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January 2008

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Waxahachie NOW

Editor's Note

Dear Readers,

January has arrived and with it comes the start of another year filled with new beginnings. Resolutions will be made, only to be broken, but I can promise you one thing. You will not be disappointed in the wonderful stories we have included for your winter reading pleasure in this month's edition of *WaxahachieNOW*.

Alfred and Jackie Mims spent the better part of one evening making me laugh until my sides ached, while the McNellis family was honored to share "their trip of a lifetime." The hustle and bustle of the holidays may be gone, but you can still find excitement in Jerry Hammock's healthy respect for fast cars or get creative with Marty Walker Willis, president of the Ellis County Quilt Guild.

My only suggestion would be: throw another log on the fire, curl up under an afghan and let your reading adventures begin. Go ahead, I dare you!

Sandra McIntosh
WaxahachieNOW Editor



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A Hunter's Paradise

— By Ashley Carlino

There is a land, far from here, which holds the key to fulfilling dreams — a place with snowcapped mountains, luscious plant life, exotic animals and modern civilizations all wrapped up into one. Such a place exists in Uitenhage, South Africa, 18 hours across the Atlantic Ocean.

"We will always remember the special time we shared in South Africa," said Sharon McNellis about her family safari to Uitenhage. Sharon, husband Tony, and their son, Matthew, saved for two years to make their dreams come true. "Tony has always had a passion for hunting. It was his life dream to go to South Africa," Sharon recalled.

The McNellis family are only three of an estimated 34,000 visitors who are drawn to this great land of adventure every year. Uitenhage is the largest attraction in South Africa's Eastern Cape, with its rolling hills, rocky coves, majestic mountain ranges and bountiful forests. The malaria-free area is rapidly becoming one of the foremost game-viewing destinations in the country. Private game farms, like the one where the McNellis family stayed, have ensured that the land is well stocked with wildlife. The climate is diverse, allowing for a wide variety of activities to enjoy. The Eastern Cape also



boasts over 300 days of sunshine every year.

"Our trip was in July of 2007," Matthew said. The summers in Africa are reversed from those of America. When it is summer here, it is winter there. "Their summers are terrible, with average daily temperatures over 110 degrees," Matthew added. "There are also a lot of cobras in the summer." The weather was mild when the McNellis family visited. With temperatures ranging from 39 degrees at night to 55 degrees during the day, they were able to fully enjoy their hunting experience.

Sharon, Tony and Matthew are avid hunters and have been members of the Texas Trophy Hunters Association for a long time. Sharon met Tony when she was just 16 years of age, and he taught her everything she needed to know about shooting guns. Tony began teaching Matthew as early as 3 years of age. "Gun safety was always very important," Sharon explained, "and from an early age."

There are over 28 huntable trophy species on Blaauwkrantz and 44 species total to hunt in the Eastern Cape. An estimated 2,000 kudu, 1,000 bushbuck, 700 impala, 500 blesbuck and 1,500 duiker are available to hunt. Sharon took three animals and Tony took four. Matthew, with his impeccable precision,

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took seven. Each of them took a kudu. Matthew even shot a wildcat, one of the most dangerous animals in the land. He also shot the largest game plains antelope, a wild cape eland, at 1,900 pounds. It took 20 African trackers to load the animal onto the truck.



Combined, they took 13 animals, including zebra, kudu and impala. "No animal ever goes to waste," Sharon explained. "Each kill feeds the natives, every worker on the plantation and all of their families."

The plantation on which the McNellis family stayed belongs to the Rudman family, who has hosted the Blaauwkrantz Safaris since 1978. The home has been in the Rudman family since 1936. "Blaauwkrantz means 'blue cliff' and refers to the mountain range where we hunted," Sharon recalled. "The Rudmans welcomed us into their home and made us feel like we were a part of their family." Each safari was a unique experience. When they returned from a hunt, they exchanged hunting stories and told of their wonderful experiences in the wild.

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The house offered plenty of space for the McNellis family and seven other guests. There were six women who worked around the clock to provide continuous hospitality to the guests. "If my cup of coffee was low, one of the ladies would come and fill it right away," Sharon noted. Three home-cooked meals were served daily to ensure that each guest had plenty of energy for the next safari. Cauliflower soufflé, blackberry cobbler and potatoes au gratin were a few of the delicious foods served. Fresh breads were also made every day.

With over 300 days of sunshine per year, one might expect an arid environment, void of foliage and forest. However, a nearby melting glacier provides the Eastern Cape's ecosystem with all the nourishment it needs to produce beautiful, healthy, lush plants. Aloe vera grows freely here and pansies are a prominent flower. "Their white roses are called 'white icebergs,' and they look like velvet," Sharon described. She attended a flower show one of the days she was visiting. Here, she learned various techniques on how to successfully grow plants. "I had to go all the way to South Africa to learn how to keep bugs off my plants! Use parsley," she said. The local women

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taught Sharon to use banana peels to make plants grow greener.

There is plenty more to do in this magnificent land aside from hunting. Addo National Elephant Park is only 40 minutes away. The park provides a home for over 400 elephants, 185 species of birds, black rhinos and several species of buck. These amazing creatures can be viewed from open vehicles.



Sharon was a passenger in a Jeep when she saw a giraffe. "I got out of the Jeep and started walking. I was looking up at him and he was looking down at me," she said. Sharon was able to capture the moment with a photograph, which is now proudly displayed in her home.

In addition to the safaris and plant show, Sharon also visited nearby Port Elizabeth, to see how modern South Africa can be. She visited antique shops and jewelry shops. "A lot of necklaces are made out of bone," she said. Warthog tusks are used to create unusual jewelry, bottle openers and more. Leopard and zebra prints were painted on dishes and bowls that were sold. Wooden spoons and spoons made of bones are commonly sold as well. Unusual accent pieces for the home can also be found, including ostrich eggs decorated with porcupine quills.

The McNellis family's adventure began as merely a dream. "Never give up on your dreams," Sharon said. They will cherish their memories always, and plan on creating many more. "I am quite sure that we will return to South Africa," Matthew said. "It's the last good place. It's a hunter's paradise." Tony is already planning for the family's next journey in 2010. **WAXAHACHIE**






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Life is What You Make It

By Sandra McIntosh

At Home With Alfred and Jackie Mims

Do you know Alfred and Jackie Mims? If not, let me tell you how to spot them in a crowd. They will be the couple walking hand-in-hand with ear-to-ear smiles across their faces.

Soon to be married 28 years in May, they have taken each day as it comes and turned them into a lifetime overflowing with laughter, as well as kind-hearted banter toward one another. "Life is how you see it," Alfred said, as Jackie wholeheartedly agreed. "Life is exactly what you make of it."

Living their entire lives in Waxahachie, Alfred and Jackie grew up knowing one another. They would see each other at school and their families attended the same church — Greater New Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church — the exact same church in which they are actively involved today. Knowing each other early on did not mean theirs was a "love at first sight" kind

of courtship. In fact, it was far from it. "We knew each other because we ran with the same group of people," Jackie explained. "It wasn't until I asked Alfred to sing at my

brother's wedding that things began to happen." During the wedding, Alfred thought to himself, "Maybe I should ask her on a date."

They both laugh as they remember their first date. "It really wasn't a date," Jackie said, correcting Alfred for thinking it was. "I just needed someone to accompany me, that's all." Needless to say, the

"date that was not" turned into two years of old-fashioned hand holding, followed by a one-year engagement that led to a wedding in 1980. "Her driven personality is what caused all this," Alfred said, referring to their happy marriage. "We got our new home the same way Jackie got her engagement







ring. She just said it was time."

For most of their married life they lived in a home on Wyatt Street. A little over two years ago, however, they moved into the new home in Indian Hills Alfred referenced when reminiscing about his wife's strong, yet not overbearing, personality. The three-bedroom, two-bath, traditional-style home is truly a dream come true for the couple. "This home is one of our many blessings," Jackie explained. "The neighborhood is peaceful and quiet. The serenity we have found here is beyond measure." In fact, Jackie remembers how hard it was to sleep the first week they were in the home. "I had to get used to the quiet," she







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said, referring to living outside the city, as opposed to the central location of their old address. "It took about a week before I was able to sleep through an entire night."

One will meet the couple's daughter, Melissa Mims, as they take a seat on the tapestry-upholstered couch and love seat in the living room. An 8x10 glossy photo is displayed on a side table, strategically placed in one corner for easy viewing. A cross Alfred handmade from a few crape myrtle branches and some string rests beside the photograph. "She graduated from the University of Houston. She liked it so much, she decided to remain there," Jackie said. "I keep the cross beside her picture so she'll have further protection." When Alfred heard



this comment, he just had to laugh. "She was home for the holidays," he said, "and she was a mess!" She may very well be a mess, was Jackie's retort, but she is also another blessing they count as "all good."

Not long after getting settled, Alfred and Jackie began collecting African and African American art. One of their first pieces, a carved, intricately detailed walking cane, was given to them after a family friend returned from a trip to Africa. It rests beside the fireplace in the living area. Other one-of-a-kind pieces also found in the couple's living room include a vase that resembles aged pottery, a hand drum that Alfred calls a noise maker and a very special

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framed photograph of African American people picking cotton.

"That picture reminds me of happy times," Jackie said, remembering her days in the fields. "We'd exchange recipes and I'd hear women talking about their families two rows over." Alfred sees this time in history a bit differently than his wife, who tends to always see her glass half full instead of half empty. "It was a time of great adversity," he said, also remembering the hours he spent in the hot sun as a young boy. "It made me want something better for my family." After a few



moments of innocent banter, they once again agreed to disagree. "Seeing things a bit differently is OK," Alfred said, quickly mentioning how much better a stalk of cotton would look in the vase that sits on a table under the print. "It's all labeled as good."

When asked about favorite places in the home, Jackie quickly answered the kitchen. "We love



to entertain and I love to cook anything and everything," she said. "I like the results as I cook. It's fun to see Alfred's

face when he tastes a new recipe." As she continued to share some of the most priceless of Alfred's reactions, Alfred continued to look around the living room for his precious beanbag.

"I love throwing my beanbag down in front of the fireplace," he said.

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"I like to sit in front of a warm fire and read or channel surf." During the spring and summer months, the couple can generally be found on the back patio eating a light supper or sharing a glass of iced tea.

Alfred is still very much the fisherman who enjoys getting out to the lake as often as he can. He has also been blessed with a green thumb when it comes to the care and upkeep of the live plants found throughout the home. Shopping with Jackie is an adventure he has learned to appreciate over the years. "We go to the mall," he said. "We blow time and eat out wherever we go." Laughing, Jackie could not help herself as she added, "It's the eating out that he likes the most!"

While Jackie has taken a liking to the finer things in life, such as mixing their wedding china with new napkins and a matching tablecloth, Alfred is more content to "dig in the dirt."



He has also been blessed with a green thumb when it comes to the care and upkeep of the live plants found throughout the home.



"He's a junk collector," Jackie explained. "He's collected old coins, bottles and guns." Several drawers are filled with his special finds. "I'm not allowed to lay the stuff out so people can really appreciate it," he added, with a laugh. Being able to laugh at one another, while also laughing at themselves could very well be the secret to their long, happy marriage. "It's good to laugh," they both agreed. "Laughter really is the best medicine." **NOW**

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**ARTS
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An Age-old

Art Form

— By Faith Browning



Members of the Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis County pose with a current project

Marty Walker Willis is an extremely gifted artist in an age-old art. "Quilting is definitely an art form," she said. "It's endless what you can do." Her palette is an infinite variety of colors, prints, patterns and textures. "Fabric is a quilter's sewing palette," she explained. "A quilter has a lot of fabric because they don't know what they are going to use when they are designing."

The vast list of items, which can be created by quilting includes: purses, vests, shower curtains, coasters and jackets, to name only a few. "The field is open," she said. "There are so many different things you can do." Marty is a newlywed, and instead of a wedding book, she had her guests sign a heart quilt patch so she can create an autograph wall hanging to proudly display in their home.

Creating her own unique designs is her artistic passion. "I'm still a traditionalist," she said, "but I like to throw my own twist into things." Her creative mind has resulted in the publication of two pattern books by Four Corners Publishing, as well as a write-up in *Quiltworks Today*

Magazine. Her stunning Mosaic Memory and her whimsical Lady Bug quilt designs are the headliners in her two books.

Marty describes the creation of a new pattern as a long process, but they all start with a single idea. She sketches her ideas on grafting paper and she enters them in her computer, using a program designed to help quilters complete unique patterns. "When designing, you must consider that others will be making it," she explained.

Inspiration for most of her quilts comes from nature's colors. "I love colors," she excitedly said. "My favorites are the muted tones." One idea she is working on was inspired by Oriental fabric she acquired while visiting her daughter in Japan. Pagodas, teapots, dragonflies and kimonos are just a few of the designs she plans to use

in this creation. A few other ideas she is working on are designs divinely motivated by Scriptures from her pastor's sermons. Even though designing is a long process, Marty



ARTS NOW

finds quilting relaxing. "It's my escape hatch," she said.

The main attraction in her well-organized quilting room of worktables and sewing machines is a wall-sized frame covered in felt called a "design wall." Quilt squares stick in place on the felt and can be easily removed, allowing the quilter to rearrange her pieces until she is happy with the design. Once satisfied with the design, a picture is taken for future reference. Marty has a storage room with an overwhelming collection of fabrics. This room of many shelves and cabinets is filled to capacity with enough fabric to open a small store. To a non-quilter, it could seem extreme, but Marty confirmed this mass collection of fabric is normal for avid quilters.

Marty started quilting with her friend, Ophelia Pool, in the late '80s. Quilting was their way of coping with their grief over the loss of Ophelia's son. Marty's enthusiasm for quilting inspired Ophelia, and they began taking lessons from Donna Poster, in Farmers Branch.

Marty is currently the president of the Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis County, a nonprofit organization. Debbie Wolf, Vanna Worley and Trudy Coker founded the guild five years ago. A questionnaire was sent out revealing that Ellis County had enough quilters to start their own guild. To their amazement, 63 quilters attended the guild's first meeting. Currently, membership is over 150 strong; monthly meetings now have 55 to 75 quilters in attendance. The guild meets at the Waxahachie Bible Church on the fourth Monday of each month. Due to their large attendance, they must have an organized meeting. A program is presented on quilting topics and then a time of "Show & Tell" of selected finished works completes the meetings.

A major event for the guild is a quilt show held every July at the Midlothian



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Ginger Smith and Marty Walker Willis enjoy quilting with fun and colorful fabrics.

Convention Center. This event raises funds needed for the organization's finances, special projects and annual charity project. This year, they presented Hope Clinic with \$1,500 raised from their silent auction of quilted table runners. A magnificent quilt created by the guild's caring hearts and skillful hands is raffled to raise funds for special projects.

Every year, the guild has several workshops, where special projects are created with love. Walker caddies and lap quilts are given to several nursing homes every December. They make tote bags filled with crayons and coloring books, which are donated to Child Protective Services. "When they take the children from the homes," Marty said, "they have only what few belongings they can put in a grocery sack. The tote bag is something they can call their own."

Are you interested in quilting? If so, Marty suggests getting to a quilt shop, and getting there quickly. "There's always a quilt a quilter wants to do," she said. "Whether it's her own design or someone else's. I really encourage people to go to a big quilt show. They need to go see what quilters are doing. They're not your grandmother's quilts anymore."

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Sports NOW



— By Sandra McIntosh



Sprint car racing is fast, competitive and fun. It is difficult for Jerry Hammock, driver of the red, number 4 car owned by Smiley Sitton, to remember a time when he was not climbing into the driver's seat. "I started racing midgets at the age of 13," Jerry said. "I've been competing now for 29 years."

When reminiscing, the first person who comes to mind is Jerry's father, Gary Hammock. "My dad got me started," Jerry said. "He owned and built those first cars I drove. His craftsmanship was second-to-none." Gary may not have been a competitive driver himself, but Jerry remembers his cars being a hot commodity. "People wanted a car my dad had built," Jerry said, with pride in his voice. "He was, and still is, a perfectionist. He would

work all night on a car to make it perfect if he had to."

During those early years, Jerry only drove for Hammock-sponsored cars, racing in several different classes. He has not forgotten the old days at Devil's Bowl, an oval dirt track located in Mesquite, Texas, where the competition would be such that a driver would almost turn cartwheels if a fellow driver was unable to take to the track. "It didn't matter what the reason for not being able to race was," Jerry said. "You only looked out for one person — yourself." It finally got to the point where the engine and tire rules and regulations began changing every other year. When constant changes occur, the price to race can quickly skyrocket out of control. "I had my own sprint car at this time," Jerry said. "I sold it in

Sports NOW


1992 and retired, or so I thought."

Jerry had not been to a track in over two years when Rick Burdick phoned, with a proposition Jerry was unable at that time to decline. "He wanted me to drive his car a couple times," Jerry said. In fact, it only took one night for the racing bug to bite. The second night he was scheduled to race saw Jerry breaking a date with Mitsy, his wife of eight years. "It was Halloween," Jerry recalled. "I didn't really break the date. I asked her to come to the track with me."



The key ingredient to Jerry's coming out of retirement, so to speak, is the friendship Rick had at the time with Smiley. Nowadays, Smiley, Jerry and Rick, also the team's crew chief, work together in the Sprint Series of Texas (SST), a relatively new sprint car group that is making a buzz across Texas, as well as into Louisiana and Oklahoma. Jerry could not be happier with the changes SST has brought to the sport that he loves. "Now, it's all about helping our fellow racers, so everyone can have a good time," Jerry said. "The SST is not intended to be a springboard to NASCAR. It's all about having fun and calling your memories profit." Showing his true love for the sport of sprint car racing, Jerry also added it is not about getting rich. "It's about the passion," he said, "and the camaraderie found in being a team."

To get where he is now as a member of the Smiley Sitton Outlaw Driving School team, Jerry had to try his hand at several types of racing. He may have

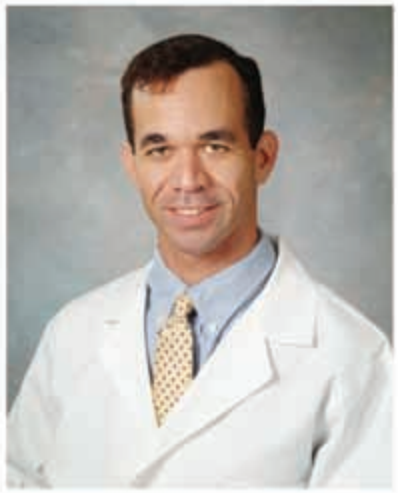


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learned how to maneuver a track in a midget, but his experience in stock cars and modifieds surely prepared him for the success he is enjoying today in his Chevy V-8, 400-plus-horse powered, fuel-injected sprint car. As a hands-on team member, Jerry also helps mechanically maintain the car. "When I only want to drive, I'll be done," he said. "The real fun is working on them and spending time off the track with the guys."

In those early days, Jerry and his father got to a point where they could read each other's minds. The relationship Jerry currently has with Rick is much the same. "Dad and I learned the same things at the same time," Jerry explained. "Rick has given me a different kind of education. He's taught me how to fix things."

SST racing has quickly become one of the most prestigious wins in the state because everyone is so evenly matched. "When you win one of these races, you haven't beaten a bunch of no names," Jerry said. "In fact, Johnny Suggs is in his 70s and still going strong, while the rookies are keeping the sport alive." The art of winning comes with "good guessing" techniques. "You must be good at guessing," he said. After the practice laps and the heat race, the car's setup has to be adjusted, and the same goes for the main. "The track changes during a 25-lap main," Jerry said. "You have to decide if you want to be fast at the start or at the finish."

Mitsy and the Hammock's two daughters, Emily and Audrey, as well as Bob Reeves, Gary and Rick, are some of Jerry's biggest fans, cheerleading him on to several victories over the years. Every other weekend during racing season will see Jerry at one of several tracks in the area. When attending a sprint car race, remember sitting too close to the fence almost guarantees a little "mud in the eye." **NOW**

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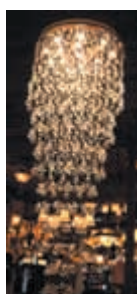
Do not let the name fool you. While Lights Galore is indeed a store with every light fixture and design imaginable, it is so much more than a light store. The store, the concept and its owner are all unique.

When Kim Tucker opened Lights Galore on Highway 77, she had two goals. She wanted to offer quality lighting to local builders and give her neighbors a place where they could shop. As both an interior design expert and builder, she understands what both the professional and the consumer want.

The store itself is gorgeous, filled with lavish lamps, furniture and mirrors. Vanities, Bombay chests and designer cabinets are throughout the shop along with what Kim calls, "all

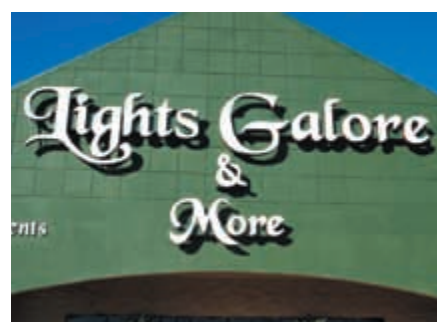
the pretties," such as jewelry, purses, picture frames and even handcrafted floral arrangements. "People are most surprised that my store is more than just lights," Kim said. Indeed, it is a glorious floor show one might expect

to see in Dallas, and it is one of the things Kim is most proud of. She brought North Dallas to Waxahachie.



Kim fought hard, however, to keep the prices low and competitive. "I'm not going to buy a \$300 lamp. I like to change things up; I like to redecorate my home," she said,

"and I can't do that if I buy a \$300 lamp." Always, she has the customer in mind. While Lights Galore has a full staff, including an interior design team,



Kim personally hand selects items at market. "I see the production market," she said, noting this is her way of staying on top of what is "in" and what is selling. "I talk to vendors, and I read a lot," she commented. She is also careful only to order a select number of specific items. "That way," she said, "when someone buys something here, they know it is unique. It's personalized." It is that personal touch that brings her customers back again and again.

As Kim discusses inventory, her passion is clear. Not only does she have a great eye for color, but she can visualize rooms and design in intricate detail. For her, it is a passion that was awakened when she began a family. Her husband, Keith, worked as an engineer, and she worked as a legal secretary. Suddenly, Kim realized

Business NOW

she no longer wanted to leave her toddler, Brooke, at day care, and she devised a plan. "It all started," Kim explained, laughing at the memory, "when I bought a lot out of bankruptcy." With Keith supporting her, she decided to build the family their own home. Once



the project began, a buyer gave an offer she could not refuse. So, she bought another lot and once again, another offer came that could not be refused. "I think I was doing all those little touches," Kim offered, "that made the difference."

It is those little touches that allowed Kim to create her own company. When their second child, Brandi, was born, Kim asked Keith for help. Toting around two small children, Kim definitely stood apart from the traditional image of a homebuilder. While she has been called a pioneer in construction and praised for her abilities to think outside the proverbial box, Kim is humbled. For her, the reward is that her daughters, along with her son, Blake, see her hard work pay off.

"This isn't just a light store," Kim said, sharing her concerns about the community. "It's time that we support our own community, put our tax dollars right back in." It is a sentiment Kim feels so strongly about, Lights Galore has participated in numerous auctions for schools and churches, raising funds and school supplies for children in need. "We have such a great community right here," she said. It is, as she has said, so much more than a light store.

Lights Galore is located at 1011 Highway 77 N., Ste. 103. Hours are Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. and Saturday, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. **NOW**

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Education
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Two Minutes to Sparkle

— By Sandra McIntosh

Sparkle the Tooth Fairy arrived at St. Joseph Catholic School with a giant-sized toothbrush in hand. After introducing herself, the first thing she asked her audience of kindergarten, first- and second-graders is, "Do you have teeth?" "Of course!" they answered, loud and clear in the affirmative. "This happens everywhere I go," said Jennifer Vespia, broadly smiling to show her pearly whites. "Fun and laughter are often the best teachers."

Getting the children actively involved in the presentation on proper dental hygiene was the plan five years ago. "I stood in front of children for 10 years in scrubs. I'd turn the VCR on and pop in a tape," she explained. "I hate to say it, but it became boring for everyone." Always thinking outside the box, Jennifer did a bit of brainstorming. "Why couldn't I become the tooth fairy?" she asked herself. Immediately following this premonition of sorts, Jennifer traded her scrubs for a beautiful pink gown with matching fairy wings, a diamond-like tiara and a pink purse filled with "magic fairy dust." "No longer are the programs boring," she added. Wide-eyed children are now excited to hear what Sparkle, the name Jennifer prefers to go by, has to say. They are also eager to raise their hands to answer her many questions.

Once Sparkle perfected her idea, she made a call to Dr. John Ousley, a local dentist who specializes in dentistry for infants and children. After talking to her three times via the telephone, she was hired to represent his office. Her job was to educate children in the Waxahachie area and beyond about proper dental hygiene at a young age. "Sparkle is incredible and how she handles the children is just amazing," Dr. Ousley said. "Good dental hygiene is so important. The kids absorb what she tells them like a sponge. They come in the office and tell me they need to floss. They all know who Sparkle the Tooth Fairy is, and they remember everything she tells them."

Throughout the year, Sparkle stays very busy, but during the months of January and February, she barely has time to sleep. "For those who may not know, January is National Dental Month and February is National Children's Dental

Education NOW

Health Month. When I'm not traveling around looking under pillows," she said, laughing, "I'm talking about my favorite thing — teeth."

The children learn everything they need to know about teeth during Sparkle's hands-on, interactive presentation. She teaches them all about the number two. "I teach them the importance of brushing two times a day for two minutes," she explained further. "I also explain why it's important to floss and brush their tongues twice a day, too. It only takes two minutes to sparkle."

There is never a dull moment as she continually shoots questions into the audience, only to be answered by a sea of raised hands. In the span of 45 minutes, children learn that teeth are not just used for eating. They are also of the utmost importance when it comes to talking and smiling. Students return to class knowing they have 20 baby teeth, but as adults they will have 32 permanent teeth. The tongue, Sparkle said, is also used in talking, as well as tasting what we put in our mouths. "How many of you like the taste of broccoli?" she asked. "Yuck" was the unanimous answer. When asked about the taste of candy, the



Students, acting as teeth, are brushed by their teacher.

"yummy" response was overwhelming.

Interacting with the children, teachers, administrators and parents is part of what makes Jennifer's job as Sparkle the Tooth Fairy so rewarding. She not only asks questions, she also calls several willing participants forward to act as

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incisors, canines, molars and even a large, imaginary tongue. “Usually, the shiest teacher in the bunch gets called up to brush the teeth,” Sparkle said. “I instruct her to brush the teeth in big, wide circles and make sure to brush the front, the top and the back of each tooth.” Another adult will floss, while a fellow student brushes the tongue. Each task is followed by a boisterous round of laughter, not only from the audience, but also from all those playing the parts of teeth and tongue.

Unfortunately, all good things must come to an end, so Sparkle concludes the presentation by explaining the importance of proper diet. “Sugar Bugs like to eat teeth,” she said. “They [Sugar Bugs] make little black holes in your teeth called cavities.” Foods that are good for teeth include milk, fruit, vegetables, cheese and bread. Candy, sodas, popcorn and fruit drinks are foods high in sugar that cause hyperactivity. “It’s also important to visit the dentist twice a year for checkups,” Sparkle added. “X-rays let the dentist see if your teeth are growing in properly and also lets him know if you have Sugar Bugs.” Sparkle the Tooth Fairy was scheduled to marry the Crest King this past November, but due to her hectic schedule they postponed the nuptials until March. “The King got bumped for the greater good,” Sparkle said, smiling. “He understands that the children come first.” **NOW**



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Around Town NOW



Helen Skoda, top left, of Whitney, Texas, took time to smell perfume handmade at Bethlehem Revisited. A gourd with several holes in key locations, top center, made a wonderful musical instrument. The Lord's Last Supper quilt, top right, has become a mainstay during Bethlehem Revisited performances. Jesus is born, bottom left, in a manger. John Richardson, age 5, bottom center, colors his menu while waiting for his food to arrive. Shepherds tended their goats, bottom right, on opening night at Bethlehem Revisited.

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Around Town NOW



Jill Odle & daughter Keira, top left, picked up toys from the NOW Magazines office for delivery to Cooks Children's Hospital. Bible school, top center, at Bethlehem Revisited. A ribbon cutting was held, top right, at Ark Country Store. A World War II re-enactment, left second row, was held in Waxahachie recently. Waxahachie firemen, directly above, collect money for Fill the Boot for Jerry's Kids. A groundbreaking ceremony was held, left third row, for Buffalo Creek Assisted Living & Memory Care Community. Another ribbon cutting, bottom left, was held at Kufflynx. Actors, bottom right, re-enacted the job of making wine at Bethlehem Revisited.



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IN THE KITCHEN WITH CHEF THOMAS HUTCHINS

Chef Thomas has loved food and cooking ever since he can remember. "My mother and I would watch cooking programs, copy recipes and re-create them," Thomas said. Eventually, he entered the banking field as a teller, but felt something was missing. "At bank dinners, people waited to see what I brought and asked when I would open a restaurant," Thomas said.

For Christmas 1997, Thomas was given a culinary course at El Centro College. His wonderful experience led him to go back to school in 2000; in 2004, Thomas quit his job as a bank teller, something he had been doing for 20 years, to pursue his dream of becoming a personal chef. "It seemed like a perfect match," he said. "I loved helping people and thought I could meld the two together." **WAXAHACHIE**

GRANDMOTHER'S CHOCOLATE CHIPS

- 1/2 cup butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- 8 drops vanilla extract
- 4 Tbsp. cocoa
- 1 cup all-purpose flour

Heat oven to 350 F and grease cookie sheet. Cream together butter and sugar. Add eggs and mix well. Add vanilla. Sift cocoa with flour and add to egg mixture. Pour batter into cookie sheet, spread thin into one big cookie. Bake for 8 - 9 minutes for brownie-like cookies, bake longer for a crispy cookie. Cut into strips while hot.

GRANDMOTHER'S COFFEE CAKE

- 1/2 cup butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup molasses
- 1/2 tsp. baking soda dissolved in 1 cup hot, strong coffee
- 3 cups flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 2 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp. allspice
- 1/2 tsp. cloves
- 1 cup raisins
- 1 cup pecans, chopped

Cream together the butter, sugar,

molasses and baking soda/coffee mixture. Add flour, baking powder, salt, cinnamon, allspice and cloves. Mix in raisins and pecans. Bake at 350 F for 1 hour.

MOM'S APRICOT SALAD

- 2 eggs, beaten
- 2 Tbsp. flour
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans
- 3/4 cup grated cheddar cheese
- 1 can apricots, quartered

To the first three ingredients, add juice from apricots with enough water to make one cup. Cook over medium heat until thick. Let cool. When cool, layer it with pecans, cheese and apricots.

AUNT PAT'S BROCCOLI CASSEROLE

- 1 stick margarine
- 1 small onion chopped
- 1 8-oz. pkg. chopped frozen broccoli
- 2 cups cooked rice
- 1 8-oz. jar Cheez Whiz
- 1 10.75-oz. can cream of chicken soup
- 1 10.75-oz. can cream of mushroom soup

In a large skillet melt margarine, add onions. Cook until tender. Stir in broccoli and heat through, add rice, almost all of the Cheez Whiz and soups; blend well. Pour in a greased 9 x 13-inch

baking dish. Put some of the Cheez Whiz on top. Bake at 350 F for 30 minutes.

TEA-TIME TASSIES

CRUST:

- 1 3-oz. pkg. cream cheese
- 1/2 cup butter or margarine
- 1 cup sifted flour

PECAN FILLING:

- 1 egg
- 3/4 cup brown sugar
- 1 Tbsp. soft butter or margarine
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- dash salt
- 2/3 cup coarsely chopped pecans

CRUST: Soften cream cheese and butter at room temperature; blend. Stir in flour. Chill at least 1 hour. Roll on lightly floured board to about 1/8-inch thickness. Cut with a 3-inch cutter; place in tiny ungreased 1 3/4-inch muffin tins. Press dough on bottom and sides of cups. **FILLING:** Beat together egg, sugar, butter, vanilla and salt until just smooth; stir in pecans. Put 1 teaspoon in each pastry cup. Bake at 325 F for 20 - 25 minutes, until filling is set. Remove and place on paper towels to cool.

MARTHA'S BEST EVER POTATO SOUP

- 6 bacon strips, diced
- 3 cups potatoes, peeled, cubed
- 1 14 1/2-oz. can chicken broth

Who's Cooking **NOW**

1 small carrot, grated
 1/2 cup onion, chopped
 1 Tbsp. dried parsley flakes
 1/2 tsp. celery seed
 1/2 tsp. salt
 1/2 tsp. pepper
 3 Tbsp. all-purpose flour
 3 cups milk
 8 oz. processed American cheese,
 cubed (I use Velveeta.)
 2 green onions, thinly sliced (optional)

In a large saucepan, cook bacon until crisp; drain. Add potatoes, broth, carrot, onion, parsley, celery seed, salt and pepper. Cover; simmer until potatoes are tender, about 15 minutes. Combine flour and milk until smooth; add to soup. Bring to a boil; boil and stir for 2 minutes. Add cheese; stir until cheese is melted and the soup is heated through. Garnish with green onions, if desired.

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Will “Subprime” Loan Crunch Affect You?

— By Jeff Trojacek

If you have even casually followed the news over the past several months, you have probably heard about “subprime loans.” The issue can be confusing, and if you are like most people, you really just want a couple of questions answered: How might these subprime loans affect the economy? And will I need to adjust my investment strategy?

To begin with, let us define subprime loans. Generally speaking, a subprime loan is a mortgage made to a borrower who might not otherwise qualify for a loan. Subprime lenders typically charged these borrowers higher interest rates, but some subprimes were adjustable rate mortgages (ARMs), which meant they carried a lower rate for the first few years of the loan. Many subprime borrowers took out ARMs, hoping their credit would improve enough for them to qualify for a better rate before the mortgage rate was adjusted upward. When this did not happen, they were hit with higher payments and many faced foreclosure. Because many of these mortgages had

been resold and then packaged into other financial vehicles, the bad loans hurt these investments.

Ultimately, the subprime loan problem might jolt at least two sectors of the financial markets: housing and financial services. So, housing-related investments, such as real estate companies, and financial services firms, such as mortgage lenders, might experience some rough roads. Also, the subprime situation could lead to a potential slowdown in overall consumer spending. Why? Because if lending standards tighten, people may find it more difficult to tap home equity loans and lines of credit. If consumer spending does slow, it could affect corporate profits, a key driver of stock prices.

As an individual investor, what moves, if any, should you make to prepare yourself for any potential subprime “aftershocks”? To begin with, do not get so caught up in a possible subprime-fueled downturn that you overlook the many positive factors about the current investment outlook.

Although the real estate industry is slumping, the rest of the economy remains relatively strong. Furthermore, inflation and interest rates remain low and stable, and corporate profits still exceed expectations.

No matter what happens in the investment world, you can hardly go wrong by following these tried-and-true techniques:

- **Look for quality.**

Quality investments, such as the stocks of strong, established companies, historically tend to fall less than other investments in down markets, and they have frequently led the way in the recoveries that follow. Past performance is not an indication of future results.

- **Choose an appropriate mix of investments.**

Build a portfolio containing a variety of investments that are suitable for your goals, risk tolerance and time horizon. While diversification, by itself, cannot guarantee a profit or protect against a

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loss in declining markets, it can help reduce the effects of market volatility.

- **Hold investments for the long term.**

By following a "buy-and-hold" investment strategy, you can reduce your commission costs and avoid some of the other problems that can result from frequent buying and selling. Once you buy an investment, consider holding it until either your needs change or the investment itself has evolved in an unexpected way.

By looking beyond the possible turmoil and sticking with good investment habits, you may well escape some of the problems caused by the subprime fallout — while you stay on track toward your long-term investment goals. **WAX**

Jeff Trojacek is an Edward Jones representative based in Waxahachie.

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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.⁴ 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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Great Outdoors

NOW

'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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Januray 2008 Community Calendar

First Wednesday

Red Moon Café, located at 3701 N. I-45 in Ennis, will host an evening of karaoke from 8:30 p.m. – midnight.

Every Tuesday January 15 - February 5

Edward Jones Financial Workshop for individual investors. Contact Jeff Trojacek, FA, for more information. Seating is limited. RSVP required. (972) 298-2586.

Every Friday and Saturday

Live bands at The Red Moon Café. Be sure to check their Web site at www.theredmooncafe.com for all upcoming events.

January 8 and 22

The Waxahachie Business Interchange Networking group, 7:30 - 8:30 a.m. at Hastings Entertainment located at 791 Highway 77N, Suite 101. Entry fee is \$1 and be sure to bring plenty of business cards. Coffee and pastries will be provided. Nonmembers are welcome to attend a total of two times. For more information, call (972) 937-2390.

January 9

Teens will meet at Sims Public Library from 4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

January 12

Open House at Pettigrew Academy, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. Come tour the school and find out about the Montessori philosophy of education for children. The school is located at 806 E. Marvin St. For more information, call (972) 923-1633.

After Hours Improv Comedy Show, 8:00 p.m. at The Texas Theater, 110 W. Main St. in downtown Waxahachie.

Admission is \$10 for adults and \$6 for children 10 and under. Tickets may be purchased online at www.AfterHoursImprov.com, by phone at (972) 937-9839 or at the box office. Only cash will be accepted at the box office which opens at 7:00 p.m. Doors open for general admission seating at 7:30 p.m. Group discounts are available.

January 16

Junior Teens, ages 11-12, will meet at Sims Library from 4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

January 17

Teen Book Club at Sims Library will meet from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. This event is for ages 11-18.

January 19

Teen Movie Saturday at Sims Library from 2:30 – 4:30 p.m.

January 23

Teens, ages 13-18, will meet at Sims Library from 4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

January 25

11th annual D.E.A.R. Day celebration will be held at campuses throughout the Waxahachie Independent School District. Reading times will be at 8:45 a.m. and 10:15 a.m. Call Melissa Cobb at the Partners in Education office at (972) 923-4631, ext. 142. In case of inclement weather, D.E.A.R. Day will be rescheduled for February 1.

February 1 - 3

CASI-sanctioned chili cook-off will be held at the Ellis County Expo Center, located at Hwy. 287 North in Waxahachie, benefiting the Ellis County Children's Advocacy Center and Gingerbread House. For more information contact Kay Lefler at (972) 646-5159 or Theresa Haskovec at (972) 938-0075.

February 2

The Ellis County Art Association will host an evening with Elvis, as performed by 2005 National Champion David Allen, 7:00 p.m. at the Ellis County Fine Arts Museum, 501 W. Main St. Advance tickets: \$10. Tickets at the door: \$12. To secure advance tickets or for more information, call (972) 937-3414 or e-mail ecaa@sbcglobal.net.

February 18

Waxahachie ISD Lighthouse for Learning — Adult Community Education classes begin for the spring semester. Classes are offered on Monday and Thursday evenings at Waxahachie High School. Please contact the community education office at (972) 923-4631 or e-mail Melissa Cobb at mcobb@wisd.org for further information.

March 29

Meals On Wheels 3rd annual BBQ Benefit. Location TBA. The fundraising event will include dinner, entertainment and an auction with all proceeds going to benefit Meals On Wheels. For more information, please call (972) 351-9943.

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