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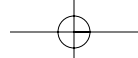
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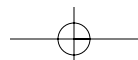
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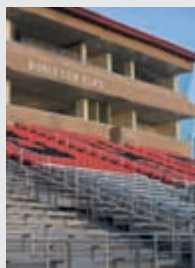
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*Photo by Rod Cordsen.*

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# Burleson NOW

## Editor's Note

*Dear Readers,*

Play, home, family, work and more play all combine in the lives of the folks we feature in our pages this month. Start out reading about Valerie O'Brien, a woman who makes a living just fiddlin' around. Further in, find out how Denise Griffin and Marty Mullendore turned parties into business. Read on for insight into Jordan Freelen, the Burleson High School fullback who is quite serious about the game he plays — as is Helen Hanson about the notes she plays for the Burleson Community Chorale.

For those of you who do not yet know Bettye Kilgore, we will introduce to you the woman who cooks other people's favorite foods when they are ill. Our educator-of-the-month is Martha Cornett, who found that joy makes every test bearable. Another playful duo is John and Mary Smith; we will take you into their home and show you what they are giving thanks for this year. You have a lot for which to be thankful, Burleson!

Happy Thanksgiving!

*Melissa Rawlins*

Burleson Editor

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# The Lady is a Champ

— By Alex Allred



Long before *American Idol* winner Kelly Clarkson put Burleson on the map, the city was already home to a great musical talent. Unlike Kelly, who is continuously bombarded by adoring fans, Valerie O'Brien moves quietly about her hometown. Few realize her historical connection and importance to the world of music.

In fact, this amazing woman is quite a pioneer. Valerie was the first female to serve on the board of the Texas Old Time Fiddlers Association at its inception in 1973. At that time, fiddlers wanted to create an association that could provide and groom judges who were familiar with Texas-style fiddling. While Valerie was busily fighting alongside her fellow fiddlers to have this particular art form better understood and judged, she was also experiencing her own personal battles. "I was the only girl," Valerie said, "all

the time I was growing up fiddling."

Historically, fiddling had always been, as Valerie explained, "a man's world," but she is grateful for the experience. "It taught me to be courageous and strong," she said. "A lot of fiddlers didn't quite know what to think about a young female playing their kind of music."

Their kind of music, specifically, is the musical melting pot of immigrants and U.S. history. As Anglo-immigrants brought their own music to Texas in the early 19th century, settlers told folklore and history through song, blending in those of Mexican and African American music, as well as Czech and German polkas. Nothing was recorded; every song and its story would be passed down from generation to generation through the art of performance.

Although Valerie began classical training with the violin at the age of 9, she felt a kindred spirit with the

Texas-style fiddling. Both her grandfather and great-grandfather were fiddlers, and as far back as she can remember, she has studied and played the music of her forefathers. By the age of 13, she had won the Junior World Championship, and over the years she has added to that countless state, national and world titles. Some of her awards include: two-time winner of the Texas Ladies Fiddle Championship and World Series winner for Solo Competitor and Twin Fiddling, as well as honorary titles such as Master Artist Grant from Texas Folklife Resources and Educator for Texas Commission on the Arts.

Widely thought of as one of the greatest practitioners and top fiddlers in folk music, Valerie is held in high regard among her peers. Always described as "classy" and "a real lady" by fellow competitive fiddlers, long-time



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music producers, songwriters and instructors, she is a throw back to a time that embraced the very kind of music she so loves. A classic beauty, she is poised, soft-spoken, genuine and driven.

In the 1970s, Valerie was most certainly on her way to great success. She had cut an album, played with and proven herself among the old guard of male fiddlers, and earned wide-spread respect and admiration. Thus when Nashville began calling, she surprised many by refusing to leave her Texas home. At that time, she was the mother of two young girls. "I didn't want to be a full-time musician with children," Valerie said. Instead, she focused on teaching private lessons in her home. "I wanted to be a parent and a teacher first," she added.

Before her high school graduation, Valerie experienced life on the road with an all-girl band and discovered she much preferred being at home. "That was when I knew I didn't like the road life," Valerie explained. "We got pretty cold and hungry." Opportunity kept knocking, however. She was in demand as a judge, a competitor and an educator for folk music around the nation and the world. While she modestly downplays her role, Valerie's lifelong dedication and passion to this music is believed to be one of the reasons the art has been preserved.

With her marriage to award-winning guitarist Rich O'Brien, Valerie sealed her fate as a traveling artist. Interestingly, it was Valerie the lady, not the artist, who was most attracted to her future husband. "The first time I met him," she recalled, "he tipped his hat to me. I'd never had anyone do that before and he took my breath away."

A tremendous talent in his own right, Rich has performed with some of the biggest names in music. "Wow, what can I say about him?" Valerie laughed, proudly listing his credentials. The winner of 11 Wranglers, the equivalent of a Grammy with the Academy of Country Music Awards,

he has played at the White House for former President Bush and in Crawford for President George W. Bush. When he tried his hand at producing, he created a blockbuster CD with such talents as Red Steagall, Reba McEntire, Tobey Keith, Charlie Pride, Larry Gatlin and Charlie Daniels in the titled work *Here We Go Again*. Rich remains in high demand, and together, both Valerie and Rich have earned numerous awards with the National Cowboy Hall of Fame and the Western Music Association.

Long gone are the days when Valerie had to prove herself among fiddlers, yet it is impossible for her to remain still for too long. With her sister Lydia, and grown daughters Jennifer and Julie, she now owns Valerie's Studio in Burleson and continues to teach Texas-style fiddling as well as classical violin, guitar, bass, piano, mandolin and banjo.

For years, Valerie has given meticulous detail to each song, to every note and every bowing. She has now undertaken a new challenge, one that is perhaps more daunting than the first. She is documenting the songs with which she was raised, determined to put the over 500 songs she has memorized to paper before they are lost. "It's so important," Valerie expressed of the arduous process of properly documenting each song. "The music belongs to everyone. It's not just my music." She continued, "It takes a lot of time and money to put it down so it can be shared. I might spend days on just one piece of paper." Clearly, her hard work is paying off. Already, she has produced two curriculum volumes and is working on her third.

No doubt about it, this lady is a champ, and the impact that Valerie has had on the musical world was recently made even clearer at the Red Steagall Fiddling competition at the Fort Worth Stockyards. As fiddler after fiddler was announced, it was clear the tide had turned. "It was funny," Valerie said, with a certain pride, "because most of them were girls." **NOW**



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# A Multi-faceted Couple in an Eight-sided Home

— By Melissa Rawlins

When John and Mary Smith married, they did not foresee retiring in an eight-sided house with no hallways. “God takes care of us,” Mary said, and based on that motto, the Smiths set out to contribute to their community and rear their children properly. That mission brought them to Burleson from Fort Worth in 1962. “We came to visit my friend, Marjorie, and saw that Burleson had a good school system which the boys could attend all through graduation,” Mary said. As it turned out, Mary taught in Mound and Taylor elementary schools throughout her 30-year career.

“When we arrived in Burleson,” John explained, “there were lots of vacant homes. We got a fixer-upper.” He advised Mary to put her salary into a special savings account for their future home. While working hard to get their Taylor Street house up to par, the couple began looking for a place in the country where their two boys, Kyle and Rick, could play. In 1969, they found a two-acre parcel on Ricky Lane. “We brought John’s daddy and stepmother out to look at the land, and a snake raced out from under a piece of metal,” Mary remembered. “That was the first time I knew that snakes could climb trees!” The serpent climbed up the very tree which is now home to the tree house they built for their grandson. “The kid used it once, but I guess he was scared of it,” John laughed.

Long before grandchildren were a concern, John and Mary visited Rockport, on the Texas coast, where the couple saw a unique home built on an eight-sided foundation and decided they wanted one built on their pastureland outside of Burleson.

## At Home With John and Mary Smith





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The man who took the job was J.A. Shumacher, who rebuilt the old Methodist church on South Dobson after it burned. "Even though he usually built commercial buildings," John said, "I think Mr. Shumacher kind of did us a favor. He was a nice guy."

In 1970, the Smiths moved into their warm and open 1,550-square-foot cabin in the woods, which Mary and John slowly filled with collectibles from their favorite haunts in Fort Worth and various Texas towns. "Early in our marriage, whatever I liked, he did not and vice versa," Mary recalled, "until one day we were in a Fort Worth antique mall and discovered we both liked older stuff." They carefully selected only a few necessary items of

furniture. When John is not out in public — telling stories at Toastmasters, or teaching the pros and cons of reverse mortgages at Burleson Community Education, or designing historic walking tours with Burleson Heritage Foundation — he likes to visit with friends and family in his family room, where he takes a seat in a World War II wheelchair purchased from the same place where they found their solid oak bed and the church pew by the front door. "This old pew collects all the stuff we'll take with us on our next Volkswalking trip," Mary said.

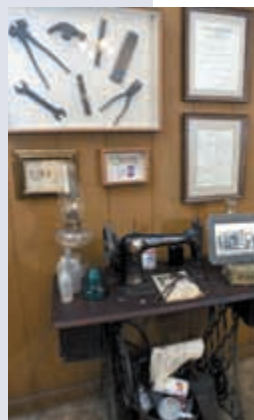
The personality of the home comes not from the circular effect of the depressed octagon in the ceiling, but from the Smiths' collections of family and community memorabilia. Scattered around the home are five

old clocks which Mary keeps wound and synchronized. One is a fragile cuckoo clock, brought back from the Black Forest of Germany by their son, Rick, when he was in the service. The other four are mantle clocks. "The one under the KC Baking Powder sign was John's uncle's, who needed some money and asked if we'd like it," Mary mentioned.

"There's another one from my mother."

Mary devoted one of the eight walls in the center of the house to her own family's memorabilia. "My mother sewed on a machine like this," she said of the treadle-machine brought home by John. On the wall above it, next to her mother's teacher's certificate and her 1903 birth certificate, hangs a 1930s black-and-white photo of the group of children

Mary's mother first taught in Arnold, Texas. Nearby is a framed collection of Mary's daddy's tools. "He was a



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carpenter, and his trade took us to Lake Worth, where I grew up.”

Neatly dividing the family room from the living room, Mary’s collection of gifts from her students fills the shelves surrounding the custom-made entertainment cabinet. “So many kids gave me love and hugs, and some were gift-givers,” Mary said. “One little girl, Kayleen Burns, gave me this little cross-stitch with ducks on it in 1982. Later, her brother gave me a shelf that looks like a school house, and I hung that on the wall to display more gifts from children.” On this shelf, John added an old powder horn that came from a cousin’s home.

The room where their sons grew up, once filled with two single beds covered in quilts hand-stitched by Mary’s mother, is now artfully arrayed with family mementos. “This is where we keep the boys’ Marine Corps and Army stuff,” John stated proudly. This family history wall displays a picture of all the boys in the family costumed

as a bunch of dalmatians; Mary sits regally in their center, hair spiked and face dramatically made-up to look the spitting image of Cruella De Vil.

Another example of the humor with which John leads his family is a faded black-and-white poster, his favorite memento from his years at the University of North Texas. “One Sadie Hawkins Day, I ran for the title Ugliest Man on Campus by superimposing my face over Francis the Talking Mule,” he laughed. He plastered the poster around campus and won! John framed one of those posters for his wall of awards, in the couple’s bedroom. Other awards tell stories of John’s community service, including the fact that he chartered the Burleson Optimist Club with Ed Carroll.

Mary displays a few awards of her own, including a sweet poem extolling the virtues of a good game of tennis, one of the couple’s pastimes during their working years. “John and Clayton Boyd built the first tennis courts at



Warren Park,” Mary said, “and I played for years with my doubles partner, Sandy Babb. I still play tennis three mornings a week, and I sub on other days if close friends ask me.”

John and Mary stay active now by donating their hands and hearts to St. Matthew Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Mary also volunteers at the Second Glance resale shop in Fort Worth, benefiting battered women and children, and at the Burleson Public Library. John continues to write about Burleson history for the *Burleson Star*. Now, building on 46 years of marriage, 45 years giving to Burleson and 30 years in their octagonal home, the memories are adding up to a multi-faceted retirement. **NOW**

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**ARTS  
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— By Melissa Rawlins

*Helen Hanson joyfully backs up the Burlleson Community Chorale.*

If you attended Founders Day last month, you might have heard The Burlleson Community Chorale in full effect, celebrating the community with songs of all types: gospel, patriotic, show tunes, fun songs and spirituals. What you may not have heard were the piano notes setting the tone underneath the harmony created by those 30 voices. However, that is okay with pianist Helen Hanson, who has accompanied the Chorale since its first practice two years ago. “My role as pianist is to allow the singers to hear the music so they can learn their parts. An accompanist,” Helen explained, “can lend emotions to music that allow the performers to feel the music and, hopefully, sing it the way the composer intended. The director can direct with great feeling, but if the accompaniment is not played with feeling, a hole is left in the heart of the listener.”

Helen should know. “I can cry when I’m alone, playing a composer’s wonderful works. The more I play,” she continued, “the more I acknowledge those emotions I feel are gifts from God to me.”

The Chorale reveals all the nuances of these emotions to the audience in their public performances. “There are so many dynamics to music that allow a piece to be done sweetly or humorously,” Helen said. “I guess there can be anger in music, too — but we’re a nice choir!” The Chorale’s job is to portray a march or a reverent moment in a way that moves the audience. “As the pianist, I help to remind each singer of how they should feel their song.”

Both Helen and this year’s Chorale president, Clayton Boyd,

are quick to point out the Chorale’s role in encouraging new voices in Burlleson. “We don’t have a lot of young people, yet they’re important to a choir. Younger people inspire all of us to feel more comfortable singing,” Clayton enthused. “If someone’s shy to sing, a chorale is a good way to start.”

“The Chorale practices a lot,” Helen explained, “because it takes a lot to put all this together into a finished product. It’s a team thing. You cannot have a chorale without the singers

and the director, and the accompanist works with them all. Each part has an important function to fulfill, kind of like the body of Christ.”

The group does a thrilling job with songs of faith. “The cornerstone piece of music we sing is ‘How Great Thou Art,’ although we’re separate and apart from association with one church,”

Clayton said. He added “Our members just like to sing.”

The Chorale’s audiences just like to listen. The group does not charge for performances, such as the upcoming show they will give on December 13 at Heritage Place. “We enjoy the fact that people want us to sing,” Clayton expressed. While the membership is made up of 20 percent retired persons, most of the singers are employed during the week. “For the majority of the members who work, we have practices on Sunday afternoons,” Clayton said. This works well for Helen, who is employed during the week as an administrative assistant for an environmental engineering consulting firm in Fort Worth. She has two grown daughters and two grandchildren





**ARTS  
NOW**

in the area, thus her heart belongs in Burlson, where she has a host of angelic voices to support with her flying fingers on the piano.

"I don't remember my mom ever forcing me to practice," Helen said. "I began lessons at age 11, and always enjoyed playing. I discovered I really loved the piano when I started playing for the high school chorus. Then in college, I was pianist at a church for a while. I actually do not have a degree in music, but consider myself a better musician than some who do because I pick up on unusual rhythms," she said. "I strive for perfection when I play. My skills are more than proficient, yet I couldn't make a living playing concert piano. I'm a good sight-reader, and that helps."

More than anything, Helen enjoys having fun with the group. "It keeps things lighthearted, builds camaraderie. When you can laugh during practices, you can enjoy yourself more. I'm not the clown of the chorale," she noted, "but if I make a mistake, I might make a comment to laugh about what I've done."

The Chorale began the fall season with a Sunday afternoon practice session at the St. Matthew Presbyterian Church, and debuted their full range of voices with a rousing performance at the Burlson Ex-Students Association last month. The Chorale currently has approximately 30 members. In order to fulfill his vision, which is to blend 100 voices into one great, huge sound, Clayton has opened the door to practices at the church for any interested singers. "Anyone who wants to sing, we invite them. There are no tryouts. Come, sing, enjoy!" he encouraged.

"It's not that everyone's got to have a fantastic voice," Helen added. "The art of the Chorale is that we learn how to blend our voices, to achieve synergy by creating a final sound that is an amazing thing. When you're part of that, it's really ... wow!" **ARTS NOW**

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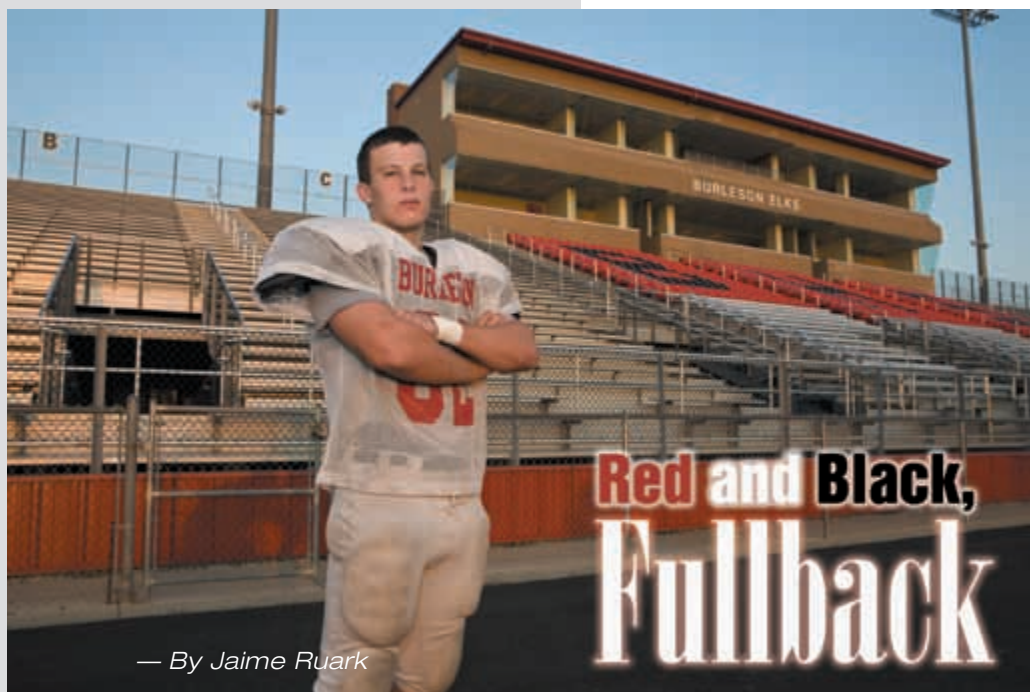
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— By Jaime Ruark



**“Be humble; focus on school; God and family first.”**

Work hard. Be a team leader. Have pride. Be determined. These are words that ring through the locker room at Burleson High School, words you expect to hear echoed back by one of the Elks’ star players, Jordan Freelen, No. 32, senior starting fullback. “Be humble; focus on school; God and family first,” are, however, words some might find surprising coming from an athlete, especially in a world where the television show *Friday Night Lights* showcases the total, and sometimes obsessive, emphasis placed on football. Yet it only takes spending a few minutes with this unpretentious young man to realize that these seeming contradictions are actually what help him be a star, both on and off the field.

It is difficult for Jordan’s parents, Rusty and Shari Freelen, to hide their pride. Having played football himself at Lamar High in Arlington, it is easy to see that Rusty has some big shoes for his son to fill. Both Rusty and Shari are graduates of Texas Tech. “We hand-picked Burleson



because of the colors,” Rusty smiled. “The boys are allowed to go to any college, as long as it’s Tech,” he joked. With three handsome sons sporting the Elks red and black, they have some exciting football years ahead of them even after Jordan graduates.

While they could probably spend hours discussing Jordan’s ability on the field, such as the time he rushed 174 yards in one game, his parents will just as quickly turn the conversation to his accomplishments in the classroom. “Jordan is third in his class,” Shari said. The Burleson Independent School District has a program that enables parents to monitor their children’s grades online, and Jordan’s parents find this helpful in keeping tabs on his progress. “Last year, his grades started to slip a little,” Rusty admitted. Lower A’s meant emphasis needed to shift a bit from football to academics. “His career is more important,” Rusty expressed, with Jordan nodding his head in quick agreement.

“Football takes up a lot of my time,”

Jordan explained. “We practice before, during and after school, and on Saturdays.” Despite this, Jordan sets a high academic standard for himself. “I don’t want to walk on anywhere,” he said, “unless there’s a scholarship involved.” He feels that he can go further in life with a college degree. Jordan excels in math and science and plans to be an engineer, like both his parents.

Jordan channels his boundless energy off the field in positive directions. During their four-hour Saturday morning varsity practices, the boys review film from the previous night’s game and lift weights, and Coach Mel Maxfield, athletic director and head coach, has the boys run plays, work on individual drills such as passing and footwork, and practice against the junior varsity team during the regular practice week. Jordan then goes home and “relaxes” by mowing lawns or playing paintball. “My hobbies involve anything outdoors,” he said. “I like to go hunting, water-skiing, hiking and camping.” He has a black belt in taekwondo and has built a deer stand that causes the whole family to smile over its 32-square-feet of grandeur. “It

## Sports NOW

took a crane to build it," Shari laughingly exclaimed, as her son explained, "I was tired of being uncomfortable."

Having a football family can mean a jangle of nerves for the mother of the brood, as well as other family members who get to watch and cheer from the stands. "I'm focused when I'm playing," Jordan added. "I can't hear the crowd. When you're out there, you really can't hear a thing." If he does break concentration for a second, he can look up and find both sets of grandparents and the rest of his family. Shari good-naturedly admitted, "I'm up there fanning myself! These guys are 50 - 100 pounds heavier and they're all on top of him. It can be scary, but it's fun. These kids have grown up together," she said, referring to Jordan's teammates. "They've all played together for so long, it feels like every kid is your kid."

Jordan's brothers, Nicholas, 15, and Landon, 13, also fullbacks, are extremely proud of their older brother. They enjoy the bit of notoriety that goes with sharing the Freelen football tradition. "It's cool! Everybody knows he's my brother," Landon enthused. Thus the boys take to heart Jordan's experience when he advises them that working out is important. "It may not be fun," he said. "Personally, I don't really like lifting, but it's worth it. The work will pay off."

For such a hard-working athlete, even more inspiring are Jordan's next words. "I'm a Christian, so my priorities are church, school, family, then football," he said. The Freelens have impressed upon their sons the importance of teamwork and putting in a full effort, but they feel the true test involves their character and witness. Here again Jordan passes with flying colors, because as he modestly said, "It seems like when I start to get a big head, I mess up, so I try to stay humble." Quite a task for such an impressive athlete and student; but with his family's support, Jordan can turn his clear gaze to a very bright future. **NOW**

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**Business**  
**NOW**



— By Melissa Rawlins

There is fearlessness in the smiles of Denise Griffin and Marty Mullendore, who own and operate the Silver Caboose Party Place and its neighboring rustic décor store, Petticoat Junction. Both businesses opened their doors one-and-a-half years ago after Marty and Denise decided to be more than friends and neighbors. “We’d talked about wanting to do something together for all these years,” Marty said. “One day, we just went riding and looking at properties.” They saw the “for rent” sign in front of the lonely building on the railroad tracks near Old Town. “We plopped our money on the table, and then figured out what to do with it.”

With a prior history as a veterinary supply and a feed store, the building needed an update. Denise’s husband helped remodel, transforming the dark space into a festive party room (the Silver Caboose) and cozy gift and

decorating shop (Petticoat Junction). Marty and Denise have personalized both areas with “some cool stuff” found

the bar,” said Denise, adding that over 17 Christmas parties were hosted in the Silver Caboose last year. “Our clients



while cleaning out the old store, and with their own touches.

“For the party room, Marty and I made all the tables. We branded them with SC, for Silver Caboose, and then stained and shellacked them. My husband built

transform the room into the vision they have for their party. They like the fact that it’s long and narrow, that the upper level is great for a disc jockey and dancing, and the lower level for the food and beverages. They love the setup.”

## Business NOW

The partners credit their landlords for helping make Petticoat Junction and the Silver Caboose a going concern. "For two girls like us, green, never in retail, Rocky Bransom and David Shipman have been really good to help us succeed." In fact, Marty and Denise have relied quite a bit on the kindness of family, friends and strangers as they have filled Petticoat Junction with handmade crosses, furniture and indoor/outdoor decorations — especially their best-selling iron art. "Marty and I go down to Laredo together, no man with us. We take a suburban or my husband's quarter-ton pickup plus a friend's trailer," Denise explained. "The guys we buy our ironwork from pack it up for us, and stack it 20 pieces high, wired together so it's really not going anywhere — but it makes you pretty nervous!"

"This summer we went for pottery. We had 80 pots on a one-axle trailer," Marty said. The weight of the pottery forced their tires to compress nearly to the ground. "We bought new tires from a Pep Boys, and they sent us around to a hole-in-the-wall place in a back neighborhood, where some other guys came over and changed the trailer tires for us — right there on the street, loaded up with pottery!" The women learned a lot from that trip!

Traditionally, a business must struggle for three to five years before it either fails or succeeds. Odds seem to be in favor of Petticoat Junction and the Silver Caboose Party Place, since Marty and Denise fearlessly operate from the simple attitude that it is a blessing to be able to do anything and consider customer service as their main objective.

Petticoat Junction is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. - 5:30 p.m., and is closed Sunday and Monday. To book a special event, from holiday parties to quinciéneros to anniversaries, call the Silver Caboose Party Place at (817) 447-3335. **NOW**

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# Education **NOW**

# Good to GO

— By Melissa Rawlins

Living through Breast Cancer, being a survivor, has been anything but a lonely journey for Martha Cornett, a reading specialist at Stribling Elementary School. “My students helped me survive,” said Martha with a smile. The children in her classroom did not know she had cancer, or that she had a machine inside her purse that pumped Herceptin into her body even as she worked with her small group of readers. “I didn’t look sick, people said. In fact,” Martha added, “you’re not sick when you are fighting the cancer, except on the weekends when you’re taking your chemo. Only my husband saw that.”

Her students saw a kind and polished woman with intense eyes that searched their faces and watched their body movements, listening intently to their every word as they worked hard, learning to read. “I just try to create happy moments in there for the children, using humor,” Martha said about her work. “I’ve got a whole bag of tricks I use. For example, you pick a child, find something good about them, and spotlight them periodically so the positive thing about them can shine above everybody else. For children who have been unsuccessful, we have to re-establish

**For success,  
attitude is as  
important  
as ability.**



self-esteem. I’ve had some children who’ve gone two years before their magic moment, when skills, practice and self-esteem combine to give you a successful reader.”

There is not a magic moment for breast cancer survivors, however, because there is no cure. “They think they’ve got it all, but they can’t,” Martha clarified. “That’s why you go back for checkups. I never did quite understand the term ‘breast cancer survivor,’ but I have been one for eight years.”

Thankfully, she said, her oncologist is aggressive. “He used an experimental drug on me, and I’m glad he did. He’s been on the cutting edge. One drug he used with me was a derivative of mistletoe. When I learned that, I told my friend, ‘I knew I had a strong urge to kiss every man I see!’”

Martha’s sense of humor and willingness to experience happiness has made a big difference. “When I

received my diagnosis, I told my oncologist I was just getting ready to sign my contract to teach. He said, ‘You need to work, and I’ll work with you. We’ll give you your infusion by pump over the weekend, and on Monday after school, we’ll remove the pump.’ I told my principals, and one of them said, ‘That makes no difference to me.’ I was able to go to school and actually had a happiness when I was with the children. The reading in the small groups is very good. I like to limit it to four children, and that way I get to spend time with the children, observing them read and zeroing in on their problem to help them solve it.”

That technique is precisely what Martha’s oncologist used with her. “He knows the state of mind is really important. I would have stayed home and felt a lot of fear,” she remembered. “With his encouragement, I worked and experienced joy with the children. I redirected my energies outward instead of inward.”

“Sometimes, I wondered where all

## Education **NOW**

this joy came from! Here I was ready to go through chemo, and I had joy!” Martha received support from her husband, who told her how cute she looked the day she first donned her wig, and from teachers, who said they liked her new haircut. “I got such energy from my kids and from the teachers.”

Unfortunately, Burleson Independent School District (BISD) has several staff members battling cancer. Last year, BISD employees fielded approximately 27 teams in the national fundraising effort titled Relay for Life, dedicated to cancer survivors and their families. “Because of the total monies we raised and the tremendous participation level of our employees,” explained Richard Crummell, BISD director of learning supports and public relations, “we won the Power of Purple award for the most participation in this local event. We raised over \$35,000. Several of our campus teams participated due to the struggles of a faculty member or someone on their staff.”

“You race for the cure,” Martha said, “because they’re still looking for a cure.” That is why she will continue to go to her specialist for checkups until she passes her 10-year “all-clear” point. “They are not telling you that you are cured, but they are watching to see if it is going to come back. As time goes on, depression and anxiety go away and you just live with it.”

“I think it’s important to have something in life for which you have a passion,” Martha said. “I focused on three things to help me fight: faith, family and work. The longer you survive, the more your chances of survival increase.” This was unknown to her in the first year after finishing treatments, the year Martha called the hardest. “It’s like you’ve lost your parachute once the treatment’s over,” she said. “Now, you wait. That’s the time you must keep busy. Now, I’m back in the classroom and good to go.” **NOW**

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# Around Town NOW



The Burleson Chamber of Commerce held several ribbon cuttings, at left from top to bottom: American National Bank, Cendera Funding and Texas Best Smokehouse. Dayton McDowell, son of Parks and Recreation Manager David McDowell, top right, thoroughly enjoyed the horse ride during the annual Founders Day event. Annamaria Montoya and Maria Noriega, bottom right, meet weekly with their friend from Joshua, Maria Salazar, at Tiger Mart to enjoy a cup of coffee.



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# Around Town NOW



A ribbon cutting, top left, was held at Checkered Flag. Members of the City of Burleson's United Way committee, top right, presented a check to the United Way staff and board members. The Burleson Police Department, middle left, graduated its second COPS class recently. Willie Kirby of Rendon, bottom right, comes weekly to work on the renovation of the Burleson Interurban Railcar with a trio of his best buddies. Burleson businesses, bottom left, supported the 186 new Burleson ISD employees with a luncheon. Another ribbon cutting, bottom center, was held at Ryan's.

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## Look Who's Cooking

— By Melinda Hines

### IN THE KITCHEN WITH BETTYE KILGORE

Betty credits her mother for her interest in cooking, especially when it comes to baking. “One of my most precious inheritances was my mother’s recipes,” she said. “Her pound cake is one of my favorites.” Bettye recalled how she baked these delicious treats for many family and friends. “One summer after she was 90, she baked over 20 sour cream pound cakes for her church’s summer Harmony Hill singing school,” Bettye said.

Bettye has tried to keep the gift of baking alive as she shares these special creations with her own friends and family. “I relive the wonderful memories every time I cook them,” she commented. These are some of Bettye’s favorite treats including her mother’s popular pound cake and several variations on her most popular cakes. **NOW**

#### PUMPKIN PIE CAKE

##### CAKE:

- 1 large can pumpkin
- 1 12-oz. can evaporated milk
- 5 eggs, room temperature and beaten
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 3 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp. cloves or pumpkin pie spice
- 1/2 tsp. nutmeg
- 1/2 tsp. ginger
- 1/2 tsp. salt

##### TOPPING:

- 1 box Duncan Hines Butter Recipe Golden Cake Mix
- 1 cup broken pecan or walnut pieces
- 2 sticks oleo or butter, melted

CAKE: Blend all ingredients and pour into 9 x 15-inch greased cake pan or 2 smaller pans. TOPPING: Sprinkle cake mix, followed by nuts over pumpkin

mixture. Drizzle melted butter over the top. Bake for 45 - 50 minutes at 350 F. Test cake with toothpick. If not clean, bake a little longer. Serve with cool whip.

#### NELL KILLGORE'S SOUR CREAM POUND CAKE

- 5 eggs, room temperature
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/4 stick butter, room temperature (If butter is not available, substitute only Parkay margarine.)
- 1/4 cup Crisco oil
- 1 cup (8 oz.) sour cream
- 1 box Duncan Hines Butter Recipe Golden Cake Mix
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 tsp. butter flavor extract

Preheat oven to 350 F. Spray Bundt pan with Pam and grease with oil. In a large mixing bowl beat eggs; add sugar and butter; continue to beat, gradually adding oil, sour cream and cake mix. Beat in electric mixer at medium speed for 1

minute; add vanilla and butter flavor extract; put mixer on high and continue beating for 4 minutes. Pour into prepared Bundt pan and bake 38 - 42 minutes until cake returns to finger press. Cake will rise above edge of pan; bake until cake falls a little bit, then remove from oven and let sit in pan about a minute. Spray Pam on wire cake rack and place rack over cake while in pan; turn upside down, leave on rack and cover the cake while it is hot with the top or cover of a cake pan. Let cake cool. Cake can then be placed on a serving plate or in a “cake keeper.” It may also be frozen if wrapped tightly with plastic wrap and foil. If wrapping, be sure cake is completely cool. When taken from freezer, a slice in the microwave for 15 seconds tastes freshly baked.

\*For Lemon Pound Cake, use the above recipe substituting Duncan Hines Lemon Supreme Cake Mix and lemon flavoring for vanilla. For glaze, heat 1/2 cup creamy homestyle lemon frosting and slowly drizzle over cake.

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# Who's Cooking **NOW**

## CHOCOLATE CHERRY CAKE

### CAKE:

- 1 22-oz. can cherry pie filling
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 tsp. almond extract
- 1 pkg. fudge cake mix or any chocolate mix

### ICING:

- 1 cup sugar
- 5 Tbsp. stick margarine
- 1/3 cup evaporated milk
- 6 oz. semi-sweet chocolate chips

### CAKE:

Preheat oven to 350 F. Grease and flour 13 x 9-inch sheet pan; or use two 8 x 8-inch pans. Combine pie filling, eggs and almond extract. Gradually add cake mix and stir until completely blended. Do not use electric mixer. Bake for 25 - 30 minutes.

**ICING:** In small saucepan combine first 3 ingredients and boil for 1 minute stirring constantly. Remove from heat and stir in chocolate chips until smooth. Pour over cooled or warm cake. Make little holes in cake with fork for icing to penetrate.

*\*For Spice Apple Caramel Cake use Duncan Hines Spice Cake mix and 1 can of apple pie filling which has been blended in either food processor or blender. For icing, substitute 6 oz. butterscotch chips.*

## WHITE TRASH

- 1 box Golden Graham Chex Cereal
- 2/3 pkg. thin pretzel sticks, broken in half
- 12 oz. peanuts (cocktail or dry roasted)
- 24 oz. white chocolate almond bark

Cut open a large brown paper bag and place on large surface. Mix cereal, pretzels and peanuts in a large foil roasting pan. Melt white chocolate bark according to package directions. Bark should be hot and thin enough to pour over dry mixture. Stir until all pieces are covered with the bark and then spread coated mixture on brown paper bag as thinly as possible. Let cool. Then break into manageable pieces and store in airtight container.

## GRAHAM CRISPS

- cinnamon graham crackers, enough to cover cookie sheet
- 1 stick Parkay margarine
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup chopped walnuts or pecans

Place cinnamon graham crackers close together on cookie sheet with cinnamon side up. (Or you can use plain or chocolate graham crackers for variety.) Heat oven to 325 F. Boil margarine with brown sugar for 4 minutes. Pour over crackers, covering all and add nuts. Place in 325 F oven for 8 - 10 minutes. Take off cookie sheet immediately with spatula and place on wire rack to cool. When cool, break up and put in airtight container.

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# What Kind of an Investor Are You?

— By Sharon Robinson

If you are investing money or planning on doing so, there is one very important question you should ask yourself — “What kind of investor am I?” Knowing if you are an aggressive or conservative investor is the first step to knowing how you should invest your money.

- **Determine Your Risk Tolerance**

First you need to determine your risk tolerance level. Risk is the amount of volatility and uncertainty you are willing to accept from an investment in seeking your financial

goals, like planning for retirement or a college education.

Some investments carry a higher level of risk than others. Generally, the higher the risk of an investment, the greater its potential returns. However, there is also a greater potential to lose your initial investment.

The lower the risk, the less likely it is for that investment to generate a higher rate of return. When you invest your assets in financial products that assume little or no risk, your money may not have the opportunity to grow as fast as you would like.

To help determine your risk level, ask yourself, “How comfortable will I be watching my investment go up and down in value?” The more comfortable you are with price volatility, the greater the risk you are probably willing to assume.

- **Consider Time**

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The next step in the process of determining your profile as an investor is to identify your time horizon — the amount of time between now and when you hope to reach your stated goal. Generally, the more time you have, the more risk you can afford to assume. The reason: The longer your time horizon, the more time you have to ride out the market's ups and downs in pursuit of your financial goals.

Knowing what level of risk you are comfortable with can help you determine whether you are a conservative investor, an aggressive investor or somewhere in-between. This is an important first step because then you can focus on investments that provide you with the levels of risks and potential returns with which you are comfortable.

To find out more about the type of investor you are or the different types of investments that are available, contact a financial services professional. There is no assurance that any investment will achieve its investment objectives. Investment return and principal value will fluctuate and the investment, when redeemed, may be worth more or less than its original cost. **NOW**

*Sharon Robinson is a State Farm agent based in Burleson.*

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# Health NOW

## Surviving Diabetes Requires More Than Just Managing Blood Sugar

For the nearly 20 million Americans living with Type 2 diabetes, monitoring their blood sugar levels is a critical and daily task. While keeping blood sugar numbers in check is essential for managing the disease, paying attention to cholesterol and blood pressure levels is just as important.

According to the American Diabetes Association (ADA), about 73,000 diabetics die each year from diabetes-related complications. Topping the list of complications is cardiovascular disease. In fact, the ADA estimates that two out of three diabetics will eventually die from heart disease or stroke. While cardiovascular disease is a serious and common complication of diabetes, only 18 percent of diabetics are aware of this, according to a survey done by the ADA.

So what is the link between cardiovascular disease and diabetes? Jeffrey Astbury, M.D., internal medicine physician on the medical staff at Baylor Medical Center at Waxahachie said that over time, high blood glucose levels can lead to increased fatty deposits on blood vessel walls, affecting blood flow and increasing the risk of clogging and atherosclerosis (hardening of the blood vessels) ultimately increasing the risk for a heart attack.

“While high blood sugar is indeed dangerous and can cause other complications such as damage to the eyes, kidneys and nerves — unchecked cholesterol and blood pressure levels are even more so,” Dr. Astbury said. “Even if a diabetic is meticulous about controlling their blood sugar, they are still at risk for heart disease.”

Dr. Astbury said to help prevent heart disease, diabetics should work with their physician to determine the best treatment plan. He recommended the following guidelines:

- Maintain normal blood glucose levels. “Blood glucose levels vary depending on the time of day, what and how much you have eaten, as well as if you have exercised or not, but a ‘normal’ blood glucose level is in the low to mid 100s.”
- Keep blood pressure under 130/80, using medication if necessary. “High blood pressure puts diabetics at risk for heart attack, stroke, eye problems and kidney disease. Have your blood pressure checked regularly if you are a diabetic. It can usually be controlled with medication and lifestyle changes.”
- Keep cholesterol levels under control, using medication if necessary. “There is no

way to tell if your cholesterol levels are high without a blood test. It is recommended that diabetics keep their LDL (bad) cholesterol levels below 100 mg/dl, their HDL (good) levels above 40 mg/dl and their triglyceride levels below 150 mg/dl.”

- Maintain a healthy weight. “In most cases, weight loss can lessen the symptoms of Type 2 diabetes and in some cases keep it under control without the use of medication.”
- Exercise regularly. “Regular exercise is crucial for Type 2 diabetics and it is never too late to start. Exercise can lower your blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol levels and actually increase your energy level.”
- Maintain a heart-healthy diet that is low in fat and salt. “Try to avoid food that is high in fat as this can increase your cholesterol levels and anything high in sodium can increase your blood pressure. Try to eat a balanced diet with lots of fruits and vegetables, whole grains and choose lean meats and low-fat dairy. Most importantly, Type 2 diabetics should avoid sugar.”

The most common signs of a heart attack include:

- chest pain or discomfort
- Pain or discomfort in your arms, back, jaw, neck or stomach
- Shortness of breath
- Sweating or light-headedness



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# Health NOW

- Indigestion or nausea
- Fatigue

"If you experience any of these symptoms, take them seriously and call 9-1-1 right a way," Dr. Astbury said. He added that Type 2 diabetes is manageable, especially if it is detected in the early stages before any significant damage has been done. "Common symptoms of Type 2 diabetes include frequent thirst and urination, weakness and fatigue, blurred vision and tingling or loss of feeling in the hands or feet to name a few. If you suspect you may have Type 2 diabetes, talk to your physician about taking a blood glucose test." **NOW**

*\* Physicians are members of the medical staff at one of Baylor Health Care System's subsidiary, community or affiliated medical centers and are neither employees nor agents of those medical centers, Baylor Medical Center at Waxahachie or Baylor Health Care System.*

# November 2007 Community Calendar

**Every Monday**

Making It Happen Network Group meets from 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. at Ryan's Grill.

**Every Tuesday**

Toddlers (ages 2 - 3) Story Time begins at 10:30 a.m. at the Burleson Library.

**Every Wednesday**

Making It Happen Network Group Breakfast Club meets from 8 a.m. - 9 a.m. at Cracker Barrel.

Listeners (ages 4 plus) Story Time begins at 10:30 a.m. at the Burleson Library.

**Every Thursday**

Making It Happen Network Group meets from 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. at Ryan's Grill.

**Every Friday**

Babies (ages birth - 1) Story Time begins at 10:30 a.m. at the Burleson Library.

**November 5 - 9**

Yard Waste Collection Week. For more information, contact (817) 447-5410, ext. 271.

**November 7**

Friends of the Library Meeting begins at 10 a.m. at the

Burleson Public Library.

**November 10**

Dispose of Household Chemicals Properly from 9 - 11 a.m. at the Municipal Service Center, 1675 John Jones Drive (FM 731). The Crud Cruiser from Fort Worth will accept residential waste including paint, antifreeze, batteries, acid, motor oil, fluorescent bulbs, pool chemicals, pesticides, transmission or brake fluid, degreasers, craft chemicals and aerosol cans. For more information, call (817) 447-5410.

**November 13**

Burleson Heritage Foundation Meeting begins at 7 p.m. at the Heritage Visitor's Center.

**November 15**

Senior Thanksgiving Luncheon begins at noon at the Senior Activity Center.

**December 1**

Christmas in Burleson. Santa's Breakfast, hosted by the Park and Recreation Department, 7 a.m. at the Burleson Community Center. Lighted parade with a "Texas Christmas" theme, starts at 6 p.m. from the Kerr Middle School parking lot. Tree lighting ceremony at the corner of Ellison Street and Johnson Avenue, 7 p.m.

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72°	72°	72°	72°	72°	72°	72°





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