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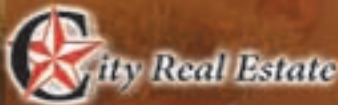
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Editor's Note

Fall has arrived!

Golden pumpkins, roasting turkeys, steaming bowls of harvest vegetables crowned with melting butter and the perfect pecan pie all conjure up an image of Thanksgiving. The pictures in our minds — of holiday gatherings from our childhood — are the background for the happy feelings experienced as we plan a meal to enjoy with our children, relatives or friends.

Young faces and old share this season equally, as we all have something to reflect on with gratitude. Thanksgiving is a reminder, not to regret what we have lost, but to cherish what we have. It is a time, not to aspire to future progress, but to rest, for a moment, in a spirit of gratitude for the present. Regardless of the richness of the dishes, our true wealth is held not in our hands, but in our hearts.

Happy Thanksgiving, Ennis.

Kelly Kovar

EnnisNOW Editor

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Come Together

— By Kelly Kovar

Pastor Lynn Godsey is accustomed to bringing people together. He has brought together dozens of community members to pray for the city and schools. In the '90s he brought together hundreds of teenagers for local youth rallies, and he founded and acts as president of the Hispanic Evangelical Alliance of the Metroplex (HEAM). His latest effort may be the boldest yet. Lynn is bringing together the entire city of Ennis in an effort to feed 1,000 needy families this holiday season. "The need unites us," Lynn said. "It is going to take the whole city to feed the poor." Businessmen, pastors, industry leaders, civic groups and private citizens have been meeting together with Lynn for months to undertake a Feed the Children (FTC) project in Ennis. There are three steps: identify needy families, raise money to buy food, then have people adopt a family and deliver the food boxes.

"Some people ask me why this is being done," Lynn said, "Millions of people in the country have lost their jobs, and 14.5 percent in Ennis are living under the poverty level. Sixty percent of kids in the local schools are in the federal lunch program, and many workers here have been reduced

to a four-day work week, losing 20 percent of their income. If they are not anchored in Christ, they feel like there is no help or hope. Not only the poor are suffering, but many middle income people and upper middle income people are losing their jobs, losing their homes, having to move in with other people." Lynn's goal is that by meeting physical needs, people's hearts will be opened, and they will be invited to and welcomed into area churches, where their spiritual needs can also be met.

The community has rallied to the call. Local businesses have stepped forward to shoulder various expenses of the project. Joshua Massey made brochures explaining the Ennis Feed the Children (EFTC) project. The

brochures, along with cards which can be filled out either to adopt a needy family for four weeks or to request assistance, have been distributed all over town along with special boxes into which the cards can be dropped. Ennis Office Supply paid for the boxes, and National Envelope provided donation envelopes, printed in English and Spanish. The Ennis Independent School District and the Ennis Chamber of Commerce have provided meeting space in their board rooms for the EFTC steering committee to meet for months.

The steering committee is actually made up of three committees: Bramlet Beard, CEO of Ennis State Bank, heads up the finance (fundraising) committee; Steve Howerton, city manager, has





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Dr. James W. Choi is board certified in Internal Medicine, Cardiovascular Disease, Interventional Cardiology & Nuclear Cardiology. Dr. Choi offices at OCT's Dallas clinic at Baylor University Medical Center and at Ennis Doctors Center. Among his many accomplishments, Dr. Choi has published a number of articles relating to stent placement, cardiovascular disease in diabetic patients & coronary stenting to name a few.



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spearheaded the logistics committee; and local minister, Dr. James Pool has undertaken the coordination of the pastors' committee. "Pastors Booker T. Washington, Von Thomas and Darrell Nelson helped Dr. Pool get the addresses for all the churches, so pastors from every church could be contacted. The pastors are all coming onboard," Lynn mentioned. Each church plans to adopt a given number of families, delivering food to them weekly for four weeks." EFTC is coordinated by Lynn Godsey, who has a treasurer, Betty Honza, and a secretary, Jennifer Kingsley, who have dedicated much time to the effort.

The cost of the endeavor will be \$72,000 and funds are being raised for the effort in three ways: through the churches, through businesses and through the public. People wanting to help can walk into places of business and find donation envelopes to sponsor a family for \$72 or co-sponsor a family for \$36, pay via check or credit card and then mail the envelopes to Ennis State Bank. Also available at each location are cards which can be filled out by those people desiring to request a food delivery to their home.

After the funds are raised, Ennis State Bank will prepare a single cashier's check, written to FTC. Then FTC will load pallets of boxes onto trucks to come to Ennis. "Each trailer carries 1,200 boxes: 400 with food, 400 with hygienic material and 400 with products donated by Avon. On Thursday, November 5, we are hoping the caravan of trucks, which I call a "convoy of blessing," will come down I-45 and roll into Ennis," Lynn said. "The community is really pulling together to do this." The convoy will go to National Envelope; they have volunteered to store the pallets of food and household items. If they need back up, CVS distribution center has offered to help.

Every Wednesday, starting November 18 and continuing through December 9, National Envelope and CVS will use their truck fleets to ferry the pallets

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to three hubs: First United Methodist Church, Tabernacle Baptist Church Family Life Center and New Founders Missionary Baptist Church. Baylor Baptist will serve as a backup hub for New Founders in the event of inclement weather. Churches will pick up pallets for the families they have adopted; then church families and individuals will personally deliver them. "A family, who has never been involved in missions — because this is literally missionary work — will have a change in their heart. Over the course of the four distribution days, relationships will be built, adopted families may share prayer requests, and they will be invited to special Christmas programs at area churches on December 20, where there will be gifts for the children," Lynn said. "We have to get out of the mindset that serving God means sitting in a pew; it means meeting the needs of people. Remember Jesus said, 'I was hungry, you did not feed me.'"

Lynn was inspired to begin EFTC earlier this year when he met with Dr. Claude Thomas, of FTC. Dr. Thomas was interested in beginning a FTC project with HEAM. Many of the HEAM churches have begun FTC projects; but Lynn also had a heart for Ennis. He and his wife, Tana, with their children, Marshall and Tanya, came to Ennis almost 25 years ago. Lynn had graduated from Waylon Baptist University, earned a master's in religious education from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and started a church near Cleburne before being called to a ministry in Ennis as pastor of Ministerios Templo De Poder. "I felt convicted to commit, not just my church, but the whole city of Ennis to come together to do this," Lynn said. "Claude told me later that nowhere in the nation of America has this ever been done on a citywide level like we are doing it, where the schools, the hospital, industry and churches come together." The undertaking is a large one. "It is bigger than any one man or any one church," Lynn said, "I give God the glory for it." **NOW**

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LOVE

Matters Most

— By Jaime Ruark

When Teresa and Stuart Goedrich met at a little dance hall on the outskirts of a small town in the middle of nowhere, life quickly became an adventure to share. “I grew up in a small town called Moulton, and Stuart grew up in a neighboring town 20

minutes away called Schulenburg, about four hours south of here,” Teresa said. The two discovered they now lived just two blocks apart in Austin, where Stuart was earning his bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Texas at Austin (UT).

“Once we knew each other, we started running into each other at the cleaners and the grocery store,” she added. “It was fate.”

A series of moves throughout their 10 years of marriage finally brought the Goedrich family to Ennis, where they will celebrate their sixth Thanksgiving holiday in their current three-bedroom, two-bath home. “Stuart graduated in ’98, and then we lived in Irving for about three years,” Teresa continued. “As a small town girl, I’m always up for an adventure, always ready to move.” Thus, when Stuart’s opportunity for job relocation to California presented itself, Teresa, with their newborn son, Caleb, was up for the challenge. “I used to say, ‘As long



At Home With **Stuart**
and Teresa Goedrich



as someone can pack me up, I'm ready to go," she said.

The family, with 2-month-old Caleb in tow, headed toward the West Coast in June. "We moved there, bought a house and then that October, the company




decided to make some changes," Teresa said. Suddenly finding himself without the job and the reason he had uprooted his family, Stuart and Teresa faced another move. "We didn't know what to do. He looked for a job there and started applying for jobs back in Texas, and we finally decided that we had grown up here and Texas was where we wanted to be. We ended up in Lewisville," she recalled.

After three major moves in less than a year, the couple, who previously were always up for a new town and a new adventure, have now established roots in the community and are thankful to


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make this house a home for their two beautiful children, 7-year-old Caleb and Ella, who is 5. "I'm not going to be moving again for a while!" Teresa declared with a smile. "We've found a quaint little town and we're happy to be putting down roots here."

Stuart first found a job with Guardian Industries Corporation in Corsicana and eventually went to work in Ennis for JTEKT Automotive Texas, LP, a subsidiary of JTEKT North America. This finally brought the moving process to an end. "I like working in-town without a commute; it makes it easier to help get the kids to school," Stuart said.

As fate would have it, the Goedrichs found a house that had just gone on the market. It ended up being the perfect place for them. "The house we were looking at was bigger than this one, but it was brand new and still needed a lot of

work. This one already had all the landscaping and fencing done," Stuart said, pointing out a backyard complete with trampoline, slide and his garden. "I enjoy being outdoors and being able to have a garden and grow things we can eat. The kids like being able to join me in planting a seed and watching it grow, and helping pick vegetables when they are ready."

Teresa, besides being a mom always-on-the-run, lends her creative talents part time to a couple of businesses — a toy company and her friend Lee Jensen's company, The Leather Stop. "I travel and help with wholesale and major market shows," she said. "Some of the work I do for the toy company is setting up their shows at the World Trade Center in Dallas." Her work has enabled her to decorate her house with finds from Canton and other local markets, as well as furnishing her children's rooms with endless toys.

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The colors of the holiday season are a perfect complement to the warm and welcoming tones Teresa has chosen for her house. "We didn't need to do any remodeling when we moved in, but I wanted to do some painting, so I called up some friends and had a painting party," she said. The open living room, kitchen and dining area, all one continuous shade of khaki, present the perfect backdrop for many family photos, including two sweet pictures over the

fireplace mantle. One is of Caleb, decked out in baseball gear, and the other is Ella in her pink, sparkly dance recital costume. A beautifully carved, wooden antique sewing machine, passed down from Stuart's grandmother, also resides in the living room. "She did a lot of sewing and quilting when I was growing up," Stuart shared.

Caleb, a precocious little man who loves all things outdoors, has his own bedroom decked out in vintage sports

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memorabilia, with hockey sticks and boat paddles hanging on the walls and sports banners as his curtains. "I like goin' hunting and I like playing sports," he declared. Of course, because Stuart's alma mater is UT Austin, the Texas Longhorns figure prominently in Caleb's room, as well as throughout the house. "He's into everything, from playing the guitar to football to hunting. He's also my artist. He loves to color and draw," Teresa proudly said, showing the little child-sized desk in the office on which Caleb creates his masterpieces.

Ella, with her shy smile and gorgeous eyes, has a room fit for a princess. Her pink decor is accented with moss-colored

walls and inhabited by a cheerful crowd of stuffed-animal friends. She is quick to point out her favorite piece in the room, a cork board decorated with a cross surrounded by floaty pink

feathers. Also a budding athlete, Ella said, "I do dance and ballet and now I'm starting to do gymnastics."

Teresa has filled her home with testaments to their family bond, including a plaque that reads: "Dad — A son's first hero, a daughter's first love." A treasured plate in the kitchen, with an imprint of Daddy's little Longhorns' feet, referencing his nickname for their children, is another of Teresa's favorite things, as well as a 10th anniversary gift from Teresa to Stuart that hangs

in their master bedroom. "When we were dating, we'd always send cards to one another, and I had saved them all," Teresa shared. "So I decoupage pieces of my favorite cards and part of our wedding program all together for him." During this holiday, when people take time to be thankful for their blessings, the Goedrichs realize that no matter where they call home, a family's love is what matters most. **NOV**



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Funny Business

— By F.L. Brewer



Vercindy Taylor possesses the uncanny gift of turning life's situations into gut-busting laughter. As a comedian, she enacts humorous sketches, which bring amusing characters to life. "I say, 'God, you know what I need,' and I try to picture myself as the character," she said with a giggle.

The funny thing about the business of being funny is that it is serious business. Likewise, the curious truth about comedy, as any humorist will tell you, is it is far more difficult to make people laugh than to provoke them to tears. Consequently, beginning with the ancient Greeks, much research has been done over the centuries by the greatest minds to determine why this inequality exists.

Although the reasons are found in places we cannot physically measure, they may be in part because we, as

individuals, more easily identify with what is tragic, but are more selective about what we find funny. This may be what makes the same joke offensive to one person, but hilarious to another.

While Vercindy may have the gift of turning human quirks into hilarity, there is also a keen message to her humor. She uses both stand-up comedy and complicated sketches with the troupe Inspiration, Inc. to illustrate and convey godly principals in a non-offensive way. As an active member of Rock Bible Fellowship Church in Ennis, she uses her comedic talents to make a point. She does it so well that her pastor, Everett Gilmore, likened her talent to the famous gospel comedienne Sister Cantaloupe, by nicknaming Vercindy "Sister Watermelon."

However, there is nothing melon-like about her shape or size. Vercindy, the wife

of Donald, the mother of two grown children — four children combined — and grandmother of one, is slim, trim and not at all matronly in appearance. Her high energy level and youthful look is surely an asset in her focus and endeavor to keep the younger generation from the pitfalls that challenged her own life.

"I understand how daunting life can be," Vercindy said as she mentioned her dedicated, single mother, Georgie Becks, who reared Vercindy and her three siblings. She credits her hardworking mother for making the extra effort to be at the ballgames and never missing a meeting for the children. Her uncle, a minister, also influenced her growing-up years. Two years before her father died, an unexpected blessing came when she and her father started a relationship, giving her the opportunity to develop a real father-daughter bond.

Vercindy attended Waxahachie High School in her senior year and especially loved her high school theater class, which included skits and stand-up comedy. "Through those high school experiences," Vercindy stated, "I discovered that I like to entertain people and make them laugh."

Vercindy learned many lessons through the challenge of being a single parent; they are lessons she endeavors to impart to others. "Comedy is a God-given talent. [The comedy] is about my own mistakes, my own experiences," she

said. "God doesn't make fun of people, but His Word is like a two-edged sword, and nobody wants to be offended. It is a way to make spiritual points in a way people will not be offended. It allows me to do it right." She continued, "We dress up in our attire, but that's not really who we are. I try my best to be the same inside and out. Not making any difference in anyone, loving people for exactly who they are."

Vercindy looks to the future by mentoring the younger generations to be godly now. She believes training should begin in the womb, by reading to the yet-to-be born baby. She recommends following the biblical principal of "training up a child by teaching the value of Jesus now and teaching the value of life now."

Recently, Vercindy was unexpectedly laid off from her job. Although she has been disappointed, she is giving her faith the chance to grow. "I know I'm not the only one going through this. I remember who I am. I am a child of God, and He reminds me that I know His Word, and I need to speak His Word," she said. "I also know He never closes a door that he doesn't open another one, or even a window." Even if her prayer is not answered immediately, she remains upbeat. "Prayer is not wasted; it's like going to a deposit box. I know He has good things for me and my gift and He will make room for me."

Having learned a number of lessons the hard way, she has a special message to parents. "God gives chances every day to wake up: A new day, a new chance, and many more chances besides. Raising teenagers requires patience, but stop compromising. I've learned that if I don't like it in the beginning, I know I won't like it in the end."

Vercindy is a person with goals and big dreams. Perhaps her fondest dream is to meet Tyler Perry, who she admires both for his comedy and also for his Christian walk. **NOW**



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On the Court

— By Kelly Kovar

Kim Vernor played volleyball in high school, at R. L. Turner in Carrollton, and then pursued a degree in forestry at Texas A&M University. “I had scholarship opportunities, but I passed them up to be an Aggie,” Kim said. “I was born and bred to be an Aggie.” After earning her bachelor’s degree in 1992, she stayed on in College Station working for the city’s Parks and Recreation Department as a horticulture crew leader, taking care of the grounds for all of the city buildings. Kim loved her job, but she also continued her love of volleyball, playing for the adult city league and in sand and grass volleyball tournaments.

Kim was gardening for a career, and playing volleyball for recreation. Her heart and her life did a flip-flop, however, when she met Danny Vernor in 1996. “Danny was coaching in Houston, and he came to play volleyball with his best friend, James, who was in my city league,” Kim recounted. “He said he fell in love with me that night.” After several more meetings on the volleyball court, Danny and Kim began dating, and he talked her into both marrying him and into becoming a volleyball coach. They moved to Kerrville, Texas, where Danny coached, and Kim got

her alternative teaching certification.

Danny became head volleyball coach at Ennis High School (EHS) in 2002, and Kim was hired as his assistant coach and the girls’ soccer coach. When Danny went to Kemp to coach football, Kim stayed on in Ennis and became head volleyball coach. Danny now works for Vought Aircraft Industries; he loves the challenges his new career has brought. Meanwhile, Kim has a built-in advisor. “I ask Danny for advice, and he keeps me on my toes and makes me a better coach,” she said. With two boys at home, 8-year-old Dane and Heath, age 5, Danny and Kim keep busy with their sons’ football, baseball and martial arts practices, as well as attending EHS volleyball and soccer games.

At EHS, volleyball workouts begin in August. Kim has help from Chris Pitts, who coaches the freshman team, and Morgan Moylan, who is the new junior varsity (JV) coach this year. Games are on Tuesdays and Fridays. “My first year we went to the play-offs, and last year, we made it to the play-offs again,” Kim said. “If we go all the way, we will be playing until almost Thanksgiving.” The state tournament is the weekend of November 19 and 20 this year.

In volleyball, six girls at a time are on the court, with about 12 on the team. “We have smart players this year in varsity. Allie Rokas is our big hitter. She plays the outside hitter position, which is where your strongest hitter is going to be. Sara Griffin, a freshman, is my other outside hitter. Then Brittani Sanders and Monae Edwards are my middle hitters, who hit the fast stuff in the middle. I moved Kirstin Minderman up from JV and put her on the right side, where you want your best blockers. Hayley Vyers, a right front hitter, is a good, dependable all-around player who can hit, dig and set.” When somebody hits the ball over the net hard, a player may have to hit the floor to get it up; that is called digging, which involves passing a hard-driven ball to the net, where the setter should be. “What makes a good volleyball player is being able to pass to a target,” Kim explained.

The setter position is somewhat like the quarterback is in football. The setter usually runs the offense and sets up the ball for the hitters. “Rachel French is a setter, so she plays back row. Allie is also a setter, which is unusual for an outside hitter, so when Allie gets to the back row, she sets.” Shelby Spaniel

is the libero, or defensive specialist, along with senior Erika Hernandez.

There are about 45 girls on all three teams, including freshman and JV.

"Sara Cox is outstanding on the freshman team; she plays outside hitter, but she plays all the way around. She can hit, dig, serve — everything we need. I have freshman Jessica Leaks and sophomore Bailey Adams, who are strong players for the JV team."

As the only double head coach at EHS, Kim is on the go almost year-round with the volleyball and soccer teams, but she makes time to indulge in



"What makes a good volleyball player is being able to pass to a target."

gardening for relaxation. "I still like to do my yard and my flower garden at home." Danny makes his mark in the yard by putting lights on their windmill at holiday time.

"I'm a hands-on volleyball teacher, so we spend most of our time on the court. You have to find a good way to make it all work so everybody is happy, and they understand their roles on the team. That is the hard part of coaching. It is easy to go out and show them drills and skills, but to put it together and teach them life lessons about how to survive and how to have self-esteem and self-confidence is the challenge." **NOW**



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Patients Come First

— By Kelly Kovar



Southwestern Surgery Center, located in the Bluebonnet Medical Plaza, is a locally owned and operated facility. “We focus on doing one thing, outpatient surgery, and doing that one thing well,” said Lance Hall, RNFA (Registered Nurse First Assistant) and the clinical manager. Although 10 to 20 surgical procedures a day are performed here, the atmosphere is calm. “Surgery centers are quiet; everybody knows their job and their duties, and we have a ballet of things that are going on.”

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have a small staff working with our doctors, so they know the doctors’ procedures, techniques and what supplies they use, so they can really have things ready for the physicians and make things turn over more quickly between surgeries. That translates to time savings for the patient, and most patients are here less than three hours.”

Jennifer Aldama, a registered nurse (RN), works primarily with the pre-operative phase. “Jennifer helped open the place and get us all set up and does a lot of preliminary work,” Lance mentioned. “She is a very involved team member here.”

In the operating room, patient advocate and RN, Klebe Brumble, is on hand to watch out for patients’ safety. “You have the opportunity here to really use your nursing skills; you

get to take care of your patients the way you were trained to do it," Klebe said. "It is about patient care here and you are given the freedom to do that and encouraged to do that. It is medically-driven, not administration-driven. Staff often come up with ideas, which are heard and acted upon."

"Dave and I believe that it is equally important to provide a good work environment for the staff," Lance explained. "We both truly believe that a happy employee makes a better employee, which also makes for a better experience for our patients. Our staff is local, and I believe that holds them to a high standard because someone they are taking care of, starting an IV on, may be bumping shoulders with them the next day at the grocery store."

Services currently offered to patients include podiatry, general surgery, orthopedics, urology, plastic and cosmetic surgery, gastroenterology, bariatrics and pain management. "We are always looking to add other services as the need may come up," Lance added. "We pride ourselves on providing advanced technology and procedures here, such as laparoscopic procedures, narrow band or blue light imaging, high definition cameras and Evolve Laser, the cutting-edge technology for prostate surgery. We have seven medical doctors of anesthesiology on staff, in addition to our main surgeons."

Their business model is simple: "Patients come first." Surgeries do not start before 8:30 a.m. so patients do not have to arrive so early. "The center was designed around the patient's comfort. It has really turned out to be a good service for Ennis," Lance said. "I think the community likes the ease and convenience of the facility."

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Aim High, Teach Smart

— By Kelly Kovar

Rafranz Dixon, Ennis High School (EHS) math teacher, is renowned for her technical skills. She is the “go to” person at EHS for SMART Board™ information, yet, the human touch is what really makes her teaching successful. “The key is listening,” Rafranz said. “With kids, you have to get them to buy-into what you are selling. I do that because I don’t ‘teach math,’ I ‘teach kids.’ I spend about 90 to 95 percent of my time encouraging. They like for somebody to say, ‘You are really smart, you are great, you can do this.’”

Rafranz has two children of her own, Maiya, a freshman in high school, and a fifth-grade son, Khalil. “I treat my students the way I would want another teacher to treat my own children. I don’t disrespect students. That is the one thing that gets them — they understand when they walk in that door that there is mutual respect here.” Rafranz encourages her students to visualize a world beyond high school, in which they can be a doctor, a lawyer or in the military.

Beverly Davis, a teacher’s assistant in special education, is Rafranz’s mom. “The teaching bug came from watching her. She worked with kids with special needs. She would tutor them, and she used to take me to help.”

Rafranz teaches geometry and math models this year. In her math models classes, she relates math to the real world. Students learn about probability, statistics and the math used in credit, getting loans and buying a house. “I am really good at getting something through to them with analogies.” She teaches that math skills are like learning football, you have to work at it and not give up, in order to improve.

“I didn’t know that I had a talent for math until my teacher at Navarro College, Shari Beck, helped me know how to go about being successful. She took me to Dr. Vanesa Hughes, head of the math department at A&M Commerce



(AMC).” They encouraged Rafranz to enroll at AMC, where she earned a bachelor’s degree in 2005, and a master’s in 2007. “Dr. Hughes’ program is heavy on content for teaching and for implementing technology. Vanesa made me aim higher. She helped me decide that my success is determined by me and what I do. I teach that to my kids. My mother taught me that growing up, and Dr. Hughes helped emphasize it.”

While getting her bachelor’s degree, Rafranz worked on her elementary TAKS™ (Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills) remediation, and then observed classroom management in Carolyn King’s sixth grade math class. After graduation, EISD (Ennis Independent School District) hired her first to teach TAKS math in fifth and sixth grade and then, within the year, moved her to take over a junior high math class. “Two of my teachers at Navarro, Sherry Beck and Brenda Reed, were writing an article about

measurement in a math class, so they came in and worked with my junior high kids.” After spending a year-and-a-half teaching at EJH (Ennis Junior High), Rafranz came to EHS. “I had those same kids in my high school geometry class when the article was published, and they were ecstatic when they were on the cover of a magazine.”

Vanesa, Shari and Brenda were instrumental in Rafranz

being able to bring technology into her classroom. Rafranz uses the SMART Board, an interactive white board, in all her classes and trains other teachers on its use. As the EISD SMART Board trainer for grades nine – 12, she meets and shares ideas with trainers from each EISD campus. She searches for new ideas on Facebook.com and Twitter.com with other SMART Board users around the world. “I use that to enhance what we do here. I am all about using any tool that can help you be successful as a teacher.” On the SMART Board, she can teach how to use a calculator; she can graph equations, make tables and work problems on the board.

The options for SMART Board use are varied. English teachers can use it by putting a paper on the interactive white board, and doing their editing and marking on the screen. “In our notebook software, you have different items for each subject,” Rafranz explained. “I can pull up history, and there is a video icon of the “I Have a Dream” speech. It has a little speaker (icon) attached to it, and when I click on that, it plays.

“My thing has always been to make a difference, to get more kids to not only graduate, but to go to college and to stay in college.” Rafranz is on the site team for AVID® (Advancement Via Individual Determination), a program that mentors kids and helps them get to college. She also works with the University of Texas at Arlington’s (UTA) Upward Bound, a federally-funded program which gives students with math and science skills the opportunity to work with UTA professors. “I am a big believer in God placing us where we need to be. I graduated from EHS, and I love it here. I really wanted to come back and help kids the way that I was helped in school. I wouldn’t trade teaching these kids for anything.” **NOW**

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Look Who's Cooking — By Faith Browning

IN THE KITCHEN WITH VALASTA SMITH

Not many cooks can claim a great-grandfather as the fire to spark their interest in cooking, but Valasta Smith can tell the tale. "My great-grandfather owned a butcher and slaughter house. We caught or hunted all the meat we ate," she recalled. "He was also a great gardener. We had a two-acre garden from berries to corn."

Valasta enjoys making crafts, camping, grilling outdoors and attending Tabernacle

Baptist with her husband, Jeremy, and their four children, Greg, Ashley, Jace and Holden. The cooler weather brings on her other delight, baking! "During the holidays, starting about October or November, I get out my favorite recipes from my mom's mom," she explained. "We start making recipes until about January!" **NOW**

To view more of your neighbors' recipes, visit our archives at www.nowmagazines.com.

SAUSAGE BALLS

- 1 lb. sausage
- 3 cups Bisquick
- 10 oz. sharp cheddar cheese, grated

1. Mix all 3 ingredients.
2. Roll into small balls and put onto cookie sheet.
3. Cook at 350 F for 20 minutes.

ENCHILADA CASSEROLE

- 1 lb. ground beef
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 can enchilada sauce
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 package tortillas

- 1 jalapeño pepper, diced (optional)
- 1/4 cup cheese

1. Cook the ground beef; season with salt and pepper. Drain meat; set aside.
2. In bowl, mix together soups, enchilada sauce, jalapeño pepper and milk.
3. Grease and line ovenproof bowl with torn pieces of tortillas; pour half the meat over tortillas.
4. Pour half soup mixture over meat.
5. Put another layer of tortillas down; add the remaining meat, then the remaining soup mixture.
6. Grate cheese and add on top.
7. Bake 1 hour at 350 F.

HOMEMADE CORNY DOGS

- 1 cup flour

- 1/2 cup yellow cornmeal
- 1 Tbsp. sugar
- 1 1/2 tsp. double-acting baking powder
- 1 tsp. salt
- 3/4 cup milk
- 1/4 cup prepared mustard
- 1 egg, slightly beaten
- 2 Tbsp. salad oil
- 8 to 10 hot dogs
- oil for frying

1. In medium bowl, combine flour, cornmeal, sugar, baking powder and salt; mix well.
2. Add milk, mustard, egg and salad oil; stir just until dry ingredients are moistened; set aside.
3. Meanwhile in deep fat fryer heat 2 inches oil to 375 F. Pat hot dogs dry with

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Who's Cooking **NOW**

paper towels.

4. Drop hot dog into batter then into hot grease.

5. Fry until golden brown, 1 to 2 minutes.
You may substitute onions for hot dogs and make onion rings the same way.

LEMON ICEBOX PIE

1 can Eagle Brand milk
1 egg
1 tsp. sugar
1/2 cup real lemon juice
graham cracker crust

1. Mix milk, egg and sugar.
2. Add lemon juice; cook it.
3. Pour into a graham cracker crust.
4. Refrigerate until set.

PRALINES

1/2 cup brown sugar
1 1/2 cups white sugar
1/2 cup milk
3 Tbsp. white Karo syrup
4 marshmallows
2 cups pecans
2 Tbsp. butter

1. In a saucepan add sugars, milk and syrup; cook over medium fire to soft-ball stage.
2. Add marshmallows, pecans and butter; melt together.
3. Drop onto wax paper; let cool.

HOMEMADE FUDGE

1 3/4 cups sugar
1/4 tsp. cream of tartar
2 Tbsp. Hershey's Cocoa Powder
2 Tbsp. white Karo syrup
1/2 cup milk
1 tsp. vanilla
1 slice butter

1. In a saucepan, combine first 5 ingredients.
2. Boil until soft-ball forms in cold water; remove from heat.
3. Add teaspoon vanilla and butter; beat until it gets thick.
4. Pour in greased platter.

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Is a Rollover in Your Future?

— By Jenny Vidrine

Have you recently left one employer to begin working for another? Were you covered by an employer-sponsored retirement plan, such as a 401(k)? If so, you may be wondering about the future of your account.

In the event of a job change, there are many options available to you regarding your employer-sponsored retirement account assets. The options you have will depend on the provisions of your former employer's plan. Sometimes your money can stay in the plan with your previous employer until you reach a specific age and you then can begin taking withdrawals without a tax penalty.

Remaining with your old plan may have drawbacks. Sometimes fees are charged to former employees to offset managing the account. A minimum asset balance may also be required. Other times you must take your money out when you terminate employment. You should contact the Human Resources department or benefits counselor of your former employer to determine your options. If you withdraw

plan assets, you may need to find another funding vehicle.

Transferring the balance of the assets in your previous employer's tax-qualified account to a plan sponsored by your new employer may be an option. This can be done without paying taxes if the money goes directly to the new account (known as a "direct rollover"). However, your new employer may not allow a rollover, thus you will need to look at further options.

One choice to consider is rolling the balance of your account to a Traditional Individual Retirement Account (IRA). With this choice, you are able to control the investment options within the IRA. You can also avoid the need to make a further rollover if you change jobs again.

Rolling your 401(k) assets into a Traditional IRA can be costly if not done correctly. If you take a withdrawal, the trustee of your old plan must withhold 20 percent of the money for federal income tax purposes. You have 60 days to roll the distribution to a new qualified retirement vehicle if you do take a withdrawal. The 20-percent withholding will count as a distribution if you do not roll over that amount to an IRA or other qualified plan. A 10-percent tax penalty will usually apply if you are under age 59

1/2 and you don't roll the entire amount into an IRA or other qualified plan.

In order to avoid the 20-percent federal income tax withholding, a direct rollover should be considered. The assets of your employer-sponsored plan are transferred directly from your former employer's plan to a Traditional IRA or other qualified plan. You don't touch the money, and neither does the government. Your assets can grow tax-deferred until you begin withdrawals.

To complete a direct rollover, contact a finance professional to discuss your options. Once you determine where you want the money to go, the IRA custodian can request the money from your employer-sponsored plan in the form of a check or wire transfer.

Your current IRA contributions are not affected by a rollover. You may contribute the allowable limit to an IRA even after rolling a substantial amount from your previous plan.

With so many choices available, it may be in your best interests to discuss a Traditional IRA rollover with a financial professional. You have some options. Take advantage of one with which you are comfortable. **NOW**

Jenny Vidrine is a State Farm agent based in Ennis.

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As more children become obese, pediatric heart disease is becoming more common.

— Submitted by Katherine Witte, MD – Pediatrician

The Childhood Obesity Epidemic

Most parents are surprised at the gravity of the risks associated with childhood obesity — and that the risks are immediate, not down the road in adulthood. Unfortunately, the statistics tell the sober truth: Childhood obesity has skyrocketed in the past three decades, according to the CDC. Stats for 1976-1980 show that 6.5 percent of children ages 6 to 11 were obese; by 2003-2006, that number had jumped to 17 percent. Similarly, only 5 percent of preteens and teens ages 12 to 19 were obese in 1976-1980; but 17.6 percent of this age group were found to be obese in 2003-2006. (Obese is defined as having a body mass index above the 95th percentile compared with other children of the same age and gender.)

Obesity, in turn, is triggering a host of other heart disease risk factors in children, such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol — considered “adult” health problems until recently. The result? A higher risk of heart disease and stroke at young ages.

The cholesterol problem among children and teens has gotten so bad that some doctors are prescribing cholesterol-lowering statins for children, although the practice is controversial. It's still pretty rare, but it is happening.

Solutions to Childhood Obesity

Experts agree the obvious and urgent starting point is weight loss. Once weight is reduced to a healthy level, some of the other risk factors take care of themselves. And even children with greatly increased heart disease risks might be

able to turn things around.

Questions to Ask Your Doctor About Childhood Heart Disease

Worried about your child's risk for getting heart disease? Here are some questions you can ask your pediatrician:

- *Is my child's weight healthy?*

Your child's BMI should be calculated beginning at age 2, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics. A healthy weight is between the fifth percentile and the 85th percentile, depending on age and sex.

- *Should my child's cholesterol levels be checked?*

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, children with a family history of high cholesterol or heart disease, children with risk factors such as obesity or diabetes, and children whose family history is unknown should all be screened for high cholesterol. Screening should be done after age 2 but before age 10.

- *What is my child's blood pressure?*

This is especially important to know. Obesity begets hypertension.

- *Should I test my child for diabetes?*

An overweight child is at risk for type 2 diabetes, which, left untreated, can lead to multiple health problems, including heart disease. **NOW**

Katherine Witte, MD — Pediatrician
Ennis Regional Medical Center



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November 2009

Community Calendar

Ongoing

Ennis Feed the Children donations are being accepted at Ennis State Bank, account number 37051. Requests for assistance with groceries may be turned in at Ennis Feed the Children boxes at area businesses.

First and Third Tuesday

Ennis Cancer Support Group: 7:00 p.m., Ennis Regional Medical Center classroom. For information, call Kathy at (972) 878-6927 or visit www.enniscancersupport.com.

Third Monday

Ellis County Aggie Moms: 7:00 p.m., Waxahachie First United Methodist Church, 505 W. Marvin. For more information, contact Cheryl Bell at (972) 723-0341 or rb4cj@sbcglobal.net or visit www.elliscountyaggiemoms.org.

First and Third Thursday

Mom's Connected: 9:30-11:30 a.m., Tabernacle Baptist Church, 1200 Country Club Rd. Free fellowship for moms of all ages. For information, contact ennismoms@sbcglobal.net.

November 5

Senior Circle of Navarro Regional Hospital meeting: 5:30 p.m., Navarro Regional Hospital, Corsicana. Speaker: Amy Wheeler of Family

First Hospice. November is National Hospice and Palliative Care Month. For information, contact Family First Hospice at (866) 834-3700 or (972) 878-CARE or contact the Caring Connections Helpline at (800) 658-8898 or the multi-lingual line at (877) 658-8896 or visit www.caringinfo.org.

November 6 and 7

WWII Veteran Appreciation Weekend: 3:00 p.m., Waxahachie square, three blocks south of Texas Theater. Military displays, "Black Market" vendors, WWII Newsreels at the Texas Theater, reenactment of a battle between the Allies and Germans.

November 7

Veteran's Day ceremony: 10:00 a.m., Waxahachie Civic Center. Call David Hudgins at (972) 937-1200 or Perry Giles at (972) 937-6171 for information.

1940s Radio Variety Hour, adapted from a script by Rick Artis: 7:00 and 9:00 p.m., Texas Theater, Waxahachie. Free dramatization of a musical and comedy USO variety show. For information, contact Texas Theater at (972) 937-1993.

November 12

Open Mic Night, hosted by Inspiration Inc.:

6:00-7:45 p.m., Ennis Public Library Learning Center. Excerpts from *Crowns* will be performed. Public welcome to perform instrumentals, sing, read poetry, etc. Free admission. www.InspirationInc.org.

November 18

Ellis County Christian Women's Connection, affiliated with Stonecroft Ministries, monthly luncheon: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Waxahachie Country Club, 1920 W. Hwy. 287 at I-35 East, Exit 401B, Waxahachie. Cost: \$13.00, inclusive. Nursery vouchers available. Reservations preferred; walk-ins welcome. To make reservations, please contact either Kay at (972) 937-2807 or windchime423@yahoo.com or Mary at (972) 937-9984 no later than Friday, November 13.

November 20

Gospel musical *Crowns*, presented by Inspiration Inc.: 8:00 p.m., Texas Theatre, Waxahachie. Admission: \$10. Tickets available at the door. For information, contact Texas Theater at (972) 937-1993.

November 28

Bristol Opry: 7:00 p.m., Old Bristol Schoolhouse, 100 Church St., Bristol. Free admission. Donations accepted. For more information, call Jim Gatlin at (972) 846-2211.

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