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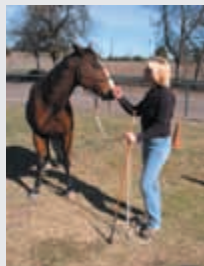
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Jill Guerber and Charlie Boy train for
a horsemanship program.*

Photo by Ivey Photography.

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Midlothian NOW

Editor's Note

Happy New Year, Midlothian!

Well, did you keep last year's resolutions? Yeah ... me neither. If you did, I want to hear from you. Maybe you can inspire the rest of us this year! Some people take very seriously the prospect of new beginnings. Bill Curry, a prison ministry volunteer, teaches inmates how to re-integrate into society when they leave prison. Enjoy his story in this issue. Jill Guerber clearly recognizes the value of a new beginning. Read and be inspired in SportsNow.

Congratulations to students Lydia Morris, Kevin Ellis, Paige Horton and Garrett Cornett, who placed first in the National FFA Poultry Evaluation Career Development Event held in Indianapolis, Indiana on October 26, 2007! They competed against top contenders from all 50 states, as well as Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Well done!

As always, I look forward to bringing you more interesting stories about the accomplishments of your neighbors, their beautiful and unique homes and those wonderful cooks who make everyone's dinner hour special! If you know of someone I should contact, you can reach me at (972) 775-5095 or btryon.nowmag@sbcglobal.net.

Betty Tryon
MidlothianNOW Editor



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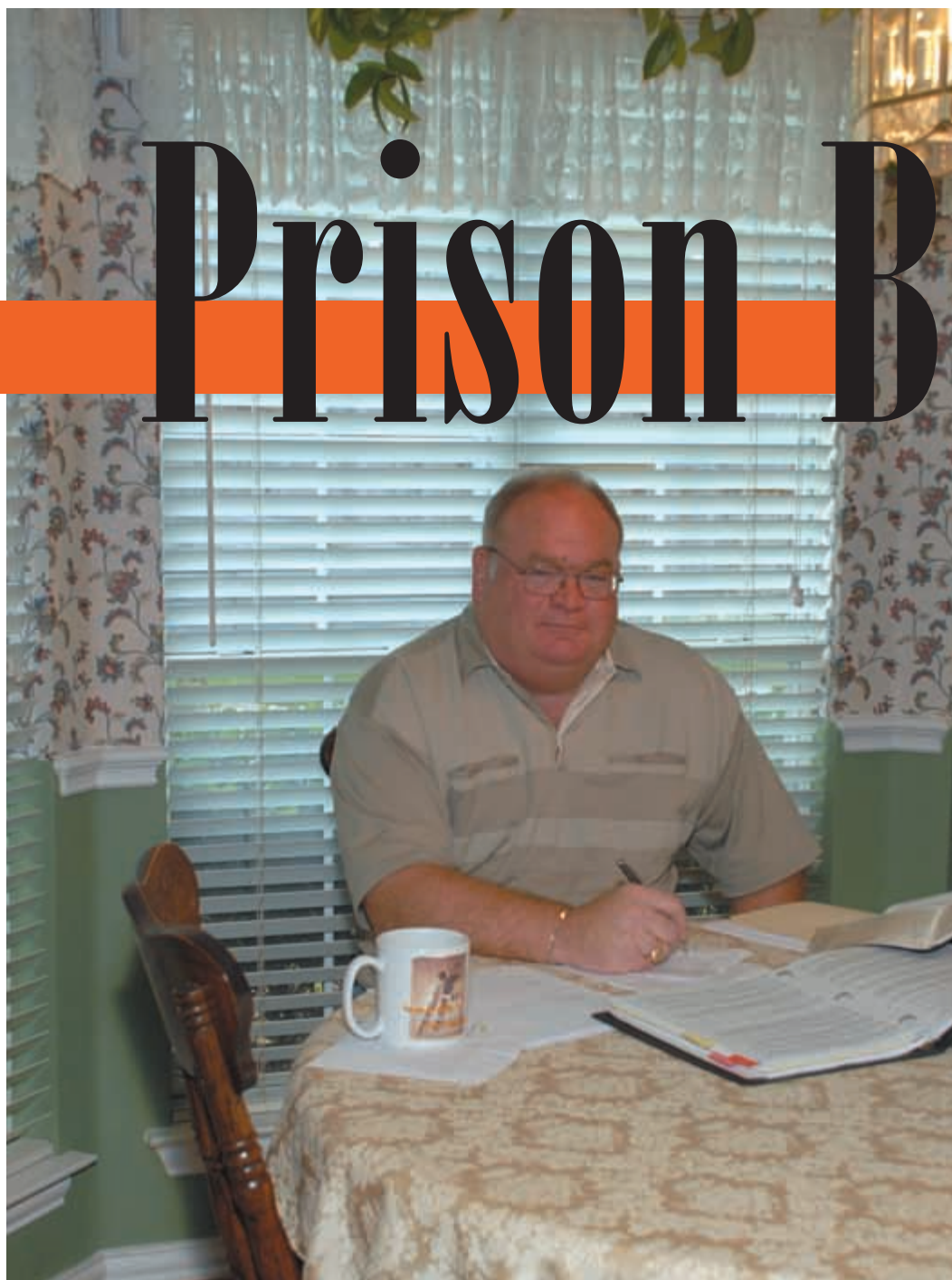
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Prison Break

From the Inside Out

— By Betty Tryon



Men in orange suits entered the cafeteria that still carried the lingering leftover smells of dinner. Their spirits were high and they were unfailingly polite and very appreciative for the visitors. Bill Curry, a volunteer with Prison Ministry, has been ministering at the Sanders Estes Unit in Venus, Texas for 13 years. Members of his church, Midlothian Bible Church, joined him to encourage and entertain the inmates for the evening. As the musicians with their amplifiers and instruments erupted into song, the prisoners responded with great enthusiasm.

The beginning of Bill's volunteerism

into the prisons began at Dominguez State Jail in San Antonio, Texas. He explained, "Bill Brashear kept nagging me to go with him on his visits to Dominguez Jail in San Antonio. When we got there, an inmate came up to us and started talking to me. Bill Brashear took off and left me there with the inmate and I was terrified. It just so happened this guy was the inmate version of a chaplain, and he looked at me and said, 'God told me to talk to you today.' I thought, *Yeah right, God talks to you?* He then asked how he could pray for me and I mumbled something like, 'Help me be a better

husband and person.' The inmate said, 'That's not what you need prayer about; you need prayer about you and your relationship with your son.'"

That remark got Bill's attention in a huge way, because he had never met that man before, yet the man had pinpointed one of Bill's greatest concerns. Returning home from San Antonio, he passed the Sanders Estes Unit in Venus, Texas and decided to check the possibility of ministering there. After he filled out an application, had a background check and completed 10 hours of training, he was given permission to volunteer at the prison

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teaching a 12-16 week series called "Preparing for Success on the Outside" by John Leonardson.

Bill said, "This is a program put together by the Coalition of Prison Evangelists (COPE). One of the lessons is a numbers game where we start with 100 percent, go to 80 percent, then 20 percent and lastly, the word,



"Men are released with nowhere to go, with no plan of what to do."

you. The 100 percent represents the prison population now. Eighty percent is the percentage of inmates who will return to prison after they have been released. Twenty percent is the percentage of Christian inmates who will return, and then there is you. We ask them which one are they? How will they fit in the numbers game?"

"There is a saying that if you don't know where you are going to go, you will get there every time. Men are released with nowhere to go, with no plan of what to do." One of the pictured illustrations Bill likes to use is of an inmate digging underground toward his freedom. He does not know it, but a few feet in front of him is the sewage holding tank. The caption reads: "He didn't plan to fail; he only failed to plan." Bill helps the inmates plan the right way.

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where the wife has been taking care of everything. They can't just return and take over. We help prepare them for what they may face. While they are in here, they are encouraged to keep in touch with their families, with their kids. If they have the money for a stamp, then write a letter to let kids know they are thinking about them."

Of course, not every child will respond with warm, welcoming



thoughts to a parent in prison. Bill said, "There was one guy who prayed and prayed for his child to send him a letter. He finally got one, but when he showed up for the next session, he was sad. When asked what happened, he responded with, 'The first page was hi and how are you, and then she wrote six pages about what a lousy person I am.'" Bill, in his inimitable way, said, "Well, you got your letter."

One characteristic of Bill's personality is his ability to be honest in no uncertain terms. This has not escaped the attention of the inmates. Some of them tell others not to take a certain class, rather take Bill's class. "I have heard guys say I tell it like it is. They can spot a phony," he said. "I have had guys repeat the class several times, because they get something out of it. I try to add different things or present things in a different way to keep them interested and learning. They watch a lot of TV here, and that is their reality. TV tells them, 'You deserve this.' I tell them, 'You deserve nothing; you've earned nothing, and no one owes you



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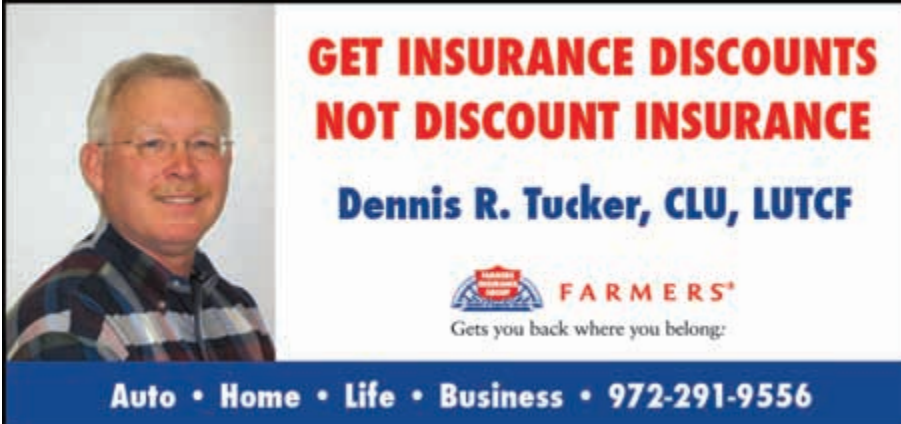
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anything.' I have guys complaining that the system sets them up to fail. I tell them, 'Then don't help the system out.' For example, a guy gets out on parole and part of his parole is not to go where alcohol is served. He takes his girlfriend to a dance where liquor is served, a fight breaks out. He is not involved, but he gets arrested because he violated his parole by being in the wrong place."

Bill meets with prisoners once a week and sometimes he has assistance from other Prison Ministry team members. He said, "Ron Lunt helps with the financial instruction, such as how to keep a checkbook and how to



manage your finances. Some of them look like a deer caught in the headlights; they don't understand any of it. We teach them how to budget their money for food, gas, insurance, clothing and other basic necessities. We tell them if they don't have a car, then the money that would've gone for gas and insurance should be put aside for savings. Paul Harris, another member of the team, helps with interviewing skills. He gives practical help, such as assisting them with a resumé, teaching them how to fill out an application, how to dress and behave for the interview."

Bill has been asked why he bothers with prisoners, and he responded, "My Bible has a verse that says, 'When I was in prison, you visited me.' Also, Christ died for everyone." Bill Curry and other members of the prison ministry are helping inmates break free from the pattern of irresponsible behavior. Their success helps them and makes the world safer for all of us, by helping prisoners procure a second chance on the outside. **END**

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Blessed

Beyond Measure

— By Sandra McIntosh

When building their new four-bedroom, three-and-one-half-bath home, Stony and Kim Halbrook had specific ideas in mind from the very beginning. The builder, John Houston of J. Houston Homes, was able to successfully take Kim's ideas and incorporate them into the beautiful abode the couple shares today with their three daughters, Lauren, Brittany and Lindsey, ages 18, 16 and 11, respectively. "It's amazing what he and his crew were able to do," Stony said. "The attention to detail throughout the house truly is a work of art."

Stony will be the first to admit that he had very little to do with the decisions made during the construction process of the single-story, traditional-style home. Leaving it with Kim meant he had left it in very capable hands. "I was here every day, nonstop throughout the process," Kim said. "John was unbelievable to deal with and incredible to work with." Customer service



At Home With

Stony and Kim *Halbrook*





is one of the most important aspects in a venture of this magnitude, and John did not let the Halbrooks down. In fact, his work ethic rendered the experience, in retrospect, easy and pain-free. "The customer service was second to none," Stony said, referring to how they were treated before, during and following the completion of the home. "We've been in the house for 18 months, and if there are any problems or concerns, we still get the same great service."

The first home Stony and Kim designed, contracted out and had built was located in Ovilla. Stony would commute, as he still does, to and from his job in Arlington, while Kim, a busy, stay-at-home mom, spent her days running to and from school. The main reason they decided to relocate to Midlothian was so the girls would be closer to their schools, as well as their



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friends and their extracurricular activity — cheerleading, both at school and at the competitive level. When it came time to find a builder to take the ideas, which Kim had secured in a binder known simply as “the book,” Stony looked to John, whom he had met through the lumber business he is in. “I just can’t say enough good things about John and his staff of workers,” Stony added. “They are a special group of guys.”

The crew of eight to 10 construction workers, of whom Stony referred, is not

merely skilled with a hammer and a bag of nails. “They are artists,” Kim said, agreeing wholeheartedly with her husband of 19 years. “I had a specific idea for the entryway. One of the guys grabbed a piece of 12” x 12” MDF and started drawing on it.” As a visitor sitting on the leather sofa in the family room, you can see in all its grander what that guy drew according to Kim’s description.

Wood barreling is the focal point of the ceiling, which measures 15 feet above the floor. An oversized floral



arrangement takes its rightful place atop the lighted art niche. The Scripture verse directly above the niche was hand painted by Julie Law, better known in these parts as the Painted Lady. The hand-scraped hardwood floors, resembling salvaged barn wood with years of character, are found in the entryway, as well as the study, the kitchen and the family room. “The dents and scrapes add personality to the floor,” Kim said, “while removing the stress of dropping something and marring the floors.”

The dark, clear, alder wood cabinetry found in the study, located to the left of the entry, blends warmly with walls

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treated in a soft shade of gold. The formal dining area, on the opposite side of the entry, is bathed in a deep, brick red. A curio cabinet in one corner is home to some very special memorabilia. "The old violin belonged to my great-great-grandfather," Kim said. Lindsey pointed to a large, clear glass vase on the bottom shelf. "That's a memory jar the kids made me," Kim added, with a smile.

The family room, kitchen and breakfast nook are open to one another, giving the area the appearance of a great room. Kim loves the kitchen because of the magnetic pull it has on family and friends. "Everyone seems to end up at the bar," she said, "or in the kitchen." Ideas Kim had for the kitchen were incorporated, and have since become conversation starters. The refrigerator is hard to locate since it blends in beautifully with the cabinets reaching from floor to ceiling. The clue is to look for the antique handle. Learning from their first home, Stony

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and Kim decided to do something different with the cabinets. "The old house had open space above the cabinets," Kim said. "The top shelf with its lights and glass doors is the perfect place for my collection of Silvercrest Fenton China that dates back to the 1940s."

Another of Kim's collections is displayed on one full wall in the breakfast nook. "I've been collecting crosses for about seven years," she

explained. "The cross I made Mom at Mosaic Madness started it all," Lindsey said, smiling. Austin stone was used freely in the kitchen, as well as on the bar and the fireplace. "The wood mantle took four full days to construct," Stony said. "They installed it piece by piece."

The master bedroom has a great view of the backyard. As a family, they look forward to the colder temperatures winter provides. "It's the best time of year to jump in the hot tub," Kim said, adding that Stony will light the see-through fireplace to add ambiance and a bit more warmth. No fewer than six girls will spend the night at the Halbbrook home on Friday night. "It's





a place where everyone is welcome," Brittany said. "Everyone loves our parents, because they are willing to do anything for anyone." Sunday afternoon will find Stony in the media room watching sports.

Stony and Kim are not only well-liked parents; they are also unique individuals, who strongly believe in the power of prayer, and feel as if they have been blessed beyond measure. Lauren, Brittany and Lindsey are learning values the best way — by watching their parents lead by example. "All the bedrooms and the media room are carpeted," Kim said. "We took permanent markers and wrote Scriptures that meant something to us as a family on the concrete."

Building a home upon a firm foundation is key to the long life of any structure, including a new home. Adding faith, prayer and a few Scriptures can only make the staying power that much stronger. The Scripture — Philippians 4:13 — found under the carpet in Brittany's room may say it best for the whole family, "I can do everything through Him who gives me strength." **NOW**

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Classically

Unique

— By Betty Tryon

The cacophony of sound from the instruments filled the room with the auditions for the Ft. Worth Youth Orchestra in full swing. First-timer, Kerri Allred, a freshman at Midlothian High School, was there with the same goal as the other youths — acceptance into the orchestra. While listening to the other musicians fine-tuning their skill with classical pieces, 14-year-old Kerri began to doubt herself. Her mom, Alex, encouraged her to do what she does best. So Kerri stepped on the stage; instead of playing a classical tune on her violin, she played a foot-stomping fiddle song. The dissonance of instruments playing different tunes in the room began to subside as kids stopped practicing and turned to look at the young girl playing the fiddle, trying out for the orchestra.

Kerri recounted her experience, “It was a huge yellow room; the judges were on opposite sides of the room, and we auditioned on the orchestra stage. It was very noisy in there, because those who had not [yet] auditioned were practicing, and those who had finished were leaving. When I was listening to the others practice, I was very impressed with everyone. I was really nervous and my voice was

shaking when I gave my name. I was very excited a week later when I found out I made it.”

Kerri’s journey began long before her first lesson at age 10. Her mom said, “She started begging us to play violin before she was 8. We didn’t think she was serious about it, but now, we wish we had given in sooner. For the first month she felt frustrated playing and wanted to quit. We encouraged her to continue for a few more months.” The rest, as they say, is history.

Kerri’s first introduction to the world of fiddling was through her grandfather John Allred. He gave her

the 94-year-old violin/fiddle she uses. As a country singer with four albums to his name, he belonged to the Old



Time Fiddlers Association. Because of his influence, Kerri and her cousin Colette Boyette have joined the group. The Old Time Fiddle Association

ARTS NOW

wants to preserve music of the past and the art of fiddling. They are eager to have kids join, so they, too, can learn and enjoy the old tunes. During her tryout, Kerri played "Money Musk," a song written in the 1800s and now very popular at fiddle festivals.

The education of Kerri was not limited to fiddle music but included classical, as well. Currently, she has three instructors, who each play a part in teaching her classical and fiddle



Kerri with her grandfather, John Allred.

music. Kerri said, "I learned how to fiddle from my grandfather, but I had to get other teachers for the classical instruction. If you can play classical on the violin, you can play anything. Fiddlers can't necessarily play classical. My grandfather taught my cousin Colette and me how to trick fiddle. Colette holds the fiddle and bow, and I do the fingering. I haven't seen anyone else do this. We play the Canadian waltz in a higher version when we twin fiddle together. It sounds as if we are harmonizing. It's the same melody, but different keys."

Kerri's passion for the violin involves not just her grandfather, but also her whole family. Her enthusiasm for the music inspired younger brother Tommy and sister Katie to venture into the world of music. Katie summed her sister up in one word — unique. Kerri appreciates her parents' presence and support in the audience. She smiled and said, "It is very reassuring to have them there. I like to look out



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at the audience and see them. When I tried out, my mom thought I would be nervous having her there, so she went where I couldn't see her. She was trying to help, but it made me even more nervous!"

Performing in the orchestra with conductor Dr. Jesús Castro-Balbi, is a



Kerri learns classical music with instructor Bernhard Kainerstorser.

great achievement for Kerri, but she has learned from the experience, as well. "I learned that we had to play together — every bow has to go up and down at the same time. I was able to get the perfect wrist action, which I had been having trouble with. When I first joined the orchestra, it took awhile to learn the music, but after a couple of songs it got easier. At first, I felt out of place, because all the kids knew each other, and they were talking and poking each other in the back with their bows. After I made some friends, I finally got poked in the back with a bow. Once you get poked, you know you're in!" she said laughing.

Unlike many teenagers today, her favorite music is not the latest hip-hop or pop artist; Kerri prefers to listen to her CDs of Sarah Chang and Mozart. "I like listening to classical music. I would feel very depressed if I could not play the violin anymore. I want others who hear my music — for it to be satisfying and pleasant for them. I want them to have a warm feeling." After listening to Kerri play, you would have to agree with her sister. She is unique! **ARTS NOW**

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Sports
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Taking Control

— By Alex Allred

It all really came together when the king-sized Milky Way bars went away. Jill Guerber had been training for months with her personal trainer, building muscle and stamina, working out six days a week, but she was not getting the results she wanted. As hard as she was working in the gym, she continued to eat the candy bars and pizza bagels. When her trainer challenged her to deal with the real problems, Jill realized she had to change.

While food was certainly an issue, the real problem was control. Control of her happiness, her health, her self-esteem



and her energy had everything to do with control of her diet and exercise regime.

Jill had always been athletic and active. Growing up with two brothers, she was the consummate tomboy. Genetically, she was blessed. In fact, after gaining 45 pounds while pregnant with her son, Brendon, she not only lost the weight she had gained, but an additional 15 pounds, as well. She remained very active, working as a PE coach in her son's elementary school. "I was always running around," she said. "I just needed to move, and the kids were a perfect outlet." She also coached boy's soccer at both the recreational and select level, but when Jill accepted a desk job in administration, everything changed. "I really didn't see it happening," Jill said. Slowly, the weight began to pile on. "I just didn't do anything about it," she added. "I was stressed out about my job and unhappy, so it was just easier to do nothing."

The typically vibrant, outgoing Jill was suddenly depressed and feeling very out of control. It was then that Jill received her most precious gift. Fred, her husband of 20 years, gave her a gym membership. "I'll never forget how he gave it to me," Jill laughed. Slowly, he extended an arm, inching toward her as though he might be bitten. Jokingly but lovingly, he let her know that he just wanted her to be happy again.

Once she began working with a trainer, she regained energy and better self-esteem. Still, it was not until she began keeping a food journal that the weight dropped off. She looked at her journal as a checklist, slowly taking the junk foods off the list and out of her life. Pizza bagels were the first to go. Her successes, both emotionally and physically, were so profound, she said, "I realized I needed to be a trainer. This is what I want to do in life."

Sports NOW

Within months of that realization, Jill studied and trained to become a personal trainer; she was soon building up her own clientele, but a move from California to Texas changed the game plan. Suddenly, Jill was back on the



couch, not training and feeling lousy. "I didn't know anyone, didn't have any friends here," Jill said. Instead, she kept calling a friend and former client back home. Just as her former trainer had challenged her, so did her friend. "She said, 'We're having the same conversations. Are you still sitting on the couch? Why aren't you working out?'"

Jill joined a gym and was quickly approached by another trainer who commented on her form. "He said I must have had a very good trainer because of my form," she explained. "I told him, 'Well, actually, I am a trainer.'" She was promptly hired.

Indeed, her form is excellent, but what Jill brings to her clients is so much more than technique. Undeniable warmth and understanding comes from this woman, who truly understands how it feels to struggle both emotionally and physically. Her training method stems from this empathy. Jill is described by clients as tough and demanding, but also as very loving and caring.

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mentioned she did not or could not eat breakfast — the most important meal of the day — Jill could not stand it. She called the woman every day for two weeks at 6 a.m. to remind her to have breakfast. "I'll do whatever it takes," Jill said.

Today, Jill's clients at the Main Street Gym in Midlothian range from young



adults to senior citizens. Whether their goal is weight loss, toning, overcoming a physical challenge or injury or building muscle and stamina, her motto is the same: "I want people to understand that it's never too late," she said. "Just get up! Get fueled and have fun. Find something you love to do and go for it."

While Jill would love to see everyone join a gym and work with a trainer to learn proper technique and form, she does not accept any excuses if a person cannot afford a gym membership. "You can afford a friend," she said. While she joked, "Friends are free!"

Jill recognizes the true value of buddy training. "It's amazing how much a buddy can help you with training." Buddies bring new challenges, excitement and accountability to training. Jill should know. She has one of the best training buddies in the world. Always willing to take a new challenge, Jill and her equine pal, Charlie Boy, are training for their first level of certification through the renowned Pat Parelli horsemanship program. Never has Jill been so in control of her life, and never has she been so happy. ~~NOW~~

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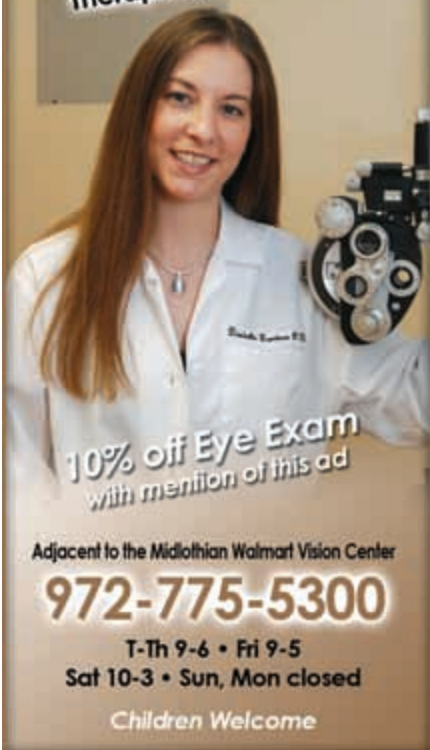
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WHERE Faith and Friends MEET

— By Dia Catalani

If you have settled in the Midlothian area and are ready to make this community your home, there is a family nearby waiting to extend a heartfelt welcome to you. The First Baptist Church, one of this area's largest houses of worship, is big on family values and good living. Their vision, "Transforming our community one changed life at a time," encompasses their desire to help their neighbors, friends and you.

Associate Pastor Kenny Lowman has been with First Baptist Church for 17 years, the first 10 of those as a youth minister. Kenny's wife, Tami, also volunteers at the church. Midlothian students know her as Mrs. Lowman, a reading specialist at J.A. Vitovsky Elementary School. Wholesome family togetherness, reflected in their messages and insightful programs, is an important focus of First Baptist Church. "It is neat that we have been here as long as we have. A lot of my 'kids' that I worked with back then are here now and teaching, which is great to see," Kenny said. "We have a great group of people here, and this really is a neat time in our lives."



Associate Pastor Kenny Lowman greets families with a welcoming smile.

About 2,000 people belong to First Baptist Church of Midlothian, with an average of 900 of them attending a Sunday morning service. The sizable attendance can be attributed to the fact that anyone can find acceptance here and a challenge to grow along with their children. The pastor noted that many families who are new to this area prefer to attend a church within the same community where their child attends school, which fosters the ability to forge positive relationships.

"We've found a good variety of folks: People who have been Baptists all their lives, people who have never been to church or read a verse of Scripture or ever read a story about Jesus," Kenny said. "So, we're reaching some of those folks through the kind of church that

we've become. People who have been far from God are finding they are accepted here and given a second chance. They have found grace and acceptance here."

First Baptist Church has a relaxed, come-as-you-are atmosphere. Its members are approachable, friendly and willing to help. For anyone who does not have family nearby, a church can be a good place to find support — in good times and bad times alike. First Baptist Church provides many ways people can meet other individuals their own age and gender, or simply meet someone who will become a good friend.

Ben Condray, an on-staff licensed professional counselor, leads peer groups for families who are experiencing divorce or separation. Another class

Business NOW

deals with ways to successfully blend families; church membership is not required to participate in these forums. No age group is left without fantastic ways to feel welcome here. With programs geared toward the interests and abilities



Above: Happy children are a common sight at First Baptist Church.

Below: Praise and fellowship are what bond the church's membership.



of toddlers, "tweens," teenagers and young adults, there is plenty to keep young minds creatively busy. Among the activities available to youth are the worship choir, praise team, drama team and technology team, all of which provide wonderful, hands-on learning experiences, too.

As anticipated, First Baptist Church is growing, right alongside its membership. Plans to expand and put current buildings to other uses are in the works. For more information, check out their comprehensive Web site, www.fbcmidlothian.org, where you can also browse through activities, schedules and listen to a church service. Visitors are invited to stop by at any time. The church is located at 1651 South Midlothian Parkway, next to Baylor Medical Center. The phone number is (972) 723-6415. **NOW**

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Education **NOW**



Leading the Way

— By Betty Tryon



Dr. Al Hemmle received a rude awakening on his first day as a schoolteacher. “Teaching was nothing like I thought it would be,” he said smiling. “I thought the students would be sitting quietly in their seats, brimming with enthusiasm and ready to learn.” He did not get that perfect classroom. The imagined, bright, shining faces were instead sleepy-looking imposters, ready to do anything except pay attention to their teacher.

Looking back on his early experience as an educator, Al disclosed, “I learned more in my first two years of teaching than at any other time in my teaching career. You have to get on their level and draw them in to help them learn.” Al prepared himself diligently for his teaching profession. Following high school, he attended Texas Wesleyan University on a baseball scholarship. He graduated with a bachelor’s in science degree in physical education and a minor in biology. He pursued his master’s degree in education at A&M University-Commerce, and earned his doctorate in educational leadership at Nova Southeastern University in 2003.

During the years of his quest for education, Al worked in various departments within the Midlothian ISD. “Midlothian school district is the only place I have worked. I have driven the bus, taught here, coached and was an assistant principal, assistant superintendent and now principal. I can better understand the reality of all the employees, because I have experienced many of those jobs first-hand. Each employee has their own reality; they see problems in a different way.”

Education NOW

Al taught in the classroom for seven years. He said, "What I've enjoyed about education is investing in other people. Truly good educators are those who help kids reach beyond themselves. Being a part of that is rewarding. That is what fuels me as an educator. I've enjoyed the relationships I have built with the students in the classroom. That relationship is different from the



relationship I developed with students as an assistant principal. It shouldn't be that way, but it does change because of the position."

After serving as assistant superintendent in the Midlothian school district, Al decided to pursue being principal at the high school. "It is unusual to go from being assistant superintendent back to principal. I liked that job as assistant superintendent; but I missed the kids." Al continued, "All of us have a purpose in life. I have lived most of my adult life by faith. Faith compels me, and I felt the Lord laid it on my heart to be a principal."

Al seeks the challenge of working with modern teens. "This job can be disappointing, in that you pour your time and effort into it and still see students struggling and not focused. But, we are here to help all of the kids, not just the ones with supportive parents. Those kids are people who will play some role in society. I keep a good attitude and try to be as positive as possible, knowing I make a difference."

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much encouragement as it can, a fact that Al recognizes and addresses. He responded, "We have identified the kids who are having difficulty. Those kids concern me a lot. For example, the ninth-grader who hasn't earned six credits will continue to fall further behind as time goes on. They get overwhelmed and hope runs out. We assign them an adult mentor. These mentors will meet weekly with the student to support them and let them know that they care about them. Sometimes we will use kids in the National Honor Society for peer-to-peer mentoring. One of my biggest fears is a kid will walk out of our door and doors will be closed to them. Everyone wants to be affirmed and be successful."

Being the principal for such a large and growing population in the community presents its own challenges, but Al is determined to meet them. "We are committed to maintaining safety and keeping expectations up. We want to keep the schools safe so the kids don't fear the hallways or each other and they respect authority. Midlothian High School has a reputation for producing capable students after graduation. I want to be a part of maintaining the high academic standards with the growth. I believe administrators should be visible in the hallways whenever possible. It says to the teachers: we are right here with you guys. It says to the students that we care about them. Sometimes just a smile, a pat on the back, asking about their grades and saying you are doing a good job says to the students that they are someone of value. Many of them are surprised you know their name!"


Al said thoughtfully, "To be an educator is a calling. Only those dedicated to the kids will make a lasting impression. The reward is when a kid comes up to you and says, 'I appreciate what you did for me.' I want the kids to know that I cared and that I invested in them." **NOW**

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Around Town NOW



Ribbon cuttings were held, at left from top to bottom: My Father's Shop, Catherine Young of North Texas GMAC Real Estate, Growing Ideas Florist and Midway Regional Airport. T.E. Baxter third grade students, top right, recently performed for family and friends. During a rehearsal for The Lighthouse's Christmas production, middle left, Jason Watson practiced his part as a pastor sharing the Christmas story. As part of their Christmas party this year, many employees of TXI Midlothian Cement, bottom right, donated toys for the annual Gryphons Motorcycle Toy Run.

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Around Town **NOW**



Greg and Ann Artkop of Midlothian, top left, walked the streets of Bethlehem Revisited held in Waxahachie during December. Mrs. Eidson's third grade class at T.E. Baxter, top right, recently adopted a soldier named Daniel who is currently serving in Afghanistan. Mrs. Van Amburgh and Mrs. Mach, middle left, approved of the gushing geysers activity. Longbranch students concluded that Diet Dr. Pepper consistently produced the highest eruptions. Midlothian Ambassadors, directly above, smiled for the camera. Vitovsky students, bottom left, constructed American Indian art.

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Look Who's Cooking

— By Sandra McIntosh

IN THE KITCHEN WITH CAROLINE FLATH

Growing up, Caroline remembers her parents working hard in their family-owned restaurant business. “I grew up at the restaurant,” Caroline said. “My mom and grandma taught me all the basics.” Caroline took those basics and began cooking herself at the age of 16. Today, her specialties include chicken and dumplings, meatloaf, chili and chicken spaghetti, as well as yummy desserts.

Over the years, Caroline has accumulated a large collection of recipes, not only from family members, but from friends she has made along the way. “I got a pineapple-orange cake recipe,” she said, “which I transformed into a sugar-free recipe that anyone can prepare and enjoy.” At home, Caroline enjoys cooking for her family. Some of their favorites include pot roast, grilled chicken and burgers. **NOW**

SUGAR-FREE PECAN PIE

1/4 cup butter, melted
3/4 tsp. vanilla
1 1/2 cups (1 jar) sugar-free honey
3 eggs, beaten
1 cup pecans, chopped or halves
pie crust

Mix all ingredients; pour into pie crust and bake at 375 F for 40 minutes.

COTTAGE CHEESE SALAD

1 bundle green onions
1 green bell pepper
1 medium tomato
1 cucumber
1 lb. cottage cheese

2 Tbsp. salt
1 Tbsp. pepper
crackers

Finely chop all vegetables; mix with cottage cheese, salt and pepper. Serve with crackers.

SUGAR-FREE PINEAPPLE-ORANGE CAKE

BATTER:
1 box Pillsbury reduced-sugar, yellow cake mix
1 11-oz. can mandarin oranges
4 egg whites
1/2 cup unsweetened applesauce

TOPPING:
1 20-oz. can no-sugar-added

pineapple, undrained
1 10-oz. pkg. sugar-free, instant vanilla pudding
1 8-oz. container sugar-free Cool Whip

BATTER: In a large bowl, beat cake mix, oranges, egg whites and applesauce on low speed for 2 minutes. Pour into a 13 x 9 x 2-inch baking dish coated with non-stick cooking spray. Bake at 350 F for 25 - 30 minutes, or until toothpick comes out clean. Cool. **TOPPING:** In a bowl, combine pineapple and pudding mix. Fold in Cool Whip and spread over cake. Refrigerate for 1 hour.

PUMPKIN BARS

BATTER:
2 cups sugar

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Who's Cooking **NOW**

1 cup oil
2 cups solid pumpkin
4 eggs
2 tsp. cinnamon
1/2 tsp. salt
1 tsp. baking soda
2 tsp. baking powder
2 cups flour

FROSTING:

1 3-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
1 tsp. vanilla
3/4 stick butter, softened
1 Tbsp. cream
1 3/4 cups powdered sugar

BATTER: Mix sugar, oil, pumpkin and eggs. Add dry ingredients and mix well. Pour into a greased 10 x 15-inch pan; cook at 350 F for 45 minutes or until toothpick comes out clean. **FROSTING:** Mix all ingredients together and spread over cooled bars. These freeze very well.

MARBLE SQUARES

1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese
1/3 cup sugar
1 egg
1/2 cup margarine
3/4 cup water
1 1/2 oz. chocolate squares
2 cups flour
2 cups sugar
2 eggs
1/2 cup sour cream
1 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. salt
1 12-oz. pkg. semisweet chocolate chips

Combine softened cream cheese, sugar and egg. Blend well. Combine margarine, water and chocolate in saucepan and bring to a boil. Remove from heat and stir in combined flour, sugar, eggs, sour cream, baking soda and salt and mix well. Pour into greased cake pan. Spoon cream cheese mixture over chocolate batter. Cut through batter for marble effect and sprinkle with chocolate chips. Bake at 350 F for 30 minutes or until done.

2008

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T.E.E.N Drivers

— By Tim Tobey

So, your teenage son or daughter wants to drive! Suddenly, driving has become one of the most important things in your child's life. Scary, is it not?

Naturally, you may dread the increase in your auto insurance premiums.

However, there is a lot more at stake than higher premiums. As parents, we all share the fear of our children becoming involved in an automobile accident. These concerns are all too often confirmed by the reality of teen crash statistics. Although premiums are derived from the monetary cost of auto accidents, lives are priceless. No amount of premium can ever bring back a life or reverse disabilities.

- Teenage passenger deaths occur more frequently when a 16-year-old is driving than when a person of any other age is at the wheel.

- Thirty-nine percent of all 16-year-old drivers involved in fatal accidents in 2004 were speeding or going too fast for road conditions. This compares with only 23 percent of drivers between 20 and 49 years old.

- Clearly, the numbers show teens have more accidents.

Let us look at how to reduce these accidents:

- Drive defensively. Watch out for the other person.

- Obey the speed limit. Speed increases the likelihood of an accident. Adjust your speed according to the road conditions. Drive more slowly on wet or icy pavement.

- As important as your driving skill, or aptitude, is your attitude. Always act responsibly behind the wheel.

Auto insurance is designed to protect our financial well-being, and in many states, it is required by law. Without it, most of us could not afford to drive. Replacing a damaged car and paying an injured person's medical bills can

cost hundreds of thousands of dollars.

So, how do insurance companies pay for auto accidents? By collecting premiums and investing them. Among the factors that determine the price you pay for auto insurance are your vehicle, your age and your driving record. The price you pay for the collision and comprehensive coverages in your policy (which cover damage to your vehicle) is based on the value of the vehicle and the claim costs it produces. That is why, all things being equal, you pay more to insure a brand new Camaro than a 10-year-old Blazer.

As we have discussed, there is no doubt your age has a lot to do with your chance of being in an accident. A study by the California Department of Motor Vehicles, for example, found that although teenagers drive only half as many miles as adults, their accident rate per mile is four times the adult rate. That is why insurance companies charge more money to insure younger drivers. They know teens have a much greater likelihood of being in an accident. Most insurance companies will raise your rates — or even cancel your insurance — if you have too many accidents or traffic violations.

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We would all like to pay less for auto insurance. Here are a couple ways that your child can help:

1. Many insurance companies offer lower rates to young, single drivers who are better-than-average students in high school or college. They do that because statistics show good students have considerably fewer accidents than students whose grades are average or below average.

2. Obey all traffic laws. You cannot always avoid an accident, but you can avoid traffic tickets, which can cause your insurance premiums to go up.

For more information and/or statistics, you may access the following Web sites: <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/> or <http://www.hwysafety.org/>. **WILEY'S**

Tim Tobey is a State Farm agent based in Midlothian.



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Health
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Walking Into the New Year

— By Sandra McIntosh

As defined in the Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, a resolution is a noun that simply means a firm decision. With a new year fully underway, many individuals will be making resolutions that pertain to more sound financial planning, putting family first or getting their lives organized from the home to the office. Many others will be deciding the most efficient way in which to shed those unwanted pounds they put on during the holidays. One sure way to begin the journey to a healthier, happier and thinner you is by walking.

There are several levels of walking that range from a fast, regimented schedule to just being conscious of your surroundings. "How much does it help to take the stairs, rather than ride the escalator or elevator?" asked Wendy Bumgardner, author of "Your Guide to Walking." Explaining

further, Wendy said a 140-pound person will burn about four more calories per minute by taking the stairs compared to standing or riding. Over the course of one year, the person may only lose half a pound, but climbing stairs will have challenged more muscles than standing still or walking on a level surface.¹

Are you one of those night owls who counts sheep instead of getting a restful night's sleep? Well, guess what? Walking can turn a restless night into a night filled with restful, rejuvenating sleep. Millions of Americans, as stated on the iVillage Total Health Web site, suffer from poor sleep. Being active throughout the day is a key way to bring about a sleep that makes walking worth the extra effort.² The rewards which come from a good night's sleep include:



clearer thoughts, more energy, a positive mindset, healthy weight maintenance, muscle strength, stress relief, the ability to make better decisions and a much stronger immune system.³

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Health NOW

Being active during the day helps relieve stress and tension, reducing the symptoms of depression and anxiety. By walking, you not only help relieve insomnia, but you improve your overall well-being. Walking helps you sleep, so you do not feel as sluggish with exercise being the least of your concerns. With that in mind, why not break the cycle of negativity that would cause you to break this year's resolution? Keep the right balance between sleep and exercise, and walk your way into the New Year! **NOW**

Sources:

1. Bumgardner, Wendy. "Your Guide to Walking." www.walking.about.com.
2. iVillage Total Health. www.yourttotalhealth.ivillage.com.
3. "Forget Counting Sheep, Walk Your Way to Better Sleep." AARP. aarp.org/health/fitness/walking.
4. Ibid.

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'08 Resolution — Save a Tree!

— By Nancy Fenton

Are you planning some remodeling or new construction for your home this year? Let us consider how to do it while protecting those big trees you love. If you are thinking about expanding your home or your driveway this year, consider looking at it from the tree's point of view. Our gracious, old trees have had a lifetime to put out those roots past the edges of their drip line using them to absorb water and

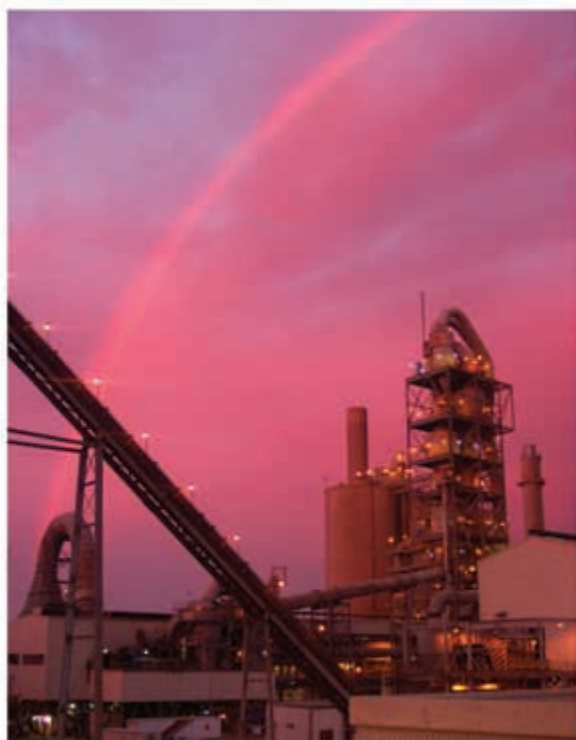
14 essential nutrients. When we pave or add soil, it really fouls up the absorption. Protect the tree from those big machines by creating a barrier with that ugly, but effective, orange fence as far out from the trunk as you can. A four- to six-inch layer of mulch over the area will protect it from the compacting of large machinery that knocks down your fence. Avoid the fill dirt around the tree as much as possible since it will slowly strangle the tree over a period of several years. Those pavers with holes in them offer some help in getting the moisture and air down to the roots if you must cover part of the area.

If you are putting in irrigation or underground lines, tunnel two to four feet below the surface rather than trenching. It will avoid most of the feeding roots. Root pruning is a last-gap measure, but necessary if you want a

level surface area. It will promote a rush of new growth and reduce the chance of root rot.

The tree canopy of the earth is quickly diminishing. We can see it as we drive down the highway and notice the dozers knocking down second growth trees in preparation for yet another shopping mall or housing addition. When the rains have no place to be absorbed, they tend to run into our homes, etc. Not a pretty thought! Less noticeable is the oxygen that those destroyed trees were producing and the CO₂ they were taking out of the atmosphere. Let us all do our share by planting trees, taking care of the ones we have, and encouraging the builders to think before bulldozing building sites with trees. **NOW**

Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener in Ellis County.



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First and Third Thursdays

Midlothian Lions Club, 7:00 p.m. at Midlothian Civic Center, 224 S. 11th Street. For more information, call (972) 775-7118.

Second and Fourth Mondays

Texas Ladies Networking meets from 11:45 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at Fire Mountain Grill in Waxahachie. For more information, call (214) 587-1221.

Second and Fourth Tuesdays

Toastmasters meets at 6:30 p.m. inside Baylorworx, 507 N. Hwy. 77 in Waxahachie.

Midlothian City Council, 6:00 p.m. at City Hall in Council Chambers, 104 West Ave. E.

Every Tuesday

Midlothian Rotary Club meets at noon at Midlothian Civic Center, 224 South 11th Street. Call (972) 775-7118 for information.

December 20-January 1

Midlothian ISD winter break.

January 4

Jeremy's Golf Center Junior Golf Parent/Student Meeting,

2636 Patrick Road, 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

January 5

Jeremy's Golf Center, Ladies League Clinic, 2636 Patrick Road, 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

January 7

American Business Women's Association (ABWA), Great Visions Charter Chapter – 6:15 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center. \$10 for dinner. The January presentation will be "Amazing Face Reading: A Breakthrough in Communication," by Ann Marks. The presentation will provide participants with a tool that will give them an accurate and immediate assessment of each person they meet. Face reading creates a deeper empathic connection with others, better working alliances, better interviews when hiring employees and better sales and customer service. Members are encouraged to bring co-workers and friends. Guests are welcome! Please RSVP to Amanda Miller at (972) 948-0811. For ABWA membership information go to www.midlothianabwa.com.

Zoning Board of Adjustments Meeting, all times and dates are subject to change or cancellation.

January 8

Leadership Midlothian, Education Day, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

January 15

Planning and Zoning Commission, all times and dates are subject to change or cancellation.

January 17

Town Hall meetings for the elementary rezoning, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m., WGMS Cafeteria.

January 19

Jeremy's Golf Center, Ladies League Clinic, Saturday, 2636 Patrick Road.

January 21

Midlothian ISD School Board meeting, administration building, 6:30 p.m.

January 24

Midlothian Community Development Corporation regular monthly Board meeting, Midlothian Conference Center, 6:00 p.m.

January 29

Incoming Freshmen Parent Orientation, Auditorium, 6:30 p.m.

January 31

Town Hall meeting for the elementary rezoning, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m., Midlothian High School Auditorium.

February 1-3

CASI-sanctioned chili cook-off, Ellis County Expo Center in Waxahachie, benefiting the Ellis County Children's Advocacy Center and Gingerbread House. Lots of fun activities. For more information contact Kay Lefler at (972) 646-5159 or Theresa Haskovec at (972) 938-0075.

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Join us for the opening of our new Weight Management & Surgical Weight Loss Center

January 19th, 9:00 – Noon

Where: BaylorWorx Rehab and Fitness
Center in Waxahachie

Topics and activities include:

Weight Management Information Class

Weight Loss Surgery Information Class

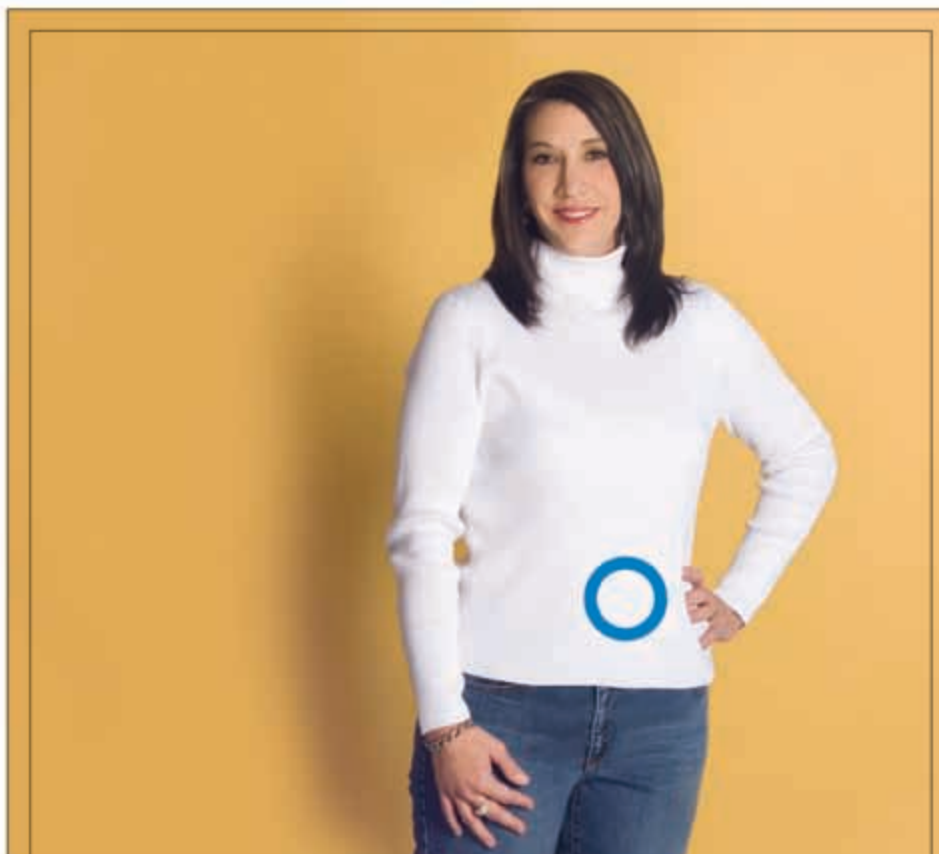
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When nurse Renee O'Daniel saw the success of her weight loss surgery patients, she says, “I wanted the surgery, myself.” That was 100 pounds ago. Two years after bariatric surgery at Baylor Waxahachie, Renee says, “I feel wonderful. I had diabetes and asthma before. Now my diabetes is totally controlled without medicine, and I haven't used my inhaler since.” Baylor's comprehensive weight loss program offers advanced weight loss surgery as well as support and education before and after surgery. “Everything is different,” she says. “People open doors for you.”

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Individual results may vary.

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