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On the Cover: A common sight in the heart of Burleson is this beautiful clock outside City Hall.

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Burleson
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The Community Magazine
Serving Burleson and
the Surrounding Area
MAGAZINE

Burleson NOW

Editor's Note

Dear Readers,

We tell good, American stories this month — stories of people achieving great things through passion, hard work and good use of resources. You will meet Mary Kaye McPherson, whose food you may have enjoyed, since she loves to cook for groups. Plus, we tell you about Gayla Tennison, the Burleson Public Library director who proved herself through years of service and was offered the directorship when the position came open. Another person always available to those who need her is Becca Baird, a drug use prevention counselor at Kerr Middle School. Next, we introduce you to Pat Dexheimer, a woman seeking to clear the air by writing a book about ghosts in Burleson. Lisa and Jimmy Prescher invite you into their home for a glimpse of the American dream; and their neighbor, Felisa Marruffo, a 13-year-old horsewoman, shares with you the wonder of winning! May you, too, enjoy health, wealth and time to enjoy your blessings this January!

Melissa Rawlins

BurlesonNOW Editor

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"We must grow in a progressive manner or face the prospect of stagnation." This quote, found in an old file now stored in the Burleson Public Library, is in an article telling of the proud beginnings of the town of Burleson. It was as fitting and relevant in 1959 as it is today. The library, with its new director, Gayla Tennison, is faced with the continuing challenge of growing progressively. With the many burgeoning activities and book clubs she has begun or plans to establish in the near future, Gayla is rising to the challenge.

Gayla grew up in DeSoto and then lived in Arlington for 13 years. Along with her husband Reggie, daughter Ashley, and son Dalton, she is a recent and welcome addition to Burleson. Though a soft-spoken woman, the confident glimmer in her eye reveals this lady librarian has some big plans. Along with the help of her much-appreciated staff, Gayla hopes to make the library a current, necessary and important

part of the community.

Prior to her present position as library director, Gayla worked at the Theological Library at Southern Methodist University. She became the interim director at the Burleson library in January and the official director this past August. "Personally, I think the library was in need of a fresh perspective, some new ideas," she modestly stated, "and that's what I bring to the table."

Books and learning have played an important role in Gayla's life. "I toyed with getting my Ph.D. in history and teaching for a while. I had actually started library school 10 years ago, but then went back to school for my master's degree in history," she said. "I even thought about becoming a writer, but when it came time to write my master's thesis, I decided against it," she revealed with a grin. Perhaps unfortunately for her, but fortunately for the library, she "got burned out" and went back to library school. "I just

love it," she enthused.

Gayla has already created many new programs, for children, teens and adults, as well as senior activities and clubs. For families with younger children, there are three story times a week and monthly movies. In keeping with the season, the library also has holiday movies for the family one Saturday a month at 1:00 p.m. With everyone gathered on blankets and pillows eating popcorn and watching *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the library is transformed into a fun family hangout. This warm atmosphere is exactly how Gayla would like the library to feel.

The children's wing of the building is quite inviting. Large, friendly stuffed ducks, lions and giraffes, donated by patrons, sit atop each shelf overflowing with books waiting to excite a child's imagination. "The 'birdhouses' are a fun touch," Gayla said. Rather than just sit at desks to read, children can enter their own

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private booth made to look like a birdhouse. "Our children's services coordinator, Carolyn Smith Pennington, is very creative," she bragged.

There are exciting plans in the works for teenagers, as well. "I'm really excited because we hired a library



consultant and we're hoping to remodel. We want to put in a teen area," Gayla expressed. Many of the teen programs are centered on literary activities, such as writing contests and the Girl's Only Book Club, but some programs are not quite as book-oriented. One such popular program is the Lock-In/Gaming Night, where teens are locked in for four hours, no parents allowed (with library chaperones). "They play Guitar Hero, Dance Dance Revolution, video and board games and eat pizza. About 40 teens have participated in the fun thus far," Gayla noted, and she hopes that number will continue to grow. "Usually when you are talking about the library, younger teens participate more. The older teens don't really utilize the library as much, so that's why we are trying to develop a teen area where they can come and hang out."

To help realize this goal, the library has established a Teen Advisory Board, which holds monthly meetings. "This is to give them a voice. We want them to help us plan future events and give us their suggestions on how the library can better suit them," Gayla explained. "Our music collection is what most teens have been requesting for a while. We're hoping to develop a larger DVD and audio CD section; we have probably over 500 CDs we want to put out. We've purchased a contract to have

downloadable audio books so they can just plug in their MP3 players and download books to play at home."

In this computer age of ever-evolving technology and information at your fingertips, a trip to the library might seem outdated. Learning to navigate the Internet may seem much easier to master than navigating the Dewey Decimal System. "My first passion is for books, but you have to keep up with the times," Gayla stated. This is where her progressive mind-set comes in handy and where her ideas for the future really shine. Just seven short years ago, the library had only four computer stations. It now boasts 18, and at times it can still be difficult to find an open seat — especially at lunchtime. "We have many people who come in to use our Internet access and don't even realize there are books in the library," she jokingly explained. "A lot of people have dial-up or no Internet service at all. That's why they're here every day. That's a vital service we provide. Many companies don't allow their employees to check their personal e-mails at work, so they come in on their lunch breaks." Gayla is doing everything she can to bring relevancy to the library.

"My staff and I are all personally invested in making sure this is the best library we can provide for the community. It's not just a job that we show up for every day," Gayla expressed. "We're enthusiastic. We're always looking for new ways we can improve customer service, because it's not just about the things we have. The quality of customer service we provide is what makes us vital and valuable. We could have all the materials in the world, but if we didn't provide customer service, I doubt anyone would come."

The Burleson Public Library is sure to continue to grow progressively; with Gayla looking to the future it will never become stagnant. "We want to provide something for everyone, to be an indispensable community asset," she said. "We plan to grow right along with Burleson!" **NOW**

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— By Melissa Rawlins Simplicity in Action

Swing the truck gently through one quiet neighborhood off of East Renfro, between white brick gates opening into an even more peaceful country lane, and finally along the driveway of a trim and tidy lawn to the place you call home. If you are Jimmy Prescher, that describes your daily pleasure at the end of a long day's work.

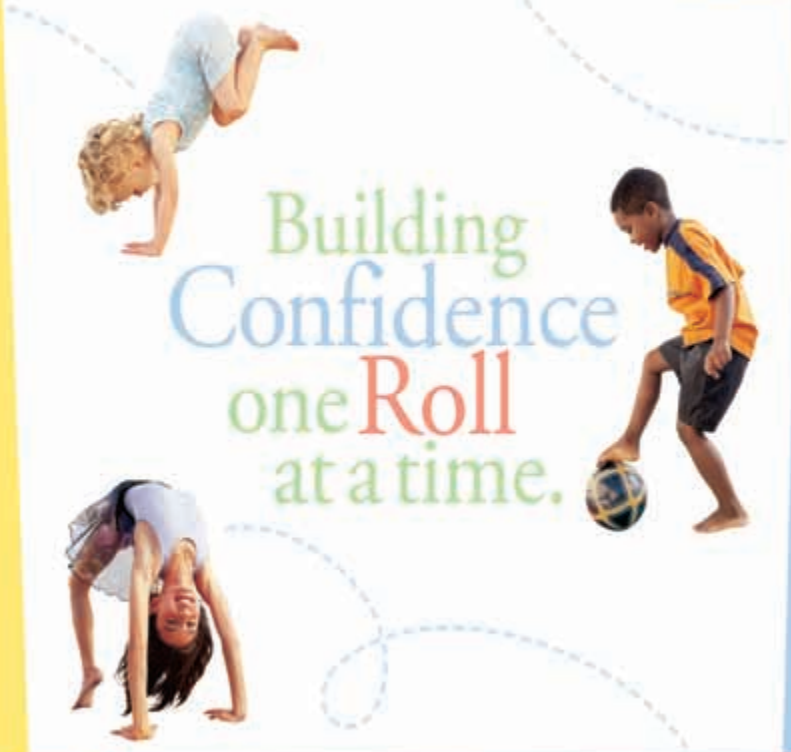
Jimmy and his wife, Lisa, moved here 10 years ago from town. With their new daughter, Mackenzie, they needed more room for the family. "There were just two homes out here at first," Lisa said. "It was so quiet and pretty." For almost three years, no more homes were built. Even now, the fun for Mackenzie is countrified: "I just get on the golf cart and cruise around." She also has been given a brother to play with: Hunter was born in 2000.

This year, Mackenzie is in eighth grade at Kerr Middle School and excels in math and language arts in addition to playing soccer, volleyball, softball and basketball. "Me and Jimmy and the kids are really involved in youth programs," Lisa shared. "Until last year, I coached Mackenzie in fast-pitch softball." She is the only coach Hunter's had. "I coach him in the Coach Pitch League now that we're moving from a tee to someone pitching at you." This year, Hunter is in first grade at Bransom Elementary and



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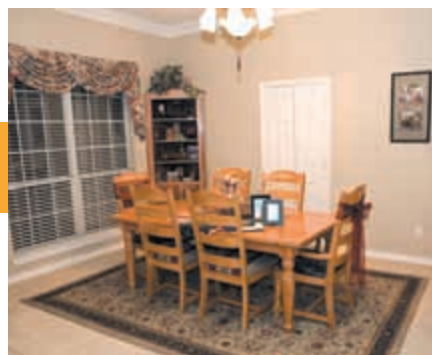




enjoys math and reading. "He gets up early so he can read," said Jimmy, the proud dad whose son was made an honorary Briar Oaks Fireman last year after saving the life of a 4-year-old who fell in a pool.

Safety consciousness is one reason the Prescher's lovely pool is shut down for the winter. Another is that the Preschers also have a lot of other things requiring maintenance, including Jimmy's toys. Attached to the house, Jimmy has a shop where he maintains three drag race vehicles. "Me and my brother, Cody, drag race for a hobby on one-eighth-mile drag strips in Kennedale, Denton and Dallas."

January begins a three-month vacation from drag racing. This winter, Mackenzie and Hunter will both



be busy with basketball, Mackenzie will start playing softball and Hunter will start playing baseball. Lisa will resume coaching. "Lisa is very good with the kids," Jimmy bragged. "They come back to her year after year. This year, the Premier League is letting us keep the same team, which is not common. But they asked for her, so Lisa's going back to coach the kids again."

Back at home, the family cooperates with Lisa to keep the house comfortably tidy. "We live in every corner of this house," Jimmy said. In their happily sparse master suite, you see proof that in Lisa's house there can be no clutter. Above their bed is one of the few wall decorations in the home. This cheerful collection of daisies in vases is eye-catching because the glass vases are screwed into

the wall. Lisa explained the optical illusion: "I bought the vases at Pottery Barn, and they already had a hole. I filled them with Gerber daisies because they are my favorite."

The children keep their most beloved things in their colorful rooms. Beyond athletics (commemorated by multiple baseball and basketball trophies on high shelves), Mackenzie's favorite activity is communicating, so next to her bed her telephone and computer are most prominent. "MySpace and the phone are how I communicate with the world," Mackenzie declared. Through the shared bathroom is Hunter's room, brightly painted (like Mackenzie's) by their good friend, Gloria, who does the Prescher's decorating. "I can come up with ideas, and just can't make it happen without help," Lisa confessed.

Hunter's favorite thing is his PlayStation. "I play cars because you get to race," he said. Hunter does not, however, plan to drag race with Dad,

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and Mackenzie will not, either. She once told her folks she wanted to get a Junior Drag Racing certificate. "But Mama says, 'No,'" Jimmy said. "I'm not ready to give up on my kids," Lisa said. "Mine is strictly hobby," Jimmy assured her.

The whole family watches out for Lisa's comfort. A special room off the family room is known as Granny's Room. "This is where my mom stayed when I went through chemo," said Lisa, who was diagnosed with breast cancer in June 2007. Here, Lisa decorates with family treasures. "I use my Grandmother Elsie Mann's coverlet on the bed which Grandfather bought for her when they got married about 75 years ago. And I set out on the matching dresser the hand-crocheted dresser scarves with MANN designed into the center." Two

other gems are the Anne Geddes-style photos of Mackenzie and Hunter as babes, swimming in the backyard pool.

Photos of family are the prize collection in the family room. "These pictures are the only clutter I have," Lisa said, referring to the large assortment of photos picturing a myriad of cousins, each of whom are so close, they are like siblings to Lisa. The dining room also pays homage to family. "Jimmy and I have large families. We've been blessed to be around them a lot," Lisa said. "Everything in the hutch are wedding gifts!"

The nearby kitchen is so tidy it tells the truth: "We do not cook a lot around here. Jimmy cooks on the grill, but even that comes in spurts, since he works about 75 hours per week," Lisa explained.

"Simplicity is our motto," she continued. Jimmy enjoys hard work, whether around the house or out on the job. He is a homebody when he can be at home. "My new construction business is year-round, so you don't

know what to expect." Neighbors can expect the Prescher's yard to look perfect. "Jimmy doesn't leave the mowing undone." Lisa keeps her focus on her family. "Movies don't interest me at all," she said. "Any clutter takes me away from my children."

Last fall, the doctors declared that her body had gotten rid of the clutter of cancer! "I'm blessed to be able to be here for my kids," said Lisa, whose studies were in accounting, making her the natural candidate for doing the book work for Jimmy's business. She keeps even this simple, using a desktop computer and an efficient filing system to keep "the office" within a three-square-foot area between the kitchen and the dining room.

"Through our business we sponsor children to play sports in Burleson Youth Association and to go to church camps," Lisa said. "Whenever we see children in need, we want to help." Not surprisingly, the Prescher's other motto is: "Give more than we take." **TODAY**



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Ghost Writing

— By Melissa Rawlins

During these long, cold winter nights, Dale Dexheimer can usually count on finding his wife and the red Siamese, Ming Too Titian, at the computer in their daughter's old bedroom. In the company of the cat, Pat Dexheimer writes through the darkness, sometimes into the dawn.

Some days, Pat can be found tiptoeing through other people's attics with her Gauss meter held high and her eyebrows arched as watchfully as Dale's. He guards his wife, while Pat looks for ghosts. These experiences, plus all the historic information Pat can verify, are the elements she has been translating into a book.

"This book is probably going to be called *Ghosts of Burleson* or *Burleson's Ghosts*," said Pat, who plans her first published work to be a historical account of ghostly happenings in Burleson, mainly centered in Old Town. The Burleson Heritage Foundation will help Pat publish the book, which was inspired at a BHF Christmas Party where Bettie Bailey was telling ghost stories.

"Dorothy Nash and I thought it would be great to do a book, and she goes along on a lot of the investigations," Pat explained. She was a perfect candidate to write the book since she was already a member of Maverick Paranormal Research.

Pat has been required to learn some new skills, including the use of some interesting tools. "One of my toys is also a cat toy," she grinned while teasing Ming Too with an ephemeral red dot on the Persian rug. "This laser thermometer helps you determine cold and hot spots." She and Dale have tested their whole house. "We know that sometimes we get visitors," Pat said. "Usually your body senses it, plus your instruments pick it up."

"Usually the spirits are just passing through," she explained. "Sometimes they follow you home, and you have to send

them home. I just tell them, 'This is not home; you need to go back or you need to cross over.'"

Once she sends them away, Pat's free to do what she does so well: communicate and express. "I'm telling stories, and not telling my stories, rather telling somebody else's," she explained. Writing is second-nature for Pat. Through a 40-year career, she devoted her energies teaching writing to elementary students in Burleson.

"Now, as I write this book, I am trying to figure out why the spirits want their stories told, and what they're hoping to gain."

"Part of the art is the sifting," Pat said, "and it's an intuitive process. This I can use; that I can't use. This needs to go here." Her collection of raw

material comes from a variety of sources through her connections with the Johnson County Historical Commission, including microfiche from the courthouse and scrapbooks donated by old-timers.

Adding to the history in the book, Pat will address what she calls science. "I'll describe what we've run into, what works for us. For instance, we have a douser in our group. He can do the grave sites, and many times we've been able to communicate [with the apparitions]. Through our work in the cemeteries, we've been able to figure out a little more



ARTS NOW

about where they were and who they were," she noted.

"Not everybody in Maverick thinks that's exactly scientific, but my feeling is you use what works. My mission is to communicate [with the spirits] to find out what their need is. Like the one house we investigated, we were called in because the owner couldn't sleep. The reason was [the ghosts] wanted attention to save the cemeteries from abandonment, destruction, desecration," Pat said. She heeded their call, and now works with the Tarrant County Historical Commission to save several cemeteries in the Burleson area.

The ghost stories Pat compiles are narratives of what living people tell her happens in their buildings. "We go in and try to discount ghosts. We check out electrical with the Gauss meter, which measures electromagnetic fields, trying to find what could be the source of any strange noises. Then I describe what we find. I have some pictures of some things," she added. "If a spirit is there they will show up on the infrared cameras. Sometimes you have partial apparitions, or an energy field (we call this ghost fog or ghost mist) and sometimes you catch objects moving for no reason."

"Then I have what happens after we investigate as well. With tape recorders you pick up what we call the EVPs, which are electronic voice phenomenon that show up after you've left your tape recorder running, and you check it later and there's somebody telling you different things and it's nobody in your group. They're telling me things like: 'Stop this. I want you out.' Who they're talking to," Pat said, "is to be decided."

The fairest judge will be Pat's readers. "I'm sure it's going to grow, but we'll see." After writing this book, Pat also has stories to publish for Cleburne, Grandview and Hill County. "There are always other people in local history to write about." **ARTS NOW**

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**Sports
NOW**

Running for the World!

— By Melissa Rawlins

Four generations of Marruffo cowboys have generated one hot little barrel racer. Her name is Felisa, and this year she intends to beat all her previous times. Last fall, Felisa placed fifth at her first run in poles at the national Playday competition in Bowie. By the time she turns 20, Felisa hopes to be earning her college tuition from her horse. "I want to win the world!"

Such lofty goals seem perfectly reasonable to 13-year-old Felisa, who lives next door to her steady supporters, Memaw and Papa (otherwise known as Virginia and Skeeter Marruffo). "Those two are at every one of her competitions," Skeeter's son, Eric, bragged. He has been giving Felisa lessons in the family's shared arena since she was old enough to sit on a horse. Only recently has Felisa's mother, Lena, started to ride. "I was always afraid that if anyone's going to get hurt," Lena said, "it's going to be me." Watching Felisa has made an impression, though. "Now, I want to run, but Eric wants me to learn to walk!"

Running full-out is Felisa's favorite gear. "That's how I get my times," she grinned, describing the fun she has performing in Playday events. As the year goes on, she needs to beat her own times in each event: Spurs (her record is 9 seconds); Poles (her record is 26 seconds); Barrels (her record is 19 seconds); Golfette (her record is 12 seconds); Flags (her record is 9 seconds); and Pylons (her record is 5 seconds).

She explained, "I have to control the horse while going as fast as I can without knocking anything over." Her dad continued, "You want it to feel as if you're going slow motion — like you're sitting in a big comfy chair, but you're going as fast as you can! Then, everything is perfect."

Felisa admitted she rides for more than sheer joy. "I want to win! I run and remember my time, and concentrate on making a clean run and a fast run," she said. "I use my outside foot to keep my horse tight, and my inside foot to make him pull away."

Her dad coaches her from the back of his own horse. Eric said, "My dad stands out there with her, too. And my 25-year-old niece, Desiree, who has won just about all the awards you can win for barrel racing, she also helps train Felisa, along with Timmy Brooks."

When Felisa is not on her horse practicing precision, she has other work to do. "My least favorite parts are feeding the horses, putting them up, catching them, bathing them, saddling them," she said. "At the end of a 5-hour Playday, it's not too fun to clean up." But daughter and dad do it together, every time.

This type of dedication is part of what helps Felisa in other areas of her life, especially school. "Math and science are probably my favorite subjects. I want to be a vet, because I love animals," the

"I ride two horses, Buttercup and Bongo. The only way for me to get faster is to ride a faster horse."

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Sports NOW

seventh-grader explained. "I know school's more important; that's why I do Playdays on the weekends and on Friday afternoons." To help her have time for rodeo, Felisa's brother, Quaid, tutors her in schoolwork when he is done practicing for his Burleson High School drum line. Somewhere during the week, she and her family also find time for riding with the school's rodeo team and Bar Cross, the church riding club. Felisa has also won plenty of ribbons in the Johnson County Junior Sheriff's Posse. "I've ridden with them since I was 11," said Felisa, who explained it was in their rodeo that she won her first ribbon. "It was Goat-tying. I just needed to run and jump as fast as I could and pull the rope as fast as I could to make sure that goat did not kick out. It was 10th place, the cutoff, but it was a ribbon and I was proud."

"I'd like to be one of the people that other young barrel racers look up to. I look up to my cousin, Desirée," Felisa said. "To be professional you have to be concentrating on winning, be really fast, and you have to really want it. I get kind of mad when I don't win," she admitted, "because I feel I should have done better. I just shake it off and hope I do better next time."

Her dad, mom and grandparents do a little coaching when Felisa's mad. "That's something my Dad taught me in softball. 'No crying on the field.' I talk it out with my family in the trailer, and then it's all gone," she shared. Another unique part of Felisa's training in sportsmanship comes from running against her dad at Playdays, where they both compete against each others' posted times.

The better and faster Felisa gets, the closer she comes to winning the world championship of barrel racing. What will she do with the thousands of dollars she stands to win? "I'll buy stuff for Papa. He's the reason I get to run in all the Playdays!" **NOW**

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Crossroads of Life

— By Dia Catalani

The Lucas & Blessing establishment is a unique asset to the Burleson community. On one property, residents and their families and friends are able to celebrate and create some of life's most memorable moments. In a tasteful pairing of new beginnings and final goodbyes, the bright white Lucas & Blessing Wedding Chapel & Reception Hall towers beside the Lucas & Blessing Funeral Home. Site of a former Episcopal church and school, the two buildings are separated by lush landscaping and a parking courtyard.

Managed by Jason Arellano, the two landmark buildings are one of the area's only facilities where families can attend church services, marry by their choice of clergy or observe the passing of a loved one. "We are all about what each family wants," Jason said. "People come from different experiences and each has their own preferences. We adapt to whatever it is that they prefer, whether it deals with their faith or the overall mood of the event. Everyone is different, and we ensure each family we will do whatever we can to abide by their wishes."

The chapel's design is reminiscent of a country church, with its high-beamed ceiling, soft lighting, wispy white window coverings and comfortable, yet simple, chair seating. The crisp, elegant design is carried into an adjoining reception hall, which features a beautifully finished plank wood ceiling and rooms for the bridal party and groomsmen, food preparation and separate common area.

Lucas & Blessing Funeral Home is a full-service facility and part of a family of Texas funeral homes, including one located in nearby

Mansfield. Experienced and compassionate staff members ensure families the utmost in personalized care. "From the minute we receive that phone call, we

are on our way to meet the family. No one wants to have to wait for someone from a funeral home when their loved one has passed away," Jason said. "From the beginning to the closing of the service, that family and their needs are our focus."

Lucas & Blessing Funeral Home is charged with the management of Burleson Memorial Cemetery. Families can contact pre-need counselors Judee



For new beginnings or final goodbyes counselor Bill Conley, left, and manager Jason Arellano provide families personalized and compassionate care.

Business NOW

Brown, Larry Foster or Jason to discuss services that can be arranged months or years in advance or for a loved one under hospice care. Jason said many families appreciate that throughout a loved one's service, a single person serves as



their contact and personally assures their wishes are addressed as requested.

Families who live elsewhere are offered assistance in the selection of clergy and florists, for example, or guidance in the attention to family matters. Jason began his education as a funeral service provider at the young age of 17, taking part in a high school mentoring program. In later years, he received training from a former children's pastor. "When people come up to me and say, 'That was a wonderful service,' I thank them and tell them that the family handled it and that everything was done according to their instructions," Jason said. "We hold ourselves accountable for every detail so that if there ever is a question, we can assure the family that we personally took care of each issue."

The family owned group of Lucas & Blessing funeral homes includes locations in Grapevine, Hurst, Fort Worth and Keller. In Burleson, Lucas & Blessing Wedding Chapel & Reception Hall and the Lucas & Blessing Funeral Home are located just east of Southwest Wilshire Boulevard at 518 Southwest Johnson Avenue. For more information, call (817) 295-9000. **NOW**

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*Becca Baird, Project
Success Counselor at
Kerr Middle School*

Trust — the Key to Success

— By Melissa Rawlins

What do you tell a seventh-grader who has confided in you that his uncle is pressuring him to smoke marijuana? Becca Baird has an answer on the tip of her tongue: “I have found that students are a lot smarter than they give themselves credit for. I tell a student experiencing such stress to use the strategy of optimism.”

In Becca’s role as a visiting REACH counselor at Kerr Middle School, she teaches students to practice a three-step strategy to maintain optimism in tough times. First, make a list on paper of the skills you have to handle the situation that you face. Second, make a list on paper of the pros and the cons of the situation, and then make your choice about how you will behave. Finally, trust that you are making the right choice for you, and seek help from someone you trust to stay strong in the choice you have made.

Becca explained that this strategy has worked for her. “I’ve been taught to handle situations in my own life, and because I am a Christian, I know I do not handle it entirely on my own.” In Becca’s one-on-one classroom and group prevention education sessions at Kerr, she stresses that it is important to maintain a good relationship with family and friends who can act as a support network when times get tough.

Becca’s style with the students is very positive, goal-oriented and existential. “You find your meaning and pull out positive

things and go through the situation,” she said. “It gets easier the more you go through these situations. I think it takes more effort to be upset and dwell on it, but it’s easier in the long run to stay positive.”

This strategy comes only partly from Becca’s education. “I have been through the whole divorce thing, since my parents separated when I was young. I was shaped by this, as well as by my education at Southwestern Assemblies of God University, where the professors teach with both academics and their own lifestyle. Because I got both my bachelor’s and my master’s degrees there, I was able to be around my professors a lot.” She received from them what she is working to give back to youth.

“When a teacher helps a seventh-grader learn to be organized, the student learns a beneficial life skill. A lot of teachers at Kerr are caring and genuine, which shows people how to be real. Academically, they’re equipping students to make it from one grade to the next,” Becca shared. “I am equipping them with skills and strategies to make decisions that will benefit their lives.”

Stress plays a heavy role in the 11 - 14 age group to whom Becca gives her attention. “Their stressors include peer pressure, changing bodies, keeping up with school and grades, performing through athletics, maintaining friends and relationships with family. I think growing up is stressful because it feels like

Education **NOW**

everything is so fast-paced now," Becca said. It almost looks like the students are always just trying to keep up. I feel their stress!"

"I encourage them to make choices that are good for them. I say, 'Hopefully, you will respect yourself enough to make the right choice.' Most importantly," she added, "I tell the students they should never feel they have to handle situations by themselves. There are people who can help them — they just have to let people know."

One activity Becca uses to teach them to trust others is a fun ball game. "I have them hold on to balls and name them stressors. Then I start throwing those balls at one child one at a time, and eventually they have to drop them because they just cannot hold them all. Then I ask them, what could you have done to hold on to them all? I want them to think: 'I could ask for help.' But very few of the students think that. Instead, they think, 'I have to study more, practice more, do more.' My goal is to get them to think, 'I respect myself; I will rely on my support systems.' That will keep them on the right path," she explained.

"The students have to make decisions about everything, and hopefully they'll learn from their choices and then make right ones. No one is perfect," Becca pointed out. How does she deal with the student who gets upset when they do not make a right decision and are confronted with their imperfection? "I tell them, 'You never know what's going to happen. There are times things don't work out even when we give 100 percent.' I know that what makes us or breaks us is what we do when things do not go right. You will be broken if you let the situation handle you instead of you handling the situation."

"Personally," Becca said, "I get more out of life being optimistic than pessimistic. And if you have only one life, then you may as well get as much as you can out of it!" **NOW**

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Around Town NOW



The Chamber held ribbon cuttings, at left from top to bottom: Burleson Wellness Center, Century 21 and National Creative. Burleson High School band student Lonnie Kitts, top right, played "Taps" during a Veteran's Day ceremony at Renfro Square. Evin Garza and his mom, Jessica, directly above, enjoyed a stop at the Chamber of Commerce.

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Burleson firefighters on the Red Team, top left, won the trophy in last month's Blue versus Red Charity Football Game, during which 400 toys were collected for needy children. Rotarian Wayne West, top right, handed out dictionaries at Frazier Elementary School. Sgt. Hill, coordinator of the Citizens on Patrol program and his daughter, Haidyn, directly above, join with COP/CPA alumni members in an effort to support the troops. A gentleman, middle left, looks over the BHF history found inside the interurban. The Burleson High School ROTC, bottom right, posted colors during the Veteran's ceremony at Renfro Square.



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Look Who's Cooking

— By Stephanie Brewer

IN THE KITCHEN WITH MARY KAY MCPHERSON

TAYLOR'S FAVORITE MEAT PATTIES AND TOMATO SAUCE

Feeds 4 - 6 and can be easily multiplied.

- 1 14.5-oz. can crushed tomatoes
- 1 15-oz. can tomato sauce
- 1 cup water
- 1 Tbsp. beef base (may substitute bullion)
- 3 - 4 drops Tabasco
- 1/4 tsp. celery salt
- salt and pepper to taste
- 2 lbs. ground beef

In a 6-quart pan, combine crushed tomatoes, tomato sauce and water. Stir in beef base, Tabasco, celery salt, salt and pepper. Let simmer over medium to low heat. Form half-dollar size meat patties. Cook meat patties in a large frying pan until very brown. As each patty finishes cooking, add it to the tomato sauce mixture. Simmer until the sauce thickens, at least 30

minutes. We love this served with mashed potatoes, using the tomato sauce as gravy for the potatoes.

DAVID'S CHICKEN

Feeds 4 - 6 and can be easily multiplied.

- olive oil or butter, enough for sautéing
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 - 2 lbs. chicken tenders (non-breaded)
- 1 5-oz. bottle Worcestershire sauce
- 1 pkg. angel hair pasta
- 2 good-sized tomatoes, diced

In a large skillet, add butter or olive oil and chopped onion. Cook over medium heat until onions are soft and/or transparent. Add chicken tenders to pan and cover with Worcestershire sauce (about 1/2 bottle); cook on medium high heat until liquid begins to get very thick. Turn

heat off. In a medium saucepan, bring water to a boil with a small amount of olive oil; cook the angel hair pasta according to package directions. When pasta is ready, drain into a colander; set aside. Serve chicken and Worcestershire sauce over pasta. Top with diced tomatoes.

SOUTHWEST QUICHE

Great for parties, showers or brunch.

- 2 4-oz. cans diced or chopped green chilies
- 1 lb. shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1 lb. shredded sharp cheddar
- 6 eggs, beaten
- 6 oz. half-and-half
- 6 oz. milk
- 1 tsp. cumin
- 5 drops Tabasco sauce
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 1/2 tsp. powdered chicken bouillon



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1 Tbsp. dried cilantro

Preheat oven to 375 F. Empty 2 cans of chilies into a 9 x 13-inch pan. Top with mozzarella cheese, then sharp cheddar cheese. Beat eggs and all remaining ingredients together. Pour mixture over cheese and bake at 375 F for approximately 30 minutes or until edges are crispy.

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Bush's pinto beans

1 10-oz. can Ro-Tel tomatoes

1/2 tsp. cumin

1 Tbsp. beef base

1 Tbsp. dried cilantro

Place a colander in the sink and pour the can of beans into it. Run cool water over the beans, rinsing well, until the water is clear. Place the beans in a pan and add enough water to barely cover the tops. Add Ro-Tel, cumin, beef base and cilantro. Warm over medium to high heat.

MIMI'S MISSISSIPPI MUD CAKE

Our family's favorite dessert.

CAKE:

4 eggs, beaten

2 cups sugar

1/3 cup cocoa

1 cup broken pecans

1 1/2 cups flour

2 sticks butter, melted

1 tsp. vanilla

1 7-oz. jar marshmallow cream

ICING:

1/3 cup cocoa

1 box powdered sugar

6 Tbsp. milk

1 tsp. vanilla

1 stick butter, softened

CAKE: Mix together first 7 ingredients and pour into greased, 9 x 13-inch cake pan. Bake at 350 F for 30 minutes. The cake will not appear to be done. Remove it from the oven anyway! Spread the marshmallow cream evenly over the cake. (TIP: Put the marshmallow cream in the microwave for 20 - 30 seconds and it will slide right out of the jar!) ICING: Mix all ingredients together and pour over the marshmallow cream. Drag a spatula or knife gently, back and forth across the top to make the chocolate and marshmallow look pretty.



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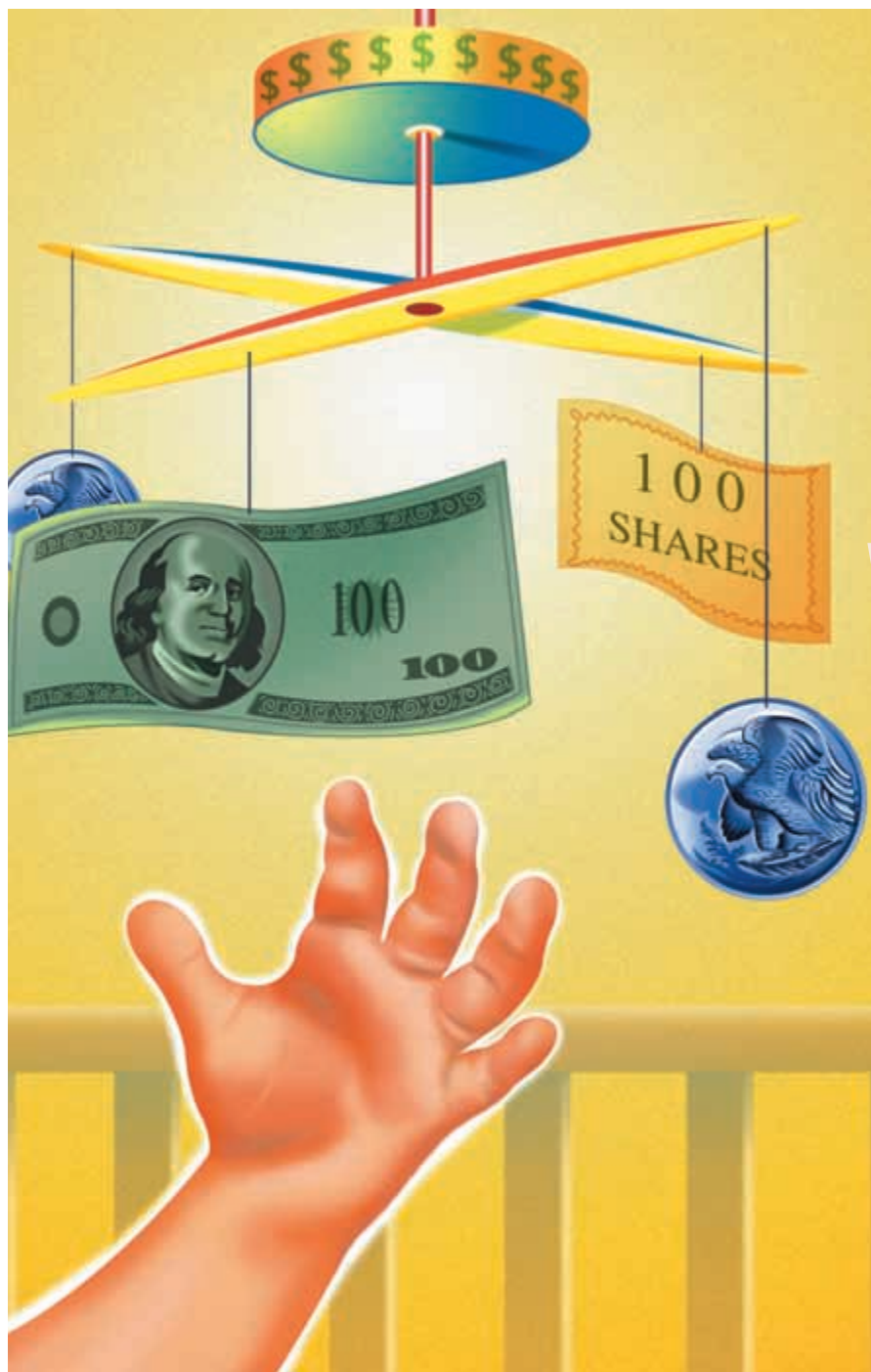
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Finance **NOW**

Preparing for Your Financial Future

— By Sharon Robinson

When most of us think of investing, we immediately think of investing for retirement. While that is an important aspect to be considered, there are other pieces of the puzzle that are also important. Establishing a budget, investing early and regularly, and saving for post-secondary education should also be included.

Establish a budget.

Establishing a budget is a great first step in planning your finances. A budget is a useful tool for recording all of your income and expenses. By writing down how much money you earn and spend each month, you can see where your money is going. This will assist you in being able to prioritize your expenses and needs. Any money left over can be used for saving and investing. Even a small amount of money invested regularly can help.

Invest early and regularly, even small amounts.

One reason to start a regular investment program early is to give your money as much time as possible to grow through compounding. If you have not started investing yet, then consider starting now and getting into the habit. Just remember that the amounts you

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invest do not have to be large, especially if the money is taken directly out of each paycheck. You will be surprised how little you miss money you do not see. If you are already investing every month, look for ways to contribute more through bonuses and monetary gifts.

The value of starting early is illustrated by a 25-year-old investing \$2,000 per year for 10 years at a hypothetical 10 percent fixed rate of return with all gains and dividends reinvested. This 25-year-old would accumulate \$672,998 by age 65. A 35-year-old investing \$2,000 per year for 30 years and reinvesting all gains and dividends will have \$400,275 when he or she reaches 65. These examples are for illustrative purposes only, do not represent any particular investment and do not take taxes into consideration. The return and principal value of any investment will fluctuate so that your investment, when cashed in, may be worth more or less than its original cost. While a 10 percent rate of return may not be representative of investments currently or historically available, the hypothetical illustration does serve to reinforce that starting early can be important.

College tuition planning.

Preparing for your children's or grandchildren's college education is important, especially when tuition costs are rising every year. One possibility might include investing in a Coverdell Education Savings Account, which allows tax-free withdrawals for qualified education expenses. These can include room, board and tuition for elementary, secondary and higher education. You might also want to look into prepaid tuition plans. Many states offer programs that allow parents to lock in the cost of tomorrow's college tuition and fees for about what it would cost today. **NOW**

Sharon Robinson is a State Farm agent based in Burleson.




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January 2008

Community Calendar

Mondays

The Table Tennis Club, free and open to all ages, Burleson Community Center, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Call (817) 295-8168.

Tuesdays

Young Professionals networking group, designed to grow your business, meets for lunch at Blue Mesa Grill on University in Fort Worth, 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Call (817) 295-6121.

Wednesdays

Making It Happen networking group, designed to grow your business, meets for breakfast at Cracker Barrel on Alsbury, 8:00 - 9:00 a.m. Call (817) 295-6121.

Thursdays

Toastmasters meets at the Burleson Chamber of Commerce, 1044 S.W. Wilshire Ave., 7:00 - 8:00 a.m. Call (817) 295-6121.

Making It Happen networking group meets for lunch at Ryan's Grill on Hwy. 174, Wilshire Ave., 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Call (817) 295-6121.

Fridays

Making It Happen networking group meets for lunch at Ryan's Grill on Hwy. 174, Wilshire Ave., 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Call (817) 295-6121.

January 1

New Year's Day! Burleson City Offices closed for the holidays. No garbage collection. (817) 447-5400.

January 1-4

Burleson Independent Schools closed for the holidays. (817) 245-1000.

January 3

Friends of the Library, 10:00 a.m., Burleson Public Library,

248 S.W. Johnson Ave. (817) 295-6131.

January 5, 12, 19 and 26

Defensive Driving taught by Greg Solomon (fees support Educational Scholarships). Classes held at the Burleson Chamber of Commerce, 1044 S.W. Wilshire Ave., 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Call (817) 295-6121 for more information.

January 7

Students return to classes in Burleson Independent Schools. (817) 245-1000.

January 7 - 11

Special Yard Waste Collection Week. Approved paper lawn waste bags are available at your local retailers. The waste will be taken for mulching at Burleson's Compost Center, 620 Memorial Drive, where free mulch is available for all Burleson residents. Call (817) 447-5410, ext. 271.

January 8

Burleson Heritage Foundation, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m., Heritage Visitors Center, 124 W. Ellison (the old Interurban Building in Old Town). Call (817) 447-1575 for more information.

January 10 and 24

Burleson City Council Meeting, 7:00 p.m. at City Hall. (817) 447-5400.

January 16

Pancake Lunch at the Senior Activity Center. (817) 295-6131.

January 17

Due to the popularity of the lunchtime Mystery Book Club group, the Burleson Public Library will begin hosting an evening monthly book club for mystery readers. The Friends of the Library will provide sandwiches and refreshments for

readers who meet to discuss the book *California Girl* by T. Jefferson Parker at the Burleson Public Library, 11:30 a.m. or 6:30 p.m. Call (817) 295-6131, ext. 265.

January 18

Getting to Know Your Chamber orientation, for anybody desiring to learn how to market their business, presented by Greg Solomon at the Burleson Chamber of Commerce, 1044 S.W. Wilshire Ave., 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. Call (817) 295-6121.

Teen Scavenger Hunt at the Burleson Community Center, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. (817) 447-5410.

January 18 and 21

Early Release from Burleson Independent Schools on Friday the 18th. No classes on Monday the 21st, in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday. (817) 245-1000.

January 22

The Burleson Public Library — in conjunction with Meals On Wheels of Johnson and Ellis counties, the Caryl Foundation and the Area Agency on Aging of North Central Texas — hosts a seminar dealing with depression, drugs, alcohol and aging, at 6:30 p.m. at the library, located at 248 S.W. Johnson Ave. For more information, contact (817) 295-6131, ext. 264 or (817) 558-2840.

January 24

Annual Chamber of Commerce Banquet, 6:30 p.m., Burleson High School Cafeteria. Call (817) 295-6121.

January 28

Board Meeting for the Burleson Independent School District, 6:30 p.m., 1160 S.W. Wilshire Blvd. (817) 245-1000.



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