the bones. Mammoths were herd animals, and yet Ellie May probably died alone. As the first humans to see Ellie May, the volunteers could only speculate on her life and death during the excavation.

"Her death was probably very quick," Tom said. He has also estimated her age based on Ellie May's four sets of molars. "A lot of people are curious about what walked through their backyards," Tom commented. "So I can't place a value on



Marty McEwen and his dad, Wayne McEwen, were thrilled with the discovery made on their property.

the work done by these volunteers. The gravel pit is kind of a time trip, so a find like this sparks the imagination.”

Stacie Rios, also a Midlothian volunteer, enjoyed making her work on Ellie May a family event, since her husband, Gene, and sons Chase, Chandler and Chad joined her. “This was the most amazing thing I have ever been a part of,” Stacie said. “My husband and sons would dig all day, every day, if they could. Working on Ellie’s tusk was memorable. Just exposing it to the elements and literally having it change color before my eyes was an unforgettable experience.”

Three generations of the Atchley family of Ennis were represented among the volunteers, as Mandi Atchley had her mother and father and her daughter, Paige, working alongside her. They were disappointed at first by being rained out twice, but were finally rewarded. “It was amazing to look down into the pit and



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see Ellie May laying there. Really, it was almost startling," Mandi recalled. "This whole experience goes beyond a cash value, since Ellie May was found right here at home. Hopefully, years from now, my daughter can take her children to see Ellie May on exhibit and be able to say, 'Mom helped dig her out.'"

Excited about the dig, Mandi mentioned it to Cassie Ortiz, a drill team director she knew in Waxahachie, who became another volunteer. "It was an amazing experience that I got to share with Mandi and her family outside of school," Cassie remembered. "I learned that it was hard, hot work. We dug out dirt and sand so others could get in farther, but it was great to learn and listen to the experts. Ellie May brought everyone together. That was really special."

One of those experts was Bill Abbott of Waxahachie. Retired now, Bill has a Ph.D. in paleontology and taught biology and paleontology on the college level. "I

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came into the dig late in the game when all the bones were totally exposed,” he said. Bill concurred with Tom in that Ellie May’s death was probably sudden. Bill has taken samples of micro fossils in hopes of learning more. “Paleontology is a combination of history and science,” he revealed. “There is a value in knowing more about the geological environment, the history of the area and about these animals.” Besides his interest in paleontology, Bill had another compelling reason to volunteer his time and expertise. “My late wife was named Ellie May, so I *had* to work on this dig,” he shared.

Sunday was especially happy to have generations of families volunteering to work together. “I have to attribute my love of discovery to my parents, who instilled in me, as a child, a sense of wonderment and curiosity,” she explained. Her dad, Bob Crider of Mexia, also assisted in this dig.

“This has been a very addictive experience,” Tom said. “Every time we have moved the dirt or scratched the surface, we have seen something that no one else has ever seen.” Like her past, Ellie May’s future isn’t known at this time. For Tom and others, she will be the topic of scientific papers, but as he remarked, “I want to see the conclusion to Ellie May’s story.” **NOW**

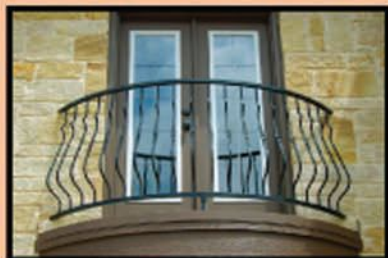
Editor’s Note: The Perot Museum of Nature and Science will be in charge of bringing Ellie May’s story to light, so people for generations to come will be able to enjoy learning about the past.

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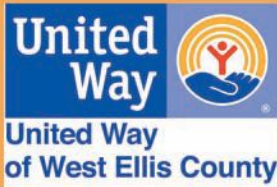
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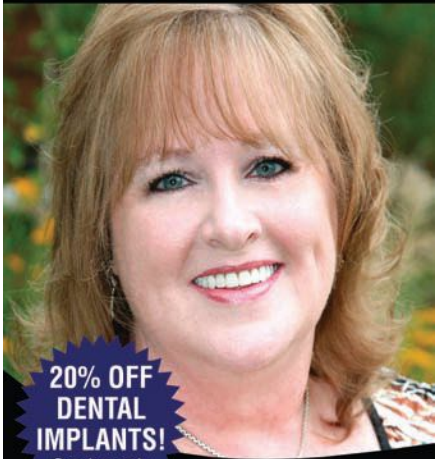
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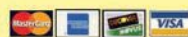
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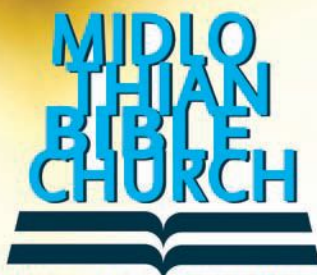
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— By Zachary R. Urquhart

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Roger and Felest grew up in Grand Prairie, as friends and high school rivals. "I was a Gopher. He was a Warrior," she explained. "We were best friends, but never dated in school." They have now been married for 27 years, and have one son, Aaron, who is in his last year at The University of Texas at Arlington and is engaged to Mattie McClean. Also living with them is Felest's mother, Peggy Bitner (better known as Nana), and the family pets — Molly, their adorable miniature Dachshund and Fred, Roger's cockatiel. The family decided to move to Midlothian, because they wanted Aaron to benefit from enrollment in MISD.

Roger stumbled onto their property over a decade ago. "We had a home in Grand Prairie with foundation problems, and we decided to build again," he said. "I got lost and ended up here." The property, which borders Midlothian and Waxahachie, seemed perfect when he discovered it, with one small problem. "I had accidentally found the place, so when I was taking the builder to see it," he joked, "I wasn't sure if I would be able to find it again."



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Roger works for the Four Seasons as the director of information technology and Felest is the senior account specialist for projects for Southwest Airlines' corporate office. "Roger loves working with computers, and I love working with numbers," she shared. In addition to her job, Felest's passions are her family and volunteering with Relay for Life, which she will be chairing in 2015.

Roger and Felest share an even bigger passion, though, in the leadership organization, DeMolay International. Roger was involved when he was young, and it impacted him greatly. "I was 15 when I joined, and I made a lot of friends there. It was my comfort zone," Roger recalled. "It helped me figure out what I wanted to do."

"Since there wasn't a DeMolay Chapter anywhere in Ellis County, we decided to start the Legacy Chapter here, which had been a dream of ours for a long time," Felest said. "It took a few years, but we have been active for about eight years now and have one of the largest chapters in the state." The organization is for young men ages 12-21 and of good



character, and helps to prepare them to be leaders. "We take good boys and groom them into better men," Felest explained.

You can see their dedication to DeMolay throughout their home. When Felest drew the design for the interior (on a napkin), it turned into a beautiful reality thanks to their builder, Gaylord Haynes. The large entryway is decorated with Felest's cross wall. "My faith is what gets me through the day," she admitted. "I love looking at the crosses each morning to get ready for the day." The entryway flows into the living room, as well as a large dining room, complete with a DeMolay display. "This shows off some of the awards Legacy has received, and has some commemorative items as well," she added.

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spacious kitchen. "I thought this was going to be my pride and joy when I designed it," she joked. "But we stay so busy we don't use it that often." With a large island complete with an extra sink and ice machine, their kitchen is a wonderful room no matter how often they use it. It leads to the living room, and is also located near the master bedroom, which is charming in its simple design. Light woods accentuate the feel Felest strives for throughout the home. "I like leaves, stars and cobalt blue," she said. "I like natural. I didn't want a formal house."

The house seems to be built around the living room. The entryway and kitchen both lead into the room, and there is dual access from the guest side of the house. The living room is Roger's favorite space. "I like to be able to sit back and relax, when I get a chance at least," he divulged. With views of the front and backyards, comfortable furniture and a handsome, large-stoned fireplace, the living room is ideal for kicking back and unwinding.

A large patio opens off the living room, perfect for a gathering or cooking on the grill. A little over a year ago, the couple built a considerable arbor in the backyard. "It was a surprise for Mattie's graduation," Felest said. "But I surprised Roger and had a tin roof put on it, so we could sit out there and listen to the rain." They also have used it often for social occasions, particularly when Aaron sets up a backyard screen, and they have movie nights with their DeMolays. Some of the Sr. DeMolays like to cook out and dine under the arbor.

Back inside, Aaron's room is the start of another wing of the house. The hallway is decorated with photographs from the family's work, and Aaron's room is a mash-up of Texas Longhorn paraphernalia and DeMolay mementos. Down the long hallway, the photographs



transition to pictures of the family. Peggy has her own room as well. "My dad had Alzheimer's, and before it progressed, I promised him that I would take care of my mom," Felest said. Roger and Felest built Peggy a small beauty shop in the utility room, as she was a beautician for decades before retiring. "She used to cut our hair, as well as other family and friends," Felest shared.



As another reminder of Roger and Felest's love for the DeMolay program, they built an upstairs room just for the guys. The large open room has an entertainment center, plenty of seating and a unique closet space. "We closed off the dormers and made closets that are just for the guys," Felest detailed. "They have to dress up for their meetings, so we collect suit jackets. They borrow them when they need them, use them until their outgrown and then give them back. We call it the DeMolay store."

The room leads to ample attic storage space, filled with a variety of items, including things for Relay for Life. From the moment visitors step into Roger and Felest's home, they can see their castle is both a palace and a haven. **NOW**



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It's not just the big boys who have a Super Bowl. The Bantam division of first- and second-graders in the Midlothian Youth Football League has already been to their own ultimate showdown. "We had a phenomenal season," exclaimed Zach Hopkins, coach and president of MYFL. "Midlothian had never been to the Super Bowl at that age before. The boys learned a lot about sportsmanship, teamwork and how

working together as a team is important."

When Zach was a fifth-grader, he couldn't wait to play football. "I put on my football pads long before the season started," he recalled. "I would sit and watch TV in my pads and would also run around and try to tackle my sister and think I was just the best at it!" He also remembered his first day at football practice did not go as blissfully as he dreamed it would be. At his first practice, he was tackled for the first time and, understandably, wasn't too crazy about it. He appealed to his mom for a way out after that first practice, and she told



— By Betty Tryon



him he wasn't going to quit. After the second practice, Zach's opinion about being tackled remained unchanged, but so was his mother's. However, unnerved by his plea, she asked the coach, Brian Henderson, what to do. Brian said, "You just stick by your guns, and we'll make it work."

"Brian worked with me that season, and although I wasn't very good, I came to appreciate his help," Zach admitted. "When I went back the next year, I found a love for it. I'm grateful my mother didn't let me quit, because this is a sport I love playing and coaching." The team he belonged to won eight consecutive Super Bowls.

As a coach, Zach can see how his style



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closely resembles Brian's. "It's amazing how coaches can impact your life," he mused. "I had plenty of football coaches through high school but none who ever invested time and energy with me." When Zach looked back on the energy and time that Brian put into him, he saw that without even realizing it, he had adopted the same coaching style.

Growing up in Euless, he was a part of that city's sports system and played at Trinity High School. In his early 20s he played semi-pro football in Ft. Worth. Zach moved his family to Midlothian in 2009





and two years later was eager to get his young son involved in football. However, he discovered that MYFL didn't have a coach for its newly created flag division for kindergarteners. "It was something they were going to do as part of Brazos Valley Football Association," Zach noted. "They really wanted to have a flag division, because other leagues or cities in the association like Burleson, Crowley, Joshua and Hillsboro had flag teams."

He offered to coach his son's team and the league agreed. "It was unique, because we had two different flag

teams," he explained. "I coached one and another coach handled the other." After the first year, the kindergarteners moved into the Bantam division, which is first- and second-graders. "The kids were



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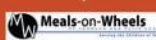
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excited to move into Bantam, because they get to tackle," Zach observed. "We got the boys to understand the concepts of football and to play together." The coaches have two core philosophies — teach the boys good football skills so they understand how to play the game and play it safely and create great football memories.

The first Bantam season was rocky in the beginning, but the team had a strong finish. "We taught them to enjoy the game, play smart, play safe and play as a team, and it worked," Zach explained. With the end of the season, the team had to be split, because the kids were moving up a grade in school. The Bantam team

"It's amazing how coaches can impact your life."



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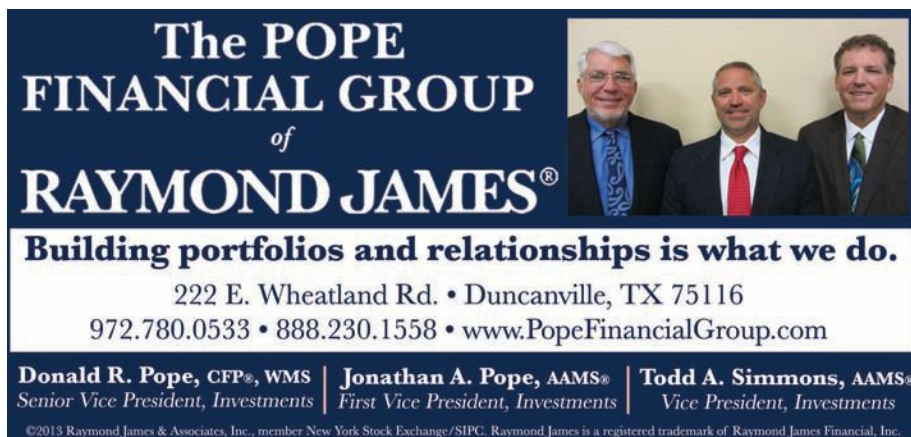
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now had kindergartners moving into first grade and the second-graders were transferred into the Minors division which consists of third- and fourth-graders. Bantam had to build a new team with half new members and only half of the players from the previous team. That team came together as a unit and made it to the Super Bowl in 2013. "We were in first place the whole season and got to the Super Bowl at Joshua," Zach smiled. "It was incredibly cold — 20-something degrees. First- and second-graders are not wild about cold weather! Half the team was in tears and standing next to the heaters on the sideline. It wasn't a competitive game. There was barely any scoring, and we lost. But it was still historical for Midlothian, since we'd never had a team that young make it all the way to the Super Bowl for the BVFA.

"What made that team successful was the unity of the parents," Zach continued. "They became a family and shared their lives and time with each other." Many times, the players' moms and dads socialized together and, as a result, became very close. They were all thrilled this past spring when the second



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half of the original Bantam team moved up to join their previous teammates in the Minors. The original unit was together again for their Spring 7 on 7.

"They competed in the championship and won," Zack enthused. This coming season has the potential of being their best season ever, as they look forward to making it to the Super Bowl and winning as their original unit. The players



also get to be a part of another first for BVFA. "We are excited about the new season coming up, because of the team re-establishing itself," Zach said. "The BVFA made a deal with the Dallas Cowboys to be able to play their Super Bowl at the AT&T Stadium. We'll be the first association in Texas to play at a professional stadium!"

Zach stresses that the lure of the game isn't all about winning. "It's not about us competing with other coaches to win," he clarified. "It's about these boys having fun and looking back on their youth and enjoying the time spent in fellowship with their friends or just being a part of a team that's successful. They also learn how to be winners and how to accept loss. Ours is the story of how a team came together and learned how to play the game. We were broken apart and one-half of the team found success, then we got back together to complete the story." **NOW**

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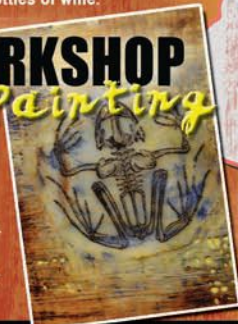
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A collection of colorful autumn leaves in shades of red, orange, yellow, and green, scattered across the upper left and top portions of the page, appearing to fall.

TO PRUNE OR NOT TO PRUNE



— By Randy Bigham

The onset of harvest time brings more than the turning of the leaves. For most of us, it means raking them up after their inevitable descent, transforming lawns and driveways everywhere into a crunchy nuisance. Autumn's inception also inspires well-meaning homeowners to prune branches and hedges while the weather is still nice. But increasingly, the word from lawn care specialists and gardeners is to hold off on pruning until winter. Resisting the urge to prune in the fall is the advice of



famous green thumb Paul James, host of HGTV's Gardening by the Yard. "The tender new growth that would result may not have a chance to harden sufficiently before cold weather arrives," Paul explained, "and that can lead to damage."

Horticulturalist Deborah Brown agreed. "Pruning in late winter, just before spring growth starts," she said, "leaves fresh wounds exposed for only a short time before new growth begins the wound-sealing process."

Gardening author Mike McGrath is more adamant in his advice. "The rules of fall pruning are simple," he maintained. "Prune nothing in the fall! Nada! Zilch! Ladies, hide the pruners from helpful husbands!"

But we yard lovers needn't fret. There's plenty of lawn and garden maintenance for us to accomplish long before winter wields its icy claws.



Lawn cleanup and maintenance

Keeping lawns free of leaves is the main objective in the fall, so let the raking begin. And we may as well do it the right way. Yes, there's a method to leaf-free madness, as Barbara Pleasant outlines in her book *Compost Gardening*. She recommends raking with the wind (and downhill when possible). Matching your rake to the kind of leaves in your yard and to your body type is also suggested. Your favorite mom-and-pop garden

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centers, as well as your local big box stores, offer a range of sizes and weights.

Most importantly, use your shredded leaves as mulch. “Leaves contain some of the nutrients that trees and shrubs have taken out of the soil,” Barbara wrote, “and it’s in keeping with nature’s plan that you should give back some of those purloined nutrients by mowing over part of your annual leaf fall, thus returning organic matter to the soil.” Ellis County Master Gardeners are in favor of this form of organic recycling, advising a 3- to 6-inch layer of leaves as mulch in vegetable and flower beds and around trees and bushes.

Writer and avid gardener Lisa Kaplan Gordon suggests patching bare or thin spots of grass during the fall. Remove dead grass and replace with an inch of compost and an appropriate grass seed suited to shade or sun. “You’ll want to keep the patch moist,” Lisa said, “so lightly water once a day until the seed germinates, and the new grass gets about 1-inch tall.”

Planting and transplanting

Fall is a good time for planting vines and ground covers from containers. Cool-season annuals like pansies, daffodils, dianthus and ornamental kale or cabbage are ripe for autumnal planting,



as are leeks, garlic and onions, especially those “from bulbs in soil enriched with organic matter.”

Paul James believes container plants deserve more attention from fall gardeners than they receive. “You can take cuttings of various annuals and root them in either water or a potting medium such as vermiculite, perlite or soil-less potting mix,” he instructed. Paul also recommends transplanting potted perennials into the garden.

Fertilizing

Roger Cook of *This Old House* magazine reminds his readers fall is the optimum time for fertilizing their lawns. “Taking the time to fertilize in the fall will strengthen your plants’ and lawn’s roots, giving them a strong base on which to thrive next spring,” he pointed out. He recommends a formula of 20-8-8

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(nitrogen-phosphorus-potassium) for the best blade, foliage and root growth and trace element absorption. Check with your local Master Gardeners for the ideal time for lawn fertilization. Roger also suggests fertilizing shrubs and trees in the fall. "I recommend applying one to three pounds of slow-release nitrogen per 1,000 square feet of bed and cultivating lightly," he shared.

Pruning

While fall pruning isn't advocated by most professionals, there are some basics to remember and apply to the task when trimming is safer for the plants.



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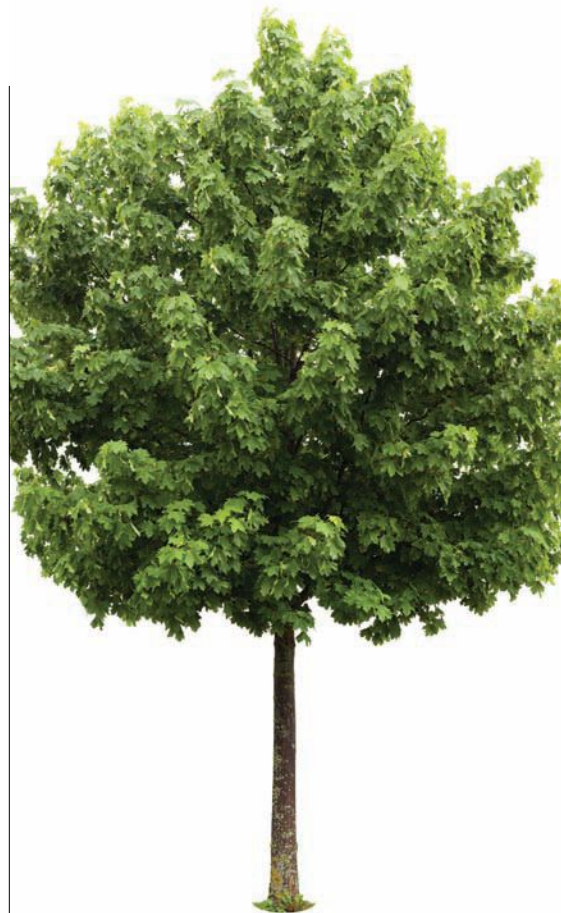
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Mike McGrath expounded on why it's advisable not to prune until winter. "As I try to stress every year at this time, pruning now stimulates new growth just when the plants are trying to go dormant, and this severely weakens the plants."

Once winter has arrived, pruning is recommended to promote overall plant health, encourage flower and fruit development, control size and eliminate broken, hazardous branches. For large, established trees, pruning is best left to qualified professionals. A number of knowledgeable, reputable tree trimming services provide care programs and fertilization. Some employ certified arborists to assist clients and offer tree trimming along with traditional lawn and garden packages.

Among shrubs to prune in winter are hydrangeas and camellias. Trees to be pruned at the same time include: juniper, spruce, Bradford pear, honey locust and poplar. Trees *not* to prune in winter are maple, birch, dogwood, walnut and elm.

Whether raking and mulching or planting and fertilizing, remember to pace yourself. As Barbara Pleasant wrote in *Compost Gardening*, "Leaf season will last for several weeks, so you have plenty of time to let yourself enjoy the weather and the work!" **NOW**



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BURR OAK RANCH



The Calverys offer many options for the bride-to-be at Burr Oak Ranch.



A Picture Perfect Wedding

Chris and Darla Calvery provide beautiful settings for brides at Burr Oak Ranch.

— By Betty Tryon

Every bride dreams of her wedding day being the most beautiful ever. To that end, much planning goes into the process. An important part of making that day memorable is the venue. Burr Oak Ranch, owned by Chris and Darla Calvery, has created a rustic setting sure to please any bride who wants to be close to nature on her big day. Here, on an abundance of acres, she can create her dream wedding with plenty of amenities.

"The ranch has a new, 30-by-70-foot pavilion with a caterers' kitchen area," Darla said. Chris has also built two pergolas for brides to choose from as locations for their ceremonies.

"A bride can get married any place on the ranch, but the pavilion and pergolas are what we mostly use," Chris explained. There are two refurbished restroom areas located near the

pavilion, and there is outdoor lighting for nighttime events. Tables, chairs and church pews are available for use. Gate and parking attendants will be present to assist the guests.

There are two separate, completely remodeled houses on the property for the wedding parties to use. One is for the groom and groomsmen, and the other is for the bride and her party.

The groom's house is furnished with two bedrooms, two baths and a kitchen. The interior is reminiscent of a hunting lodge with stuffed coyotes and deer heads with incredible antlers on wall mounts as part of the decor. There is also a groom's dressing suite.

The bride's house is totally furnished and has three bedrooms, three baths and a kitchen. This house has a softer, more elegant

Business **NOW**

look with large, comfy couches and carpet. One of the bedrooms boasts matching chairs and bed pillow, beautiful flowers and plants. In another bedroom, there's a wall covered with shelving so each member of the party has her own cubby hole storage space. There is a bridal dressing suite with two full-size mirrors, a vanity area and plenty of room for the lady of the hour to become a beautiful bride.

Darla handles details of the wedding venue and is also available to help brides as wedding coordinator if requested. "I have different wedding packages to choose from, and brides can choose one that includes a coordinator," she pointed out. "Our prices start at \$2,500 for the pavilion and the ceremony. If parents coming in from out of town want to stay overnight, we can make arrangements for that." Darla has a list of vendors she works with to provide flowers, food, photography and DJs for the bride's convenience.

"I have different wedding packages to choose from."

The ranch is an excellent spot for engagement and bridal photos with a scenic creek running through it and a picturesque old barn. Burr Oak Ranch also has a deer breeding operation called Triple CK Ranch. The deer are bred for hunters, but a few of the baby deer are hand raised to habituate them to humans. There are photo opportunities for brides feeding or cuddling baby deer.

In addition to bridal parties, the pavilion is available for rent for any festivity — birthdays, graduations, anniversaries or engagement parties. It is also a popular setting for family photos. Whatever the occasion, Darla is ready to assist. "I like to help people and get them connected," she said, adding that Burr Oak Ranch is a beautiful place to make that happen. **NOW**



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Photo by Faizel Ismail



First grade students and teachers at LaRue Miller Elementary are truly Super Heroes.



The MHHS freshmen choir rehearse before singing the National Anthem at the Heritage High School grand opening.



Ashlyn Logue plays the Peddler Hag (the queen in disguise) at Waxabachie Community Theatre.



Lauren James and 10-month-old Michael enjoy a beautiful day at Kimmel Park.



Annette and Chris Poteet of Poteet Marital Arts and Fitness Center join Midlothian's Chamber of Commerce.



Lindsey Cole and her brother, Nathan, sell home-baked cookies as a fundraiser for the Becky Miller family.



Baylee Frederick, Wensley Neal, Lauren and Bryce Hallmark participate in the Ethan Film Launch Team.



LaRue Miller Elementary Head Start teachers Adrienne Mitchell, Jurae Greiten and Amber Martin follow the Yellow Brick Road during their annual week of orientation.



Haley McDonald and Jordan McConnico attend the opening of Midlothian Heritage High School.



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How Aggressive Should I be When I Invest for Retirement?

It depends. The right answer in your case will depend on a number of key factors. These include, among others, your income and assets, your attitude toward risk, whether you have access to an employer-sponsored plan at work, the age at which you plan to retire and your projected expenses during retirement. But it's possible to lay down some guidelines that may be of help to you.

The conventional wisdom has traditionally been that you should invest aggressively when you're young and then move gradually toward a more conservative approach. By the time you retired, you would probably end up with a portfolio made up mostly of high-grade bonds and other low-risk investments. However the retirement landscape has changed dramatically in the last 20 years or so. As a result, many of our basic assumptions about retirement planning have been overturned.

The dwindling number of traditional pension plans and concerns about Social Security have led people to take greater responsibility for their own retirement. Investing more aggressively over the long term has become common as people realize that, without anyone else to take care of them, they need to build the largest retirement nest egg they possibly can. In fact, many people these days primarily use growth vehicles (e.g., certain stocks and mutual funds) for their investment portfolios and tax-deferred retirement plans (e.g., 401(k)s and IRAs), though the proportion of stocks may still be reduced as they near retirement.

Other factors have changed the way we think about and invest for retirement as well. People tend to retire younger, live longer and do more during retirement than

they used to. With the likelihood that you will have well over 20 years of activity to fund, it may be a good idea to invest more aggressively for retirement than previous generations did. And there's no reason to switch over to fixed-income securities completely upon reaching retirement, especially with interest rates at historic lows. Because bond prices typically fall when interest rates go up, a period of rising interest rates can affect the value of your bond holdings. Many financial planners suggest that you keep a suitably balanced portfolio, including some of your assets in growth-oriented investments, even after you retire.

Don't forget to carefully consider a mutual fund's investment objectives, risks, fees and expenses, which can be found in the prospectus available from the fund. Read it carefully before investing. **NOW**

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Hikers and Hunters: *Long, vigorous hikes take a toll on feet and ankles*

As brightly colored leaves begin to dazzle the fall landscape, hikers and hunters nationwide will migrate to mountains, woods and fields, but many, unfortunately, are ill prepared for the beating their feet will take. Hikers, hunters and others who love the outdoors often don't realize how strenuous it can be to withstand constant, vigorous walking on uneven terrain. Lax physical conditioning and inappropriate footwear bring scores of outdoor enthusiasts into the doctor's office each fall for treatment of foot and ankle problems, such as chronic heel pain, ankle sprains, Achilles tendonitis, fungal infections and severe blisters.

Walking up and down hills and tramping through wet, slippery fields and wooded areas puts stress on the muscles and tendons in the feet and ankles, especially if you haven't conditioned properly before hitting the trail. Also, many don't realize that cross-training athletic shoes aren't the best choice for extended hiking and hunting.

Hikers and hunters should make the investment in top-quality hiking boots. Strong, well-insulated and moisture-proof boots with steel or graphite shanks offer excellent ankle and foot support that helps lessen stress and muscle fatigue to reduce injury risk. The supportive shank decreases strain on the arch by allowing the boot to distribute impact as the foot moves forward. So if a boot bends in the middle, don't buy it.

In wet and cold weather, wearing the right socks can help prevent blisters,

fungal infections and frostbite. Synthetic socks are recommended as the first layer to keep the feet dry and reduce blister-causing friction. For the second layer, wool socks add warmth, absorb moisture away from the skin, and help make the hiking boot more comfortable. Wool lets moisture evaporate more readily than cotton, so fewer blisters develop.

What happens if your feet or ankles hurt during a hike or hunt? Pain usually occurs from overuse, even from just walking. If you're not accustomed to walking on sloped or uneven ground, your legs and feet will get tired and cause muscles and tendons to ache. To avoid a serious injury, such as a severe ankle sprain or an Achilles tendon rupture, rest for a while if you start hurting. Serious injury risk escalates significantly if you continue hiking in pain.


Evaluation by a foot and ankle surgeon is recommended if there is persistent pain following a hiking or hunting outing. Most concerning is ankle instability and strained Achilles tendons. Inattention to these problems at their early stages may lead to a serious injury that will keep you off the trails for a long time. **NOW**

Christopher Schmitt, DPM

Member of the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons

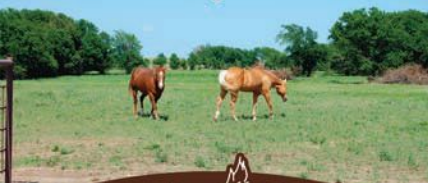
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October 1

Test of the Outdoor Warning Sirens: 2:00-2:10 p.m.

October 4

Lord's Acre Festival First United Methodist Church of Midlothian: 8:00 a.m., 800 S. 9th St. Silent, children's and live auctions, creations, children's activities and more. Turkey dinner 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Cost for dinner: Adults \$10, Seniors and Children \$5. For more information call (972) 723-3993.

Community Gardening Day: 9:00 a.m.-noon, Ridgeview Park, 750 Walter Stephenson Rd. Ellis County Master Gardeners will be on hand to provide gardening information and answer questions. Light refreshments will be served. Please give us a call or send an email to sign-up. parksandrec@midlothian.tx.us (972) 775-7177.

Downtown Farmers Market: 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Heritage Park, 234 N. 8th St. Open air market

hosted by the Midlothian Downtown Business Association.

Second Paws for Reflection Ranch Round-up: 6:30 p.m., 5431 Montgomery Rd. An evening of dancing, music and silent auction for adults only. \$25 per plate. For more information call (972) 775-8966 or email pawsforreflection@att.net.

October 7, 14, 21, 28

Community Prayer Meeting: 7:00-8:00 a.m., Midlothian Conference Center.

October 10

Texans Against Breast Cancer Annual "Kickin' for a Cause" Fundraiser: 7:00-11:00 p.m., Western Kountry Klub, Hwy 287 at Lakeview Road, Midlothian. Live performances, live and silent auctions and refreshments of BBQ and soft drinks will be available. BYOB. Tickets: \$15 at the door. Net proceeds will be donated to Susan G. Komen for the Cure. To donate to the silent auction or for more information, call (214) 205-1798. For reservations, call (817) 800-4585.

October 18

Fall Festival and 5K Run: 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., ISD Multi-Purpose Stadium, 1800 S. 14th St.

Run registration opens at 7:00 a.m. Run starts at 8:00 a.m.

For Maddie's Sake Saturday Social Inclusion Dance: "Circus Theme": 6:00-8:00 p.m., Midlothian Civic Center 224 S. 11th St. Free dance for all children with and without a disability. Free admission. Dress up as your favorite carnival or circus character or come as you are. Donations welcome. For more information go to formaddiesake.com

October 24 — 26

Waxahachie Community Theatre's *The Music Man*. **October 24**, 7:30 p.m.; **October 25**, 7:30 p.m.; **October 26**, 2:30 p.m., Chautauqua Auditorium in Getzendaner Park, Waxahachie. Tickets are \$12 for seniors/students, \$15 for adults at www.waxahachiecommunitytheatre.com. NOTE: A service charge will be added to the price of each ticket for online purchases. Preschool children get in free with a paid adult admission. Contact the WCT box office at (972) 646-1050 or via email at wct.texas@gmail.com for further information.

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In the Kitchen With Jill Matthews

— By Betty Tryon

Jill Matthews remembers many good things from her honeymoon in Italy, but she especially recalls how tasty the food was. “Everything seemed so fresh,” she said. “Some restaurants had their own gardens, where they picked many of the ingredients they used in their cooking. We tasted the difference!”

Inspired by those delicious, fresh veggies they enjoyed overseas, Jill and her husband, John, planted a garden at their home in Midlothian, where they grow herbs, tomatoes, peppers, onions, squash, zucchini, potatoes, melons and cucumbers. “We also have peach, pecan and pear trees,” Jill pointed out. “I try to use fresh foods in our meals and desserts, whenever possible.”

Jill’s cooking palate also comes from her father’s family, who came from the Netherlands. Jill’s Oma’s (Dutch for “grandmother’s”) recipes are some of her favorites. **NOW**

Oma’s Cream Cheese Ball

- 2 8-oz. pkgs. cream cheese, softened
- 1 8-oz. can pineapple, crushed
- 2 cups pecans, chopped (divided use)
- 2 Tbsp. green onion, chopped
- 1 Tbsp. seasoned salt

1. Combine all ingredients, reserving 1 cup of pecans.
2. Put in refrigerator for 1 hour. Make a log or ball, and roll in the remaining pecans. Serve with crackers.

Broiled Lamb Chops With Red Wine and Oregano Marinade

Lamb chops

- 1/4 cup onion, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup fresh oregano, finely chopped or 2 tsp. dried oregano leaves
- 6 garlic cloves, minced

- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 1/4 cup dry red wine
- 3 Tbsp. soy sauce
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 Tbsp. red wine vinegar

1. Place lamb rib, loin or shoulder chops on broiler pan. Place pan so that chops are 4-6 inches from heat. Broil 1-inch thick chops 10-12 minutes; 2-inch chops 20-22 minutes, turning once during cooking.
2. Meanwhile, in a blender, combine all other ingredients. Blend well.
3. Pour mixture over chops. Let stand at room temperature to marinate.

Tortoni

- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 tsp. almond extract

- 1 egg white
- 2 tsp. sugar
- 1/4 cup toasted almonds
- Maraschino cherries

1. Whip cream. Fold in sugar, vanilla and almond extract.
2. In a separate bowl, beat egg white until peaks form. Add sugar and beat until stiff. Fold egg white and nuts into cream mixture.
3. Spoon mixture into 8 muffin cups. Freeze. Top with additional nuts and a cherry prior to serving.

Twice-baked Potato Casserole

- 3 large baking potatoes
- 1/4 cup milk
- 6 Tbsp. butter
- 1 8-oz. carton sour cream
- 1 cup cheddar cheese, shredded (divided use)
- 1/2 cup green onions, chopped
- 6 slices crisp bacon, crumbled
- Salt and pepper, to taste

1. Wrap potatoes in foil and bake for 1 hour at 400 F. When done, remove from foil and place in a large mixing bowl.
2. Chop potatoes into pieces and add next 3 ingredients. Blend with mixer.
3. Add 1/2 of cheese, green onions and bacon. Salt and pepper to taste. Mix until blended.
4. Place into a casserole and top with remaining cheese. Bake for 30 minutes at 400 F.

Mandarin Orange Salad

Salad:

- 6 cups torn lettuce
- 1 15-oz. can mandarin oranges, drained
- 1/2 red onion, thinly sliced
- 1/3 cup walnut halves

Dressing:

- 1/3 cup oil
- 1/4 cup white wine vinegar
- 1 Tbsp. honey Dijon mustard

1. For salad: Toss together lettuce, oranges, onion and toasted walnuts.
2. For dressing: Blend oil, vinegar and mustard.

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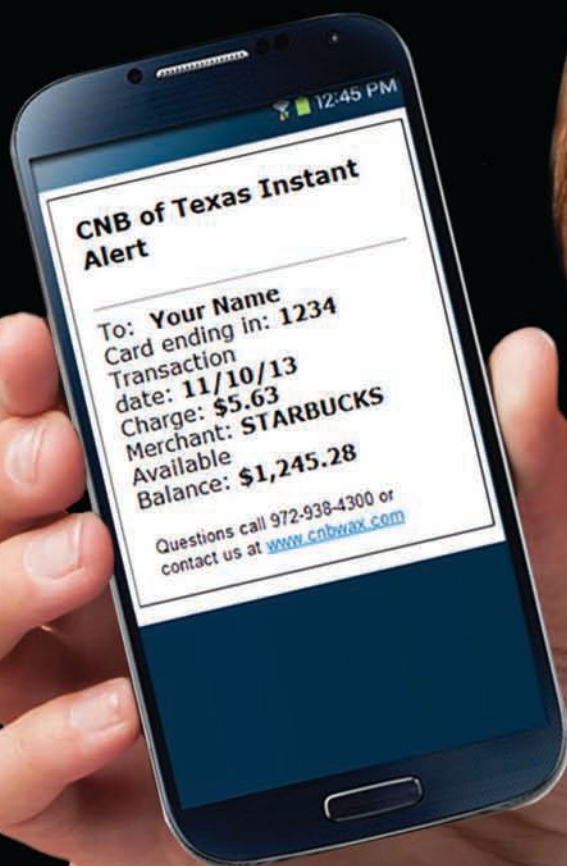
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