

The Community Magazine Serving Mansfield and the Surrounding Area

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M A G A Z I N E

November 2009

**Holiday
Shopping
Guide**

***Cream of
the Croppers***

***Training
Champions***

**All in the
FAMILY**

***At Home With
David Eister
and Jenny Elliott***





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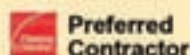
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The pumpkin patch at First
United Methodist Church of
Mansfield is a familiar sight to
local residents.

Photo by Steve Randle.

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Editor's Note

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Now that Halloween is over, we can tuck all the candy away and focus on far more important things ... turkey, dressing, mashed potatoes and lots of pies!

Inspired by such amazing people as this month's feature on Christian Nicholas, I made the grand announcement to my friends and family that I did not want yet another Thanksgiving to pass in which my primary focus was planning a menu. While I toyed with the idea of working in a soup kitchen, a very good friend was recovering from gall stone surgery. When people from my gym learned that she desperately wanted help with her landscaping, an impromptu "workout" took place on Sherry's front yard with a surprising number of strangers all pitching in.

While I'm not quite ready to give up the pies and potatoes just yet, good old-fashioned yard work served as an excellent reminder to what this nation's Thanksgiving is all about.

Have a Safe and Happy Holiday!

Alex Allred

MansfieldNOW Editor



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Giving Big

— By Alex Allred

Brothers John Precour and Christian Nicholas give thanks every day for their lives, families, homes and careers, all of which they both say is more a blessing than a responsibility. While many Americans worry about the economy and how to make ends meet, John and Christian operate on pure faith. “If the good Lord is willing and the creek don’t rise,” John jokes, “we’ll be okay.”

Yet, the creek has risen many times. “We have had plenty of times when we didn’t know how we’d make payroll. I would look at Christian and say, ‘Dude, we gotta come up with some money by this weekend, and I’ve got nothing

coming in,’ and then, lo and behold, we would have three cars delivered to us.”

On the surface, the brothers-in-law are simply two car enthusiasts who own and operate their own garage, refurbishing and redesigning vehicles. This is their “gift” in life. In reality, the gift they offer comes not from their mechanically inclined hands but the golden hearts they possess. Still struggling to make payroll, they work on Habitat for Humanity homes in locations so remote no one else wants to take the challenge; they offer transportation to the poor; work with churches and have even given jobs to those in need of employment only to rework the jobs later to meet their own high standards. “We don’t want them to think they’re getting charity,” John explained. Dignity, he maintains, should be a factor in every person’s life.

Both men, both brothers, have learned a great deal about dignity through their own very difficult lives. John’s tumultuous relationship with his own father was further marred by bouts of depression. But as he entered junior high, Christian began dating Tammie, one of John’s three sisters. Christian became an immediate role model for John. Respectful,

honorable, soft-spoken and kind — in Christian, John suddenly had a male figure to whom he could turn. It was while John was away at Howard Payne University in Brownwood, Texas, pursuing a telecommunications degree, that the creek rose once again, altering his journey. “I hit a cow. I had a 1994 Suburban that had come from an accident settlement from my Mom. When I hit the cow, I smashed in the front end.”

Prior to the accident, a friend had been killed, and his mother was nearly killed in a car accident. Frustrated with school and life, John “came home to get grounded and find out what real life was all about.” Together, he and his then

future brother-in-law began rebuilding his Suburban.

“Christian has been working on cars since he was 13 years old. His dad owned a body shop in the Philippines and they opened up a shop here when they came to the U.S.”

Like John, Christian also had a difficult childhood, moving to the U.S. when he was only 10 years of age. His grasp of the English language still very limited, he was bullied at school and for reasons still unclear to Christian and his two sisters, their mother was left behind in the Philippines when the family moved. It would not be for another 17 years — until Christian’s youngest sister was on MySpace.com — that they were able to reconnect with their mother.

Just as John had dreams of becoming a radio personality, Christian’s athletic

**“It’s not about
how much you
can give but
how you give.”**

ability leant to many dreams. With his own personal motto of, “Go big or go home,” Christian showed tremendous promise, first as a quarterback, then as a Marine recruit and finally as a fire fighter. Of the latter, he was voted as “Best Recruit” in the Tarrant County fire department, but in all three cases, his knees proved medically unsuitable.

The smashed front end of a 1994 Suburban was the catalyst to bring the two young men together, as they recreated a new front body style, making their own “kits” to redesign other vehicles on request. “It was like a sledge hammer hit us in the head. Why aren’t we doing this full time?” John asked.

Christian’s marriage to John’s sister,



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Tammie, finally made their brother bond legal. No surprise, when John married his wife, Stacey, more than two years ago, Christian was the best man. "But that's who he is," John said of his brother-in-law. "I couldn't do any of this without him." In fact, only weeks ago, while both men were searching for something in their storage area, it was Christian who looked at his little brother and said, "Dude, I don't want to do this with anyone else."

While they struggle in a tough economy to do what they love, John insists, "It's our calling." Certainly,

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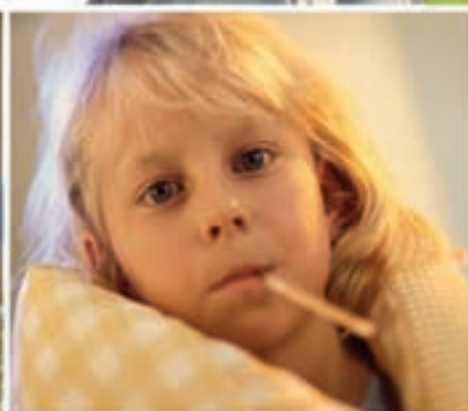
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that is a claim which can be backed up by many residents of Mansfield and Arlington. One story, in particular, showcases their calling. One rainy day, Christian noticed a middle-aged woman walking alongside the highway. When he pulled over to pick her up, she was apprehensive about the stranger, but after a few moments accepted a ride. Along the way, Christian learned she was a single mother, without transportation, recently paroled from prison, trying to earn a living. "I don't really know why I stopped," Christian said. "The Lord put her in my heart. I just felt it."

Together, Christian and John agreed to fix up an "old classic" they had in the shop and give it to the woman. "She

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needed transportation,” John shrugged. As simple as that, the brothers paid it forward.

“There are stories in the Bible,” said Christian, noting one “where Jesus notices a lady who is broke. She didn’t have anything but she still dropped a couple of coins in the plates, and that really touched Jesus. It’s not about how much you can give but how you give.” And for the two men, known never to pass a homeless person without an encouraging word and a dollar or two, “giving” and giving thanks is the ultimate payment.

Each morning when the brothers step inside Christian’s Auto Designs, “we joke that when we go to work,

“If we could, oh man, I would love to work on and give cars to battered women shelters, give them a car that is under warranty, you know, something that could change their lives and just be one less thing to worry about.”

we’re going to play,” John teased. But there is another dream. Beyond financial and professional stability, Christian wishes for something much bigger.

“If we could, oh man, I would love to work on and give cars to battered women shelters, give them a car that is under warranty, you know, something that could change their lives and just be one less thing to worry about. That would be amazing.”

“You know, it’s like this,” John said. “When you have what you want, you want other people to have it, too. I’m blessed to be in the position where I can help ... however or whichever way I can.” **NOW**

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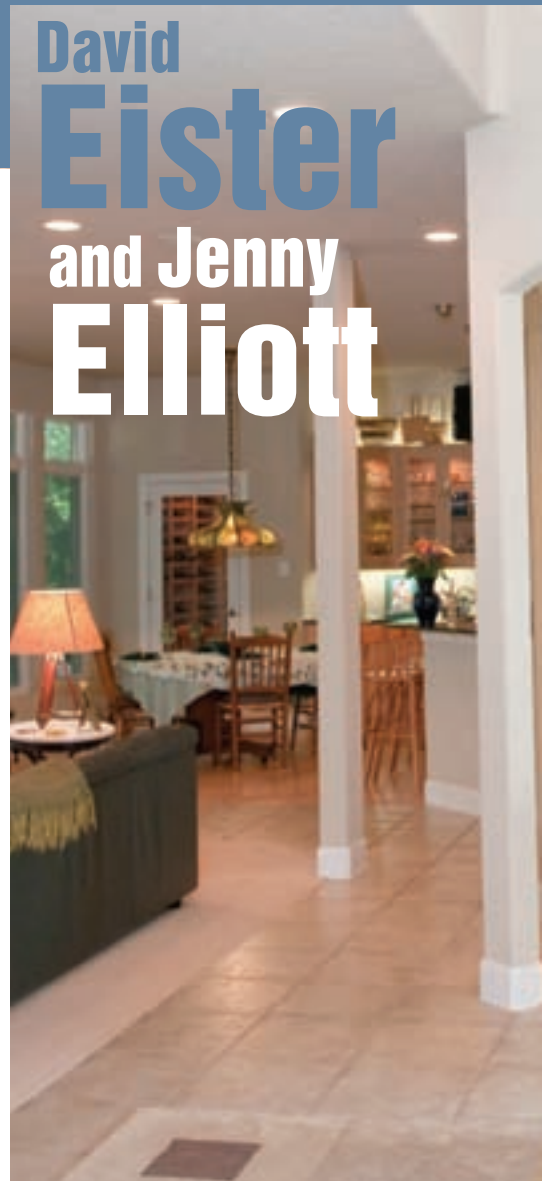
— By Jaime Ruark

The Eister-Elliott family, self-proclaimed “tree huggers,” built their stone and brick home around a treed lot, careful not to lose any greenery. But beyond the green, it is also a very busy, bustling house. Many people have walked through the double doors, usually making their way into the spacious kitchen where Chef Jenny spends much of her time. The 12-foot granite island has provided space for countless cooking lessons and dinner parties. As long as Jenny has hands to help and mouths to feed, there will be many more gatherings to come.

Jenny and David have been married for 25 years. “I never changed my name. People just mess up Eister so much,” Jenny admitted with a smile. “David works

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Jenny grew up in Ohio before heading to college in Missouri and then back east to Boston, where David was reared. "I went out there to go to graduate school in medical photography, but the economy then was like it is now, so it

was really hard to get a job, which I needed to support myself," Jenny recalled. "So at first I went to work at the giant bookstore called the Harvard Co-op in the photography department. About a year-and-a-half later I got a job at a large retina practice for these world famous ophthalmologists as a medical photographer. I got to meet a lot of high profile people: the king of Saudi Arabia, the chancellor of Austria and movie stars." The two met after David, also a medical photographer, came to work for the same practice.



They then moved to Florida for a few years before settling in Texas.

"Considering he's a Bostonian, and I'm from Ohio — we both were like, 'Texas? It's nice to visit, but it's so hot and dry!'" Jenny laughed. Despite the heat, the couple has been Texan now for 22 years, rearing their two sons, Alex, who has recently moved to Oregon, and Nathan, who lives in the area.

The two-story, four-bedroom, three-and-a-half-bath home houses countless travel souvenirs, family treasures and conversation-starting pieces of artwork. Every room in the 4,600-square-foot space, built in 1999, comes replete with period antiques from the 1830s passed down from David's mother, tea



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sets from Korea, glass sculptures from Venice, Italy, or drawings and paintings done by both of their talented sons. "Actually, one of the criteria for building the house was that we needed high ceilings and certain rooms had to be big enough to hold certain pieces, like the American Victorian beds with their giant eight-foot headboards," Jenny noted.

Spaciousness was another necessity for their house, as the couple loves to entertain; thus, the kitchen, which opens into the living and informal dining areas is big enough to fit an army — or a Girl Scout troop, Nathan's Special Olympics swim team or Jenny's annual girls' night sleep over. "When

David and I met, I was going to chef school at night, and he was just beginning to get into wine," Jenny shared. "He told me, 'One of the things I want to do when I "grow up" is be able to entertain people at home.' As it turns out, that is one of the things, which has really worked for us, because I love to cook and give parties."

David has made sure his personality is splashed throughout the home just as much as Jenny's. "We both like old stuff, but David also likes really modern things — metal, stainless steel, things like that, and I love anything Scandinavian. When we were talking to the architect, she had quite a time

deciding how to bring our two styles together," Jenny said. Wine-appreciator David enjoys his wine cellar, and the modern abstract art he favors is displayed next to ornate wood family antiques.

Collections inadvertently begun are now sprinkled throughout the home, many following an Asian theme. "Some of our things are from before David's travels. We worked with some doctors from Japan, and when we got married, they gave us all this wonderful Asian art and traditional ceremonial tea sets and sushi sets," Jenny explained. A few Russian souvenirs also decorate the shelves adjacent to the television where Nathan, who is autistic, enjoys watching

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his favorite shows. "We got to go to Russia last summer with Mr. E.B. Holschuh, from the high school, who does a trip every other year. Nathan studied Russian with him. It was really a great trip, but hard, because I don't know any Russian!"

The couple's marriage certificate is framed and greets visitors from their large foyer, another conversation starter. "We were married in a Quaker ceremony, which is more common in New England. David was raised a Quaker, and I have Quakers in my ancestry," Jenny said. "This is the actual wording of the official document, and every person who was at the ceremony signed it."

Jenny, who retired two years ago from her catering company (still sorely missed around town), definitely has created a chef's paradise in her kitchen. She attended photography school in Denmark during her junior year of college, hence her love for Scandinavian design. Her domain also boasts of stainless steel appliances, including two refrigerators, three freezers and a six-burner stove, a massive bar and



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island made of gorgeous granite and endless pantry, cabinet and storage space. "I have over 300 cookbooks, all well-used," she smiled.

Throughout the summer months, Jenny, a certified Special Olympics coach since 2000, offers their tree-filled backyard, complete with grill and infinity-edge pool, to the parents and families of Nathan's friends. "Nate has gold medals from swimming," she said proudly, adding that he also participates in basketball and bowling.

"Sometimes, when you have a special-needs child, they're not invited to the typical children's activities, or the older children can't drive themselves to the movies like other kids. It's nice to be able to give them somewhere to go and have fun. We're really all just a support system for each other."

Jenny also opens her kitchen up to special-needs teenagers and their care givers, helping to teach them how to make favorite simple foods like pizza, macaroni and cheese and fruit salads. "It takes away their fear of the unknown and gives them confidence," she added. "Plus it gives my son a social life. I love being able to help others, but really, I'm doing it for the both of us, too!" **NOW**



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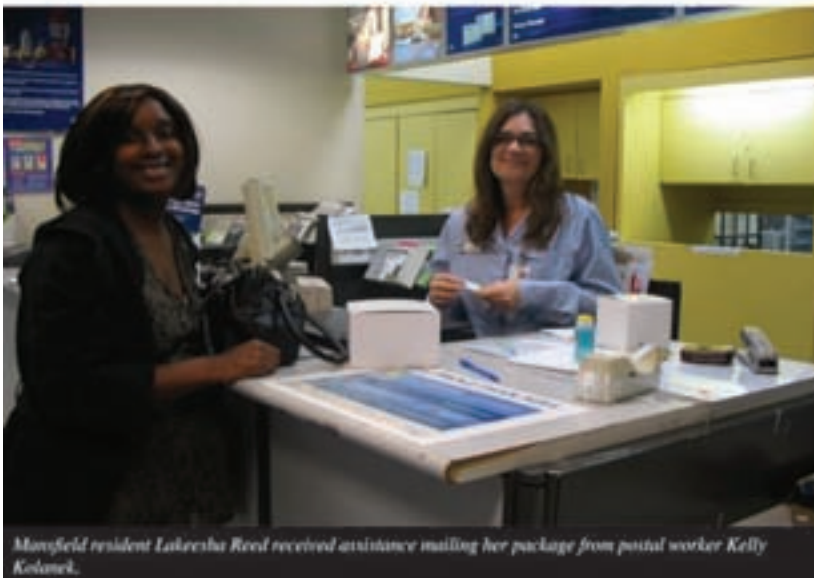
Karen Clark and Pat Coston studied women's history for their book club.



Screenwriter and novelist Joe Vaughan, novelist Greg Roburn and poet/artist Mike McEachern met for their writer's club.



Local children enjoy the cooler weather at the First United Methodist Church's pumpkin patch.



Mansfield resident Lakesha Reed received assistance mailing her package from postal worker Kelly Kotlurek.



Wendy, Randy and Lori celebrated the changing season by breaking out the fall aprons at Starbucks.

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Defense Intelligence officers and family who served in Frankfurt, Germany, shared stories at their annual reunion.



Susan Gaylor and Heather Strawn smiled at Willie E. Brown Elementary.



April braved the weather with her 10-month-old twins.



The Powe family decided to take advantage of all of the rainy days by getting dirty playing flag football.



Heather Wickstrom posed with Jim Fortin of Mindauthority.com, guest speaker for the Joint Networking Luncheon with the Women's Division.

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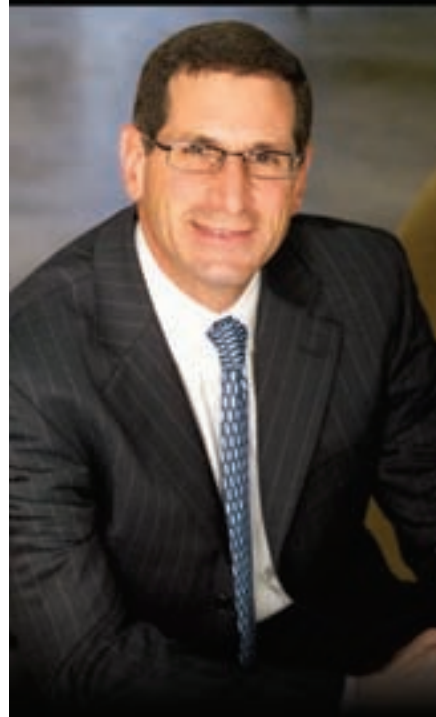
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Cream of the Croppers

— By Angel Jenkins Morris

Scrapbooking is for some today what quilting was to generations past. One local group of ladies is building on the tradition of preserving the past through colorful, creative pages of memories. Perhaps as important, they are making new memories with girlfriends who share their scrapbook enthusiasm, or “croppers” as those in the craft call themselves. “It’s really about the desire to share quality time with friends on a regular basis and devoting time to scrapbooking crafts,” Debby Reiling said.

In the spring of this year, Debby, along with Terah Mills, formed the group, Sweet Pix, to share the joy of scrapbooking. Meetings at Debby’s Mansfield home span a Friday evening and Saturday morning of one weekend per month, when members come and go as their schedule allows. “We are flexible and work together when coordinating scrapbooking dates,” Debby added.

The group was born when Terah, a chiropractic assistant, discussed scrapbooking with Debby, a patient of the doctor for whom Terah works. With Terah’s mom, Donna Mills, and another chiropractic patient, Debbie Brown, on board, the group instantly became four members strong. Today, the ladies extend an invitation to other scrapbookers — novice and veteran alike — to join them.

“We start by greeting each other and getting our materials unloaded; then we are always interested in snack foods and



congregate in the kitchen to catch up for a few minutes before we get started,” Debby explained. “Each girl has her own area to spread out her materials and pictures; we work on our scrapbooks and we always take time to share new photos or precious family stories behind a certain scrapbook theme.”

Sharing personal histories means a lot to the founding members, who have made Mansfield home after living in other states. Twenty-seven-year-old Terah moved from Arlington to Seattle in fifth grade, but returned to the area seven years ago. Debby, at 41, found herself leaving Amarillo after 17 years when her husband’s job transferred him to Fort Worth last year. An Amarillo friend suggested a Mansfield chiropractor, where Debby would eventually meet Terah.

“Moving from Amarillo was hard on me, and meeting Terah and forming this group helped me realize how blessed I was in having chosen Mansfield as our home,” Debby said. Members also come from Grand Prairie and Dallas, and the group even has an honorary member in Terah’s grandmother. “Terah got us both involved in scrapbooking, and it became a way for my mother, who is no longer able to paint, to keep her artistic side alive,” Donna said of how she and her mother came to be “crop enthusiasts.”



Terah, who first scrapbooked in high school, stressed that the activity is fun for all ages and serves multiple purposes. "I have built closer friendships, because I not only learn about the women in the group, but I also see photos of their friends and hear the stories of all of their lives. You get to know more than just the person making the scrapbook — you get to experience

"You get to know more than just the person making the scrapbook — you get to experience their most treasured occasions."



their most treasured occasions," she said.

Be it birthday or bluebonnet photos, family vacations or just a trip to the park, the creativity behind these ladies' scrapbooks underscores how every day is special to them. Bins of designer paper, stickers, stamps and stylized scissors are just the beginning of what becomes a work of thematic art in scrapbook form. "I want my history and my faith to be displayed when someone picks up one of my books," Debbie Brown said. Donna added, "It's just fun to pick them up, laugh and share the memories."

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Debby, who hopes to draw members from the new Mansfield school, where she became the librarian this year. "I truly believe this group has been a beacon to me in this time of my life. Having lived in Amarillo for so long, I missed my friends and scrapbooking events so very much! I didn't mean to take those experiences for granted, but I did not think we would ever move away. And, when we did, I lost a part of my life that I cherished. Thankfully though, our new group has



helped me transition into being a part of this community."

Spanning four decades in age, the group realizes some may be more inclined to build digital scrapbooks, and Terah assures potential members laptop croppers are welcome, too. "If you scrapbook, in whatever form, you should definitely come hang out with us!" she said. "It's where giggles, chocolate and memories come together," Debbie Brown added.


Debby also stressed the group's importance beyond having a great time with the girls. "Prioritizing time for us to get together is something I would not have done without this group, and I compare this to the same as the quilting bees of my grandmother's era," Debby said. "Organizing and documenting our photos and memorabilia is an important role in keeping our family memories alive, and I thank Terah for suggesting that we all do this." **NOW**



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Training **Champions**

— By Alex Allred

For Gary Vanderheiden, it was love at first sight. After graduating from Iowa State University, the newly licensed athletic trainer headed for Texas. While Iowa State University, Gary says, is known for its prestigious athletic training program, Texas “was definitely the place to come” for his career.

Following other graduates (and friends) from Iowa State University, Gary quickly got a job within The Colony and later Crowley Independent School District (ISD), but when he came to Summit High School in Mansfield ISD, “it was a first class operation. I knew about the professionalism,” Gary said. “Mansfield has that reputation. Trainers are put in a different category. The MISD athletic department takes care of the trainers.”

Quite an interesting statement from a man whose profession is to care for others, “but I’m not here just for the athletes. I’m here for my student trainers, too,” Gary admitted. For as many hours as Gary dedicates to the school’s athletes and coaches, he is equally committed to those who want to learn how to care for others.

As a three-sport athlete in high school, Gary was not sure what he wanted to do professionally, but did realize how much he loved athletics. “By the time I went to junior college, I was still unsure of what I wanted to do. My advisor made me write a five-year plan. When I told him I didn’t know what I

wanted, he gave me four or five different options to stay in athletics, one of them being an athletic trainer.” When Gary learned what an athletic trainer does, “I said, ‘That’s it. That’s what I want to do.’”

From the moment his training and education began, Gary realized the greater significance to working with athletes. “I could also be a teacher and a mentor. I could teach life skills to my student trainers.”

In his sports medicine class, Gary teaches his young charges about the human anatomy, athletic injuries, skin conditions, CPR training and walks them through all the different scenarios they may experience with athletes, both on and off

“I want them to know hard work eventually pays off, but you don’t get a hand out.”

the field. “Back in the day, coaches would put injured kids back in the game but those days are over,” he said, explaining the true value of an athletic trainer to a school.

Beyond treating, preventing and rehabilitating injuries, the schedule of an athletic trainer is nothing short of hectic. During a play-off game week, for example, Gary is in charge of securing a bus and meal money, getting the roster, including

the injury list, and making the itinerary for the coaches. Trainers cover games and practices, often moving between fields, courts, the field house, the track and training room. While Gary has an office, his time spent there is limited. Whether it is a championship game or a regularly scheduled practice, athletic trainers treat each event with the utmost professionalism, always acting as the first line of medical response.

“I could also be a teacher and a mentor. I could teach life skills to my student trainers.”

“We really are there for the safety of others,” Gary said.

A typical weekday at Summit is shared with Gary’s training partner, Brian Straub, also an Iowa State University graduate. Together, the two men put in anywhere from 12 to 20 hours a day and still love what they do.

“The most rewarding thing,” Gary said, “is when we have a young athlete on the brink of surgery and we can bring them back and watch them play. We build relationships with student athletes while they’re doing rehab and that’s really satisfying, but we also get to see them grow as young adults and watch them become champions!” For Gary, his champions are characterized beyond the ability to run fast, score goals or make touchdowns.

“I’m tough,” Gary admits. “I believe in discipline and being strict, and kids respond to that. They want to know where they stand. If there is one thing I’ve learned, there are three things kids

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love: discipline, positive reinforcement and attention.”

While there are many who are quick to point out how soft or undisciplined young athletes are today, Gary is optimistic. “It’s true when I was a kid, I remember coming home from [football] practice to play a game of pickup in the neighborhood. Nowadays, kids go home and watch TV or get on the computer.” Still, the level of competition and athletic ability is impressive. “It has to be here. Especially at Mansfield



ISD! The bar is raised every year.”

Eight years have now passed since he first laid eyes on the Summit campus, yet Gary’s very first impression has not changed. It is a first class operation. What has changed, however, is his own behavior.

“I want more,” he said, speaking of both his athletes and student trainers. In the wide world of sports, there are ample opportunities to grow, but success can only come from hard work. “I want them to know hard work eventually pays off, but you don’t get a hand out. Athletics are too demanding and the expectations are too high for anyone to sit back and say ‘gimme.’ This is when you learn how to become champions.”

For Gary, this is his time to show them how. **NOW**



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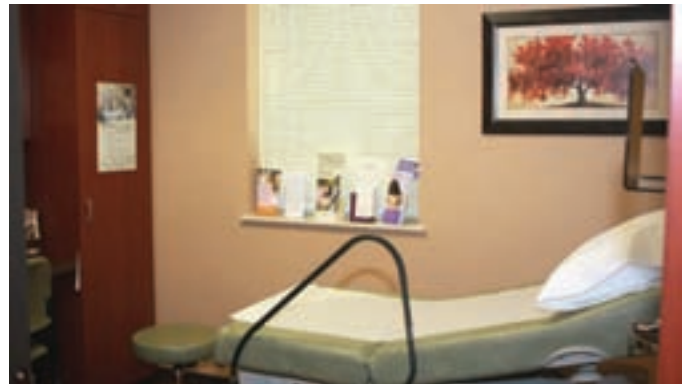


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By Grace

— By Alex Allred

A new doctor is in town. Celebrating only his second year in Mansfield, Dr. Roderick Diggs III, is the inspiration behind Grace Women's Center, a place offering professional obstetrics and gynecology services. After earning his medical degree from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas, Dr. Diggs did his residency at Methodist Dallas Medical Center and went on to practice there for another six years before moving to Mansfield.

In the field of obstetrics and gynecology, his patients would say he is a gift. Warm, engaging and deeply committed to both his practice and patients, he is known to tell jokes, "even while they are pushing," Dr. Diggs smiled. In fact, he has also been known to break into song while delivering a baby. Whether a brilliant, diversional tactic or simply the

desire to sing, his patients love his bedside manner.

"He gives a lot of one-on-one time to his patients," said his medical assistant, Danielle Martinez, "and they always say what a good bedside manner he has. But that's who he is. He's wonderful to work for. When you wake up in the morning, you want to go to work."

However, Dr. Diggs never intended on becoming an OB/GYN. "Oh, no, I fought it tooth and nail," he said. He saw how his father, Dr. Roderick Diggs Jr., worked long, hard hours as an OB/GYN, and it was his own father who had initially discouraged his son from following in his footsteps. But while in residency, working to fill the required quota for delivering babies, Dr. Diggs was hooked. "I filled the quota in the first night!"

When another resident showed Dr. Diggs just how to prepare for delivery, how to hold his hands and apply pressure, tie knots and repair lacerations, he felt the calling. Before his shift was over, he delivered five babies and "felt such an adrenaline rush. It was amazing to be able to be part of bringing in a new life, a new member to a family. And it still is!"

For Dr. Diggs, family is everything. Only with the

support of his wife, Vanessa, and their two beautiful daughters, to whom he credits his ability to better communicate with and care for his patients, did he decide to open his own practice.

"When I came here," he said of the Grace Women's Center in Mansfield, "I had a crystal clear image of what I wanted. I wanted an equal balance between obstetrics and gynecology, and I wanted an office staff that shared my vision on how to treat patients. We named Grace Women's Center for a reason — to share God's love with each patient." Adopting the "Do unto others ..." philosophy, the staff motto is: Listening to, educating and healing ...

"I think being a husband and father of two girls makes me a better doctor."

one patient at a time. While highly skilled in minimally evasive surgeries, it is his ability to communicate with patients which is earning Dr. Diggs a reputation throughout the Mansfield medical community. "I think being a husband and father of two girls makes me a better doctor," he said, adding that while his wife's feedback is important, he has learned so much more from his oldest daughter. "The heart of an 8-year-old is so tender."

He is humbled by the relationships he has been able to develop with the families he treats, often thanking them for allowing him to take part in their lives. With a grace, he leads and views his profession not as an obligation, but as a privilege.

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Teaching is a calling for the Schutt family. Pictured left to right are Sue Schutt, Melanie Beckett and Kristi Henderson.

All in the Family

— By Alex Allred

To say education is important to the Schutt family is an understatement. For this Mansfield family, education is a way of life. Howard Schutt was a Baptist preacher who taught his congregations faith, fundraising and education. Over the past few decades he taught one struggling church after another until they grew, and he would move on to teach another; moving from Forestville, Texas, through many other towns and finally ending up in Mansfield, where his wife, Sue, found her calling as a school teacher. However, when the time came for their grown daughters to select a major in college, both Kristi Henderson and Melanie Beckett actively avoided teaching. Instead, Kristi chose social work, and Melanie earned her degree in business. But once Kristi began taking the classes of her chosen major, she quickly changed her mind.

"I knew it wasn't for me," Kristi said. "I realized I wanted to be a teacher. I was called to this." Without any further hesitation, she changed her degree to education and within the first year, following her graduation, she was working in the same school district as her mother: Mansfield Independent School District (MISD). While Sue worked at Alice Ponder Elementary, Kristi joined the Charlotte Anderson Elementary team, teaching third grade. Eventually, Sue would change to Cross Timbers Intermediate.

"That was a lot of fun," Sue laughed. "Of course, I would get the kids who just came from Charlotte Anderson, and they would be amazed that I had a picture of Ms. Henderson on my file cabinet!"

While the mother/daughter duo of Sue and Kristi

tag-teamed the students of MISD, Melanie was determined not to get into education. "I think I resisted teaching," Melanie said, "because of my mom and sister." Only after she had earned her degree and began working in a bank did the realization hit her. "I knew something was missing, and I knew deep down what it was." Still, she moved slowly, observing classrooms and tutoring students who had difficulty with the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests. "I only worked with them a couple of nights a week," she confided, "but they really captured my heart." Before she could stop herself, she responded to the same calling that had trumpeted so soundly in the Schutt home.

"I truly feel that this is my calling. This is what I was meant to do," Melanie smiled, offering a statement with which entire generations would concur. Among them, the mother and daughters have taught more than 70 years. While Sue has since retired, Kristi continues teaching. After 21 years at Charlotte Anderson, she moved to the newly built Carol Holt Elementary to teach second grade.

For Melanie, Worley Middle School was her first teaching assignment in 1991. Both she and her husband, Randy, left the area because of his job, and she did not return until 2002, teaching at T.A. Howard. Today, she has already taught for 14 years and is entering her ninth year teaching with the MISD; she cannot imagine teaching anything but seventh and eighth grade.

"There is something special about them. They have an enthusiasm about life, a desire to learn and that zeal that they express on a daily basis that I just love! And I know I learn

Education **NOW**

from them every day. I didn't have the greatest experience when I was in middle school, so maybe it's that personal connection for me that causes me to want them to have a great experience."

Still, after so many years and after so many administrations and curriculums, how do the sisters still stay inspired to teach?

"I told them to keep their focus on the students," Sue said, recalling the early advice she once gave both daughters.

"I hope to build a relationship with my students," said Melanie. "None of them are just a kid sitting in my room, but a child I can watch grow. I treat them as I would want my own child to be treated."

Truly, the responsibility of educating and caring for the children of others is something the Schutt women have taken to heart. For all three women, humor has been a key ingredient to their successes. While they all describe each other as "funny" and "fun" and "dedicated," letters from students and parents say so much more. During the month of November, "I am thankful in November" letters are written in the school district by students who have called Kristi, "my hero," and portrayed Melanie as the teacher students can always go to with a problem.

Today, for the two teachers who once resisted following in their mother's footsteps, the idea of not being a teacher or not being available to a young student in need of a mentor or friend seems impossible to both Melanie and Kristi.

"When we all go out for dinner," Sue laughed, "my husband and sons-in-law always try to say we have to have a 'time out' from teacher talk," but as they are always inevitably recognized in a store or restaurant by a current or former student, it is an impossible request.

You can take the teacher out of the classroom, but you can never stop the Schutt women from teaching! **NOW**



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Look Who's Cooking — By Faith Browning

IN THE KITCHEN WITH KATHY MITCHELL

Kathy Mitchell loves cooking for others. On Wednesday nights she cooks for The Field Café youth group at First Baptist Church Mansfield. "Every week during the school year I head up a team of 10 people that help cook various meals," she said. "We cook for about 100 people, and it's open to the entire church, as well as to the youth group. Our goal is to offer great food and fellowship!"

Trying new things is Kathy's holiday

tradition. "We don't follow the tradition of having turkey and dressing every holiday," she stated. "We may do Spanish food one holiday, fondue the next or beef tenderloin with horseradish sauce the next. We like to mix things up and do something different. What is important to our family is love and laughter!" **NOW**

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

LASAGNA BLANCA

- 1 lb. pork sausage
- 1/2 cup green onion, chopped
- 1/2 cup mushrooms, chopped
- 1/2 tsp. garlic powder
- 1/2 tsp. pepper
- 1 cup cottage cheese
- 1 4-oz. cream cheese
- 1 1/2 cups Monterey Jack cheese, shredded
- 1 17-oz pkg. lasagna noodles
- 1 Tbsp. butter
- 1 Tbsp. flour
- 1/8 tsp. dried tarragon
- 1 cup milk

1. In a skillet, cook sausage, onion and mushrooms until sausage is well cooked; drain the grease.

2. Stir in 1/4 tsp. garlic powder and 1/4 pepper; set aside.

For filling:

1. Combine cottage cheese, cream cheese, 1/2 cup shredded cheese and remaining 1/4 tsp.

garlic powder; set aside.

2. Cook noodles as directed, and then cool on wax paper.

3. Fill each noodle evenly with cheese filling.

4. Sprinkle sausage mixture on top of the cheese mixture; roll each into a spiral.

5. Grease 2-quart baking dish.

6. Place lasagna rolls seam side down in pan.

For sauce:

1. In a small saucepan melt butter.

2. Stir in flour, tarragon and remaining pepper.

3. Add milk and cook, stirring until slightly thickened.

4. Cook and stir for 2 minutes.

5. Remove from heat and stir in 1/2 cup of cheese.

6. Pour sauce mixture over lasagna rolls.

7. Cover and bake for 25 minutes at 350 F.

8. Remove cover and sprinkle with remaining 1/2 cup cheese and serve.

Although this recipe requires a few steps it is well worth the effort — yummy!

KATHRYN'S POTATO SALAD

- 5 lbs. potatoes, boiled with skins
- 5 Tbsp. sugar
- 5 Tbsp. white vinegar
- 5 egg yolks
- 1 stick margarine
- 2 Tbsp. mustard
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 3 eggs, boiled and chopped
- 1 onion, chopped and sautéed
- 1 bunch green onions, chopped
- 1/2 cup dill relish
- season salt and pepper, to taste
- 1/2 tsp. dill

1. After potatoes have cooled, peel and cut into cubes.

2. In a small saucepan, mix sugar, vinegar and egg yolks; cook, stirring constantly, until thick.

3. Remove from heat; add margarine and stir until melted.

4. Add mustard and mayonnaise into butter mixture and combine.

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5. Pour dressing over potatoes.

6. Add remaining ingredients and mix well.

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STUFFED JALAPEÑOS

25 jalapeños

1 lb. breakfast sausage

8-oz. cream cheese, softened

8-oz. pkg. grated Parmesan cheese

1. Carefully prepare jalapeños! (You may want to wear gloves.) Cut each jalapeño in half, remove seeds and clean out veins.

2. Cook and crumble the sausage; drain any excess grease.

3. Add cream cheese and Parmesan to the sausage, mixing well.

4. Fill each jalapeño half with the cheese and sausage mixture; place on a pan.

5. Bake at 350 F for 20-30 minutes or until golden brown.

The jalapeños come out mild and the filling is delicious!

SHRIMP GUMBO

1/4 lb. salt pork, chopped

1 lb. raw shrimp

1/3 cup flour

1 lg. onion, chopped

1 lg. green pepper, chopped

1/2 cup celery chopped

2 cloves garlic, minced

1/2 lb. frozen okra

2 cups chicken stock

1 can diced tomatoes

1/2 tsp. seasoned salt

1 Tbsp. parsley

1/4 tsp. black pepper

2 bay leaves

1/4 tsp. thyme

1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce

1/4-1/2 tsp. Tabasco sauce

1 lb. raw shrimp, peeled and deveined

2 cups cooked white rice

1. Fry salt pork in pan. Remove and set aside. To the remaining fat in the pan, slowly add the flour.

2. Stir constantly over low heat until flour becomes medium brown. Do not burn! Into this mixture, add onion, green pepper, celery, garlic and okra.

3. Cook about 5 minutes or until vegetables are soft, stirring often.

4. Add in the stock, tomatoes and seasonings and bring to a low boil.

5. Reduce heat and simmer for 1 hour.

6. Remove bay leaves; stir in desired amount of Tabasco and shrimp.

7. Cook 5 minutes. Serve over rice. *This family recipe feeds a group and tastes great!*

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Hope for a Better Future

— By Betty Tryon, R.N.

Ronald Reagan, 40th president of the United States, Charlton Heston, movie star and Norman Rockwell, artist, are just a few of the famous people who have had Alzheimer's disease. They put a face on a devastating illness. Facing the possibility of losing a little bit of oneself every day is a dismal prospect. The fear is real, and the disease is irreversible. Is there any hope?

Alzheimer's disease (AD) holds the dubious distinction of being the most common cause of dementia. We still do not know what causes this disease, but evidence points to brain damage occurring over a long period of time before any sign of forgetfulness becomes worrisome. How much forgetfulness is enough to warrant further examination? Obviously, if you are very concerned about this, a trip to your physician may allay your fears.

We all have those minor "senior moments" of forgetfulness. However, if memory challenges disrupt your daily routine in some manner, that may be cause for concern. Being unable to balance the checkbook when you have done it previously with little effort may be worrisome. An inability to follow a plan or understand a favorite recipe is another sign. Confusion is very typical with AD, such as not being able to travel to a known place or to find your way home. Anyone can forget about those very important dates, but we have the ability to

recall them later. A warning sign in AD is when important dates or even their purpose can no longer be remembered. Needing to retrieve the instructions to reset the clocks or other electronics is common. Not remembering how to brush your teeth or dress yourself needs evaluation. Those with AD may find it difficult to express themselves using the correct words or to understand others.

Although there is no cure yet, early detection is still useful and important. Early diagnosis allows one to be an active participant in planning for future care. It permits you to have a say in legal matters regarding your estate while you can still do so. Becoming involved in support groups will help to enhance the quality of your life. Your family can benefit from these services also.

Yes, there is always hope, and it may be in early diagnosis. Research continues to advance in this area and early treatment may become crucial. Early detection can give you an opportunity to receive treatment or participate in clinical trials that can slow down the progression of the disease. Knowing what is ahead may give you a better future. **NOW**

This article is for general information only and does not constitute medical advice. Consult with your physician for questions regarding this topic.



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PLANT NOW FOR SPRING BLOOMS

— By Nancy Fenton

If you have not planted your bulbs yet for spring, there is still time. Buy them and get them in for splashes of yellow and white in February, March and April. Just be a bit careful about which varieties of narcissus, daffodils, jonquils and cyclamineus you choose. There are hundreds of varieties, but only a few do well enough in our heavy, alkaline, southern soil to come back in profusion year after year!

After a few false starts over the years, I have come to realize the beautiful King Alfreds are not right for our area. Most of the bulbs that will naturalize and bloom year after year are smaller and advertised as appropriate for USDA hardiness zones 8 or 9. The zones are based on the average minimum temperature ranges and the blooming history of the bulbs including the needed “cold time” for best blooms. Zone 8A shows our lowest temperatures to be 15 to 20 degrees Fahrenheit.

Bulbs are actually “underground storage structures.” They shoot up foliage and a bloom, then go on to store food for a “long summer’s nap” to bloom again next year. This is where temperature zones come in. Planted at a depth of two to three times the height of the bulb, the bulb will be protected from the heat, cold and water rot if it is suitable for our area.

Look on the packages you buy for the zone listings. Do not buy unless you see zones 8 or 9. The best bet for great bulbs is sharing with a neighbor who has a blooming abundance. My Internet search led me to the Southern Bulb Company at www.southernbulb.com and White Flower Farm at www.whiteflowerfarm.com.

Both sites have lots of good information and pretty pictures. Nurseries operated by locals are also good sources for bulbs that will be successful in our area.

Some gardening friends, my husband and I are planning an 11-day trip to Holland in April 2010 to check out



the homeland of all the great bulbs. It involves a small ship on the canals (unpacking only once), guided tours of Amsterdam, flower markets and flower farms. If this interests you, go to www.gct.com (Grand Circle Travel) and check it out. Use the member number 000809058; code VAPT008 for a special Fenton discount. **NOW**

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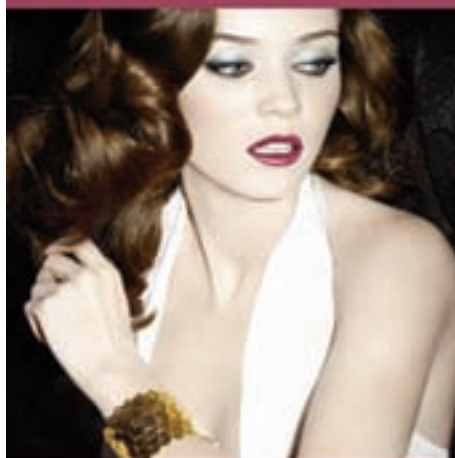
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November 2009

Community Calendar

All Month

Thinking about getting a pet? Check out the Mansfield Animal Control. New hours. Weekdays: 8:00 a.m.-noon. Saturdays: 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Monday – Friday

Young at Heart meeting (for residents ages 55 plus): 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Mansfield Activities Center. (817) 453-5420, ext. 2227.

Every Monday

Basic line dancing for seniors: 10:30-11:30 a.m., Mansfield Activities Center.

Bingo: 11:30 a.m.-noon, Mansfield Activities Center.

Small business counseling provided by SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives): 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Mansfield Chamber offices, 114 N. Main St. (817) 473-0507.

First and Third Monday

Planning and Zoning Development Commission meeting: 6:30 p.m., Mansfield City Hall.

Every Tuesday

Bouncing Babies Story Time for infants to 24 months: 10:30-11:00 a.m., Mansfield Public Library.

First and Third Tuesday

Training Academy for Dental Assistants' free informational session: 5:30 p.m. (972) 842-2999.

Second Tuesday

City Council meeting: 7:00 p.m., Mansfield City Hall, 1200 Broad St.

Third Tuesday

Mansfield Economic Development Commission meeting: 6:00 p.m., Mansfield City Hall.

Park Facilities Development Corp. meeting: 7:00 p.m., Mansfield City Hall, 1200 E. Broad St.

Adult book club: Mansfield Public Library. November's book: *Year in Providence* by Peter Mayle.

Every Wednesday

My Own Story Time for ages 3-5 years: 10:30-11:00 a.m., Mansfield Public Library.

Every Thursday

Toddler Story Time for 2-year-olds: 11:00-11:30 a.m., Mansfield Public Library.

First Thursday

ABWA Empowering Women Express Network monthly

meeting: 5:45 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center, 1 Community Circle, Midlothian. RSVP to Daphne Brewer at (972) 723-6551.

Every Friday

Mansfield Kiwanis Club: 6:45 a.m., Methodist Mansfield Medical Center, 2700 E. Broad St. (817) 473-9886.

Mansfield Public Chess Club: 4:00-6:00 p.m., Mansfield Public Library.

November 6

Mansfield Writes: 7:00-9:00 p.m., Mansfield Public Library. (817) 473-4391.

November 7

Mansfield Fire Department free CPR classes: 8:00 a.m., Station 3, 3100 E. Broad St. Register in advance; class size limited to 20 people. Contact Training Lieutenant Steve Gutierrez at (817) 804-5772.

November 25-27

Library closed.

December 5

Mansfield Hometown Holidays Parade: 2:30 p.m. Theme is "A Beary Special Holiday." For more information, contact Andrew Binz at (817) 804-5797.



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For a physician referral or for more information about orthopaedic services at Baylor Waxahachie, call **1.800.4BAYLOR** or visit us online at BaylorHealth.com.

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