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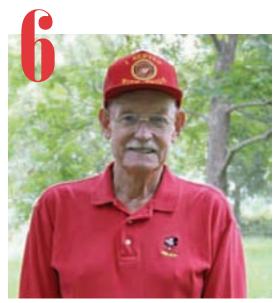


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Photo by Natalie Busch.

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Editor's Note

Happy Thanksgiving, Waxahachie!

I absolutely love this time of year. A drop in temperature warrants a change in wardrobe. I go from flip-flops to boots in a matter of minutes. The leaves turn so many colors of brown and gold that the landscape becomes a masterpiece all its own. My family comes



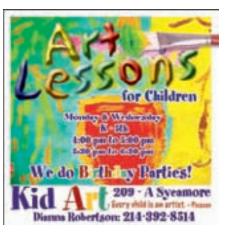
together for Thanksgiving dinner, sharing loud, boisterous laughter and several games of Farkle, a fast-paced dice game that is not designed for the meek, shy or overly quiet person, at least not with my family.

Happy anniversary *WaxahachieNOW*! November celebrates the fifth anniversary of the magazine that has become a positive mainstay in the community. I am looking forward to sharing the next five years with all of you.

This month also marks a milestone in my own personal life as I turn the big 5-0. As a teenager, I thought 50 was reserved for things ancient, but now that I have arrived, I no longer feel that way. For me, 50 is the start of a whole new journey — one that involves new friends, new adventures and new memories. No doubt, lots of them will include each of you!

Sandra Skoda WaxahachieNOW Editor









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Thanksgiving

- By Alex Allred

It was 1932 when Billie Ruth Slayden and Floyd Cockerman first laid eyes on each other in the first grade. By the third grade the two were inseparable. In high school, Floyd was voted, "Most handsome," and "we were voted 'Most Love Sick," Billie laughed. "That lasted a long time, too," Floyd smiled.

While Billie graduated from Red Oak High, Floyd enlisted in the Marines. It was September 24, 1942. Foreign Minister of Nazi Germany Joachim von Ribbentrop began negotiations between the governments of Bulgaria, Hungary and Denmark to deport the Jews of these countries. The world was about to irrevocably change, and at the tender age of 17, Floyd would change with it.

"Killing people is a very serious event and the memory is everlasting, though I must admit some memory is eroded with the passing of time," Floyd once wrote. At the age of 85, it is clear that many of those events are still very fresh in his mind. Today, he is most thankful to have survived such a devastating tragedy in world history. He was 21 years old when he returned home. "I didn't realize how fortunate I was until I saw the burials all over the world. I prayed a lot to God even though I wasn't yet a member of His Kingdom."

As he talks about what he is most thankful for, he is taken back in time. The pontoon of his tank was blown apart,

killing "the guy right next to me," Floyd said in a somber tone. "His cigarette was still burning between his fingers."

In this war, there were no e-mails or daily media coverage to inform the family back home. Floyd left home an already lean 185 pounds to his nearly 6-foot-2-inch frame and returned at 165 pounds. "Before he left," Billie said, "you couldn't hardly fill him up." But after years of only being fed SPAM, Floyd learned to eat sparingly.

While Billie hoped to marry Floyd before he left for war, there was never time. Upon enlisting, he was immediately sent to San Diego. Four months later, he deployed to New Caledonia in the South Pacific. "I always wanted to be in aviation, but they put me in tanks," Floyd laughed, adding that he has always suspected that it was his vast experience with heavy farm equipment that landed him in the driver's seat of a tank. In Australia, his unit was organized into the First Marine Division



where Floyd was trained in small gasoline tanks sporting 37 mm guns. While they were designed to move quickly on even surfaces, the off-road terrain and constant downshifting of the engine made it impossible for the gunners to lock on to a target for any given period of time. It was not until Floyd's unit was sent to New Guinea that he found suitable food and was introduced to the Sherman tank. "These tanks were big!"

With three .30-caliber machine guns and a 75 mm rifle, it dwarfed the 37 mm tanks he had been accustomed to, but its massive size and double clutch shifting made for extremely difficult maneuvering. Whatever security Floyd once felt being inside the Sherman tanks was fleeting as he quickly discovered that even infantry did not wish to walk alongside the tanks as they drew constant fire from the enemy.

It was during one such attack that







Floyd was unable to make the 45-degree angle his commanding officer called for "and we jumped tracks." While the men were forced to abandon the tank and seek cover, Floyd and another soldier remained behind to man the gun and it was then that a Japanese sniper found Floyd.

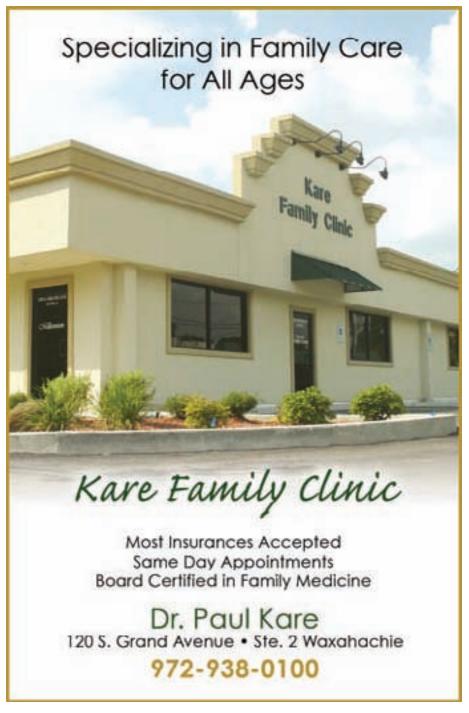
Though this would ultimately earn Floyd the Purple Heart after being shot in the hip, it did not take him out of commission for long. Soon, he was back inside a tank, securing more



airfields until he was relocated to Okinawa. While General Douglas MacArthur's army made landfall in the Philippines beating back the Japanese navy, the Marines faced what Floyd felt to be one of their most difficult campaigns. Much to his frustration, the Japanese refused to surrender even in the face of certain defeat. Floyd wrote, "Kind of like my grade school days when I was sort of lanky, but still pretty strong. I would wrestle three of my classmates at a time and win every match, except for one who would not give up no matter what. With legs, arms or back twisted or bent, he would never give in and I guess I had the good sense to let it go. But this ... this is not a game anymore. That was their national choosing. ... They took great pride to fight to the last man. We learned this lesson very quickly at Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, and were forced to go along with this doctrine, but I hated to see it continue throughout the war."

Floyd is fascinated as to why the Japanese halted their campaign, about the Russian aggression and how their







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actions forever changed world governments. In 2007, another great honor was bestowed upon Floyd when he was asked to participate in the book, The *Ultimate Battle* by Bill Sloan. "I always say," Billie beamed, "it was he (Floyd) and John Wayne who won the war!"

What is not portrayed is how a simple farm boy from Ellis County came home a greatly appreciative and humbled man.



Upon his return, which Billie describes as, "the most amazing thing! He looked so beautiful," Floyd completed high school, attended the Dallas Aviation School and graduated in the class of 1951 at Texas A&M University under the GI bill. He continued to have a successful career in the private sector and as a rancher. Together, he and Billie had two sons, Tom and Bill. While Tom died unexpectedly, as did Tom's own son, Floyd and Billie are thrilled to live "just down the road," from their granddaughter, Amy (Bill's daughter, a student at Shackelford Elementary.

Floyd proudly notes he was baptized in 1966, and together, he and Billie have led a happy, healthy life. There are few regrets, but many gifts both given and received by Floyd. He continues to be honored as a war hero and great patriot. Still, he is humble. He recalls that boy who left home in 1942 and the young man who returned in 1945. While he does not wish such a journey on today's youth, Thanksgiving is the perfect time for young and old to appreciate that journey's results.

10



Your Neighbors

Vintage Bank President Jeff Frazier is a lifelong resident of Ellis County who lives in Waxahachie. You may have seen him at the golf course teaching his sons how to play the game. Or you may have seen him and his wife at a local restaurant or out shopping for groceries. In any case, there's one thing that you can say about him that really can't be said about presidents of the outsider banks: Jeff Frazier knows and loves Ellis County, and nowhere else would seem like home.



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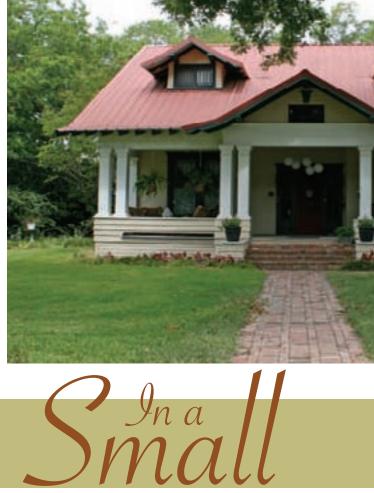
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Pictured are Jeff and Jeanette Frazier with sons Colt and Jake.



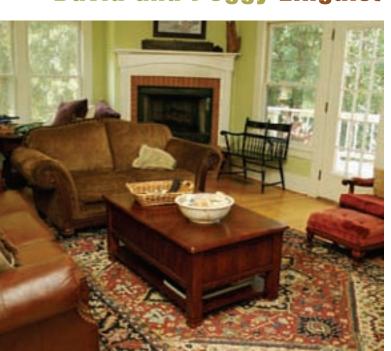






At Home With

David and Peggy Linguist



David and Peggy Linguist met at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. They married one month before entering medical school together in San Antonio. After medical school, they spent the next three years completing their residencies at the University of Tennessee. They say they got to Waxahachie as quickly as they could. "We came to Waxahachie from Memphis, Tennessee," David shared. The two-story, three-bedroom, three-bath prairie style house they have called home for the past 12 years was not for sale at the time of their arrival, but that did not stop them from pursuing what they wanted. "It took a couple of months before the owners decided to sell," David remembered, making sure to mention that this was their first small-town experience. "Our persistence paid off."

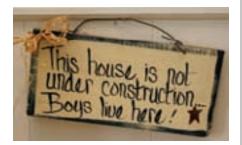
- By Sandra Skoda

After selling, the previous owners moved into another house just down the street. Before they went, they completed all the things in the home that were considered to be "works



in progress." The window treatments are great examples of this. "They left them," Peggy explained. "They had raised their family here and they were happy to know that David and I were going to do the same."

Once the young couple had settled into their new abode, they began the improving, rebuilding and remodeling



processes that are ongoing in an older home. A new roof and plumbing were the first items on the agenda. Then they added on a family room at the back of the home, a mud room that opens to the garage and a back porch. They also converted an oversized upstairs closet into a full bathroom. Central heat and air conditioning were installed upstairs, while a new driveway was poured. The original hardwood maple and pine floors, dating back to the







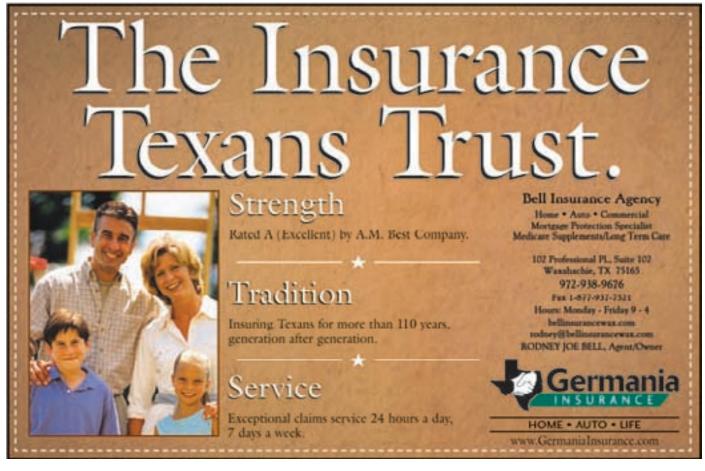


early 1900s, were also refurbished. The bricked area under the large elm tree in the backyard was the inspiration for the in-ground pool.

One of the largest undertakings was the complete kitchen remodel. "I remember one Thanksgiving," Peggy laughed. "The oven door came off the oven. I was standing in the kitchen holding my oven door." As the remodel got underway, avocado green countertops became gray with black and brown flecks throughout. On one wall, magnetic

sheet metal was painted with chalk paint. This makes it easy to leave a special note for a loved one or display artwork created by the couple's two boys, Connor and Sam, ages 11 and 8 respectively. Both boys were born and reared in Waxahachie.

Although the home boasts a study and formal living and dining areas, the favorite spot for the Linguists is found outdoors. "We love spending time on the front porch," David said. "The ferns allow for some privacy, while still





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being open to nature. We both enjoy sitting outside." The couple shared that the trees that encircle the house were a big selling point. They have come to enjoy what they call "the beautiful sunsets," especially in the fall and winter months. Some may find the railroad tracks behind the home a bit annoying, but the family has gotten used to the train whistle. "It took us awhile to get used to it," David said, as Peggy added, "The train just adds to the home's ambiance."

Peggy's decorating style is what she calls "a hodgepodge eclectic mix," with several antiques mixed with items that add comfort. "The most important things are not things," Peggy said. "People are much more important than things." There is a pre-Civil War clock that once belonged to Peggy's grandfather and a bustle seat, both of which are displayed in the formal living area. "The bustle seat has no back on it," she explained. "It allowed women who had



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large bustles on their skirts or dresses to sit down comfortably." The first couple of pieces of furniture they bought after moving here include a tiger oak roll top desk and an armoire.

David and Peggy enjoy sharing the Thanksgiving holiday with family and friends. Peggy's family is conveniently located just down the road, while David's are a short drive away in Dallas. A new tradition Peggy started two years ago includes a holiday table runner with input from every guest in attendance for Thanksgiving dinner. "I



call it the Thankfulness Table Runner," she said. "I put lots of Sharpie pens on the table and everyone has to write what they are thankful for on the runner. Each year, we're just going to keep adding to it until it's full. Then we can start a new one."

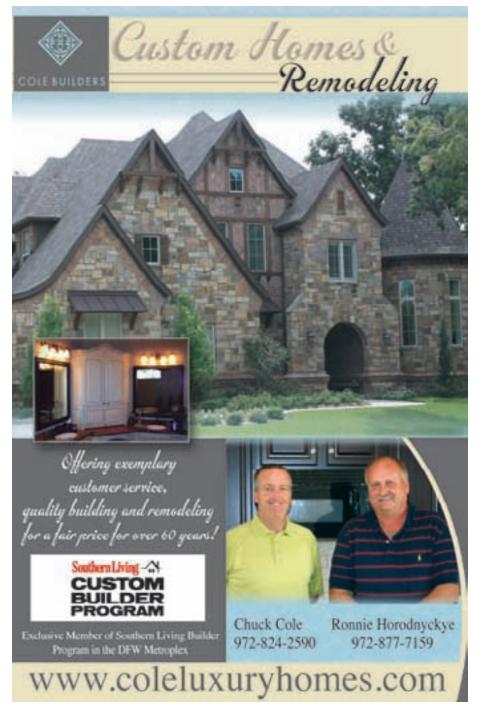
David and Peggy are always trying to come up with unique ideas that include the whole family, while also teaching Connor and Sam the importance of being thankful for what they have in life. One year, they cut

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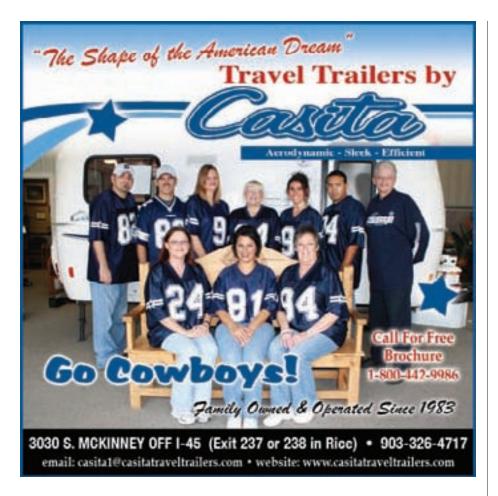
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mittens out of vintage fabric and wrote their thankful message on the mittens. Other times, they expressed themselves on rocks or leaves. Christmas will bring another tradition to the Linguist home. "David and I try to make Christmas gifts for one another," Peggy stated, as she pointed to two framed photographs of the church where David proposed to her. These photographs were a special gift from her to David, and they rightfully hang in the master bedroom.

Photographs are an integral part of the decor throughout the home. The "adventure wall," also found in the master bedroom, represents the trips the couple has taken together, many before the children were born. There is also a picture of David and Peggy on the dresser that reminds Peggy that "spring always comes again." The hallway is home to many black and white family photographs that have been spot-colored to bring out rosy cheeks.

The home is a picture in and of itself — a picture of a happy family. Connor is active in Boy Scouts and both boys participate in the sports available for their age groups. Their church, First United Methodist Church, is a short distance from their home, and many times when the weather permits, the family will walk to and from church. Peggy gets misty-eyed over a picture from one of their walks that will forever be etched in her mind. "When we walk, the boys are most always in front of David and I. One will be skipping down the sidewalk and the other may be tossing rocks," she said. "I know, it's very 'small town,' but it's what we love about living here." • WOW

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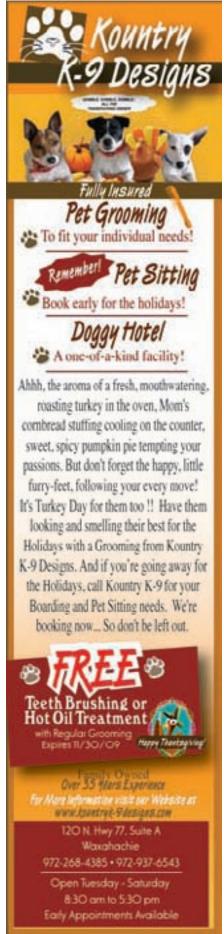
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Around Town





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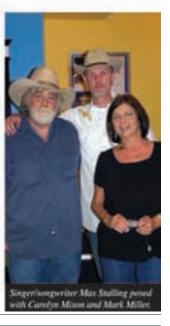
Robert Brier and family, of Robert's Retish Burn, smiled for the camera while selling their homemode goods.





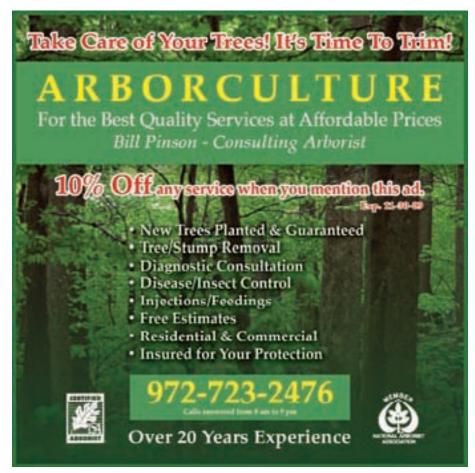


















When Light Meets Dark

By Sandra Skoda



Like many artists, Betty Reuscher grew up with a drawing pad in her hands. Because her father was an architect, she has memories of being around art from a very young age. "He would buy me books so I could draw animals," she fondly recalled. "Dad wanted me to be an architect. He wanted me to work as a draftsperson." She dabbled in art until she grew into adulthood. When she reached her early 20s, Betty started to get serious about what she feels is a God-given talent. Thus began her journey in the artistic world of oils.

The first canvas she ever painted was a pot of geraniums, which she gifted to a friend. "I remember how excited my friend was to get that painting," Betty explained. "To say the least, it was gratifying as an artist." Once she and her husband, Jon, married and had children, Betty realized that oil painting was not going to work if she planned to spend time with her young family and still get to exercise her passion on canvas. "When the children were young, I went from oils to watercolor,"

she said. "Watercolor dries much faster."

To master the art of watercolor painting, Betty attended several weekend workshops in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where the couple lived for many years before relocating to Waxahachie. "I painted at night when the children were in bed sleeping. I usually got started sometime after 9:00 p.m.," she said. "Jon would fix breakfast for the kids and get them off to school because I'd been up until 2:00 or 3:00 a.m. painting." During this time of late-night painting, Betty created enough artwork to start attending weekend art shows. She began with a small booth that held several of what she felt were her best works, each piece displayed on an easel. "This is how it all started," she said, "before it progressed to the state level of juried art shows."

Looking at the detail and color in her paintings, one would think she majored in art while in college. That was not the case. Betty's bachelor's degree is in speech and drama, her master's degree in educational psychology. "I feel I'm mostly self-taught," she stated. "I took several classes, but classes only teach you something you can incorporate into your own artistic style."

Betty readily admitted that the classes helped her grow, but the best teacher is experience. All her paintings begin with a photograph, most of which were taken during the years spent in New Mexico. She has a deep passion for nature, including flora and fauna, which is clearly evident in each

Arts

completed piece of artwork. Many of these pieces hang in her home. "Having lived in New Mexico for 22 years, I find that the delicate balance of colors and subtle hues of the Southwest continue to profoundly influence my painting," she said. "I



"I feel I'm mostly self-taught."



like to work large as well as small, and oftentimes I include a bit of the history that I find in the nooks and crannies of the back roads."

"Betty's bunnies" were a collection of paintings known also as the "bread and butter" of her early days as an artist. She would travel by bicycle to a nearby schoolyard in Albuquerque to snap photos of rabbits. The subject of her paintings may have changed over the years, but her technique has remained the same. She has learned how important it is to find a stopping point when creating with watercolor. "The finished painting needs to be transparent," she explained. "You miss the art of watercolor if you get too heavy on the pigment of the darker colors. It's







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Arts

easy to go darker, but it's difficult to go lighter."

They say eyes are the window to the soul, which may be why Betty paints the eyes first. She puts the background color on the paper first. Then she adds the darker color around the edges. Once the area has had a few moments to dry, she adds more water to wash down to the lighter color underneath. With this technique, Betty's animals end up with a dark ring that allows viewers to see the depth in the eye. Finally, she adds a small dot of white



for the reflection that brings life to her painting. "I love to do the eyes," she admitted. "If the eyes work, then everything else falls into place. It's all about the lightest light meeting the darkest dark."

Betty has won several awards during her tenure as an artist. They include both the National Award of Excellence and the New Mexico Award of Merit at the National Pen Women Show held in Washington, D.C., for her watercolor *Steam Heat*, as well as numerous purchase awards. Her artwork has hung in several Albuquerque galleries, but has also been shared with art lovers in Arizona, Texas and beyond over the years. "I've always gotten lost in my painting," she said. "Sometimes it can be hard work when I'm on a deadline, but it's relaxing, as well as gratifying."

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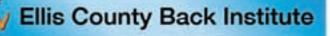
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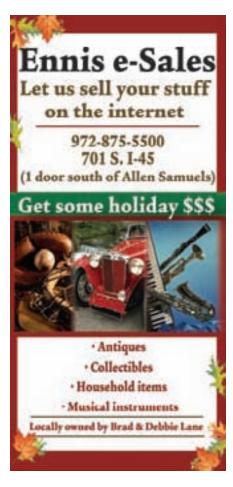


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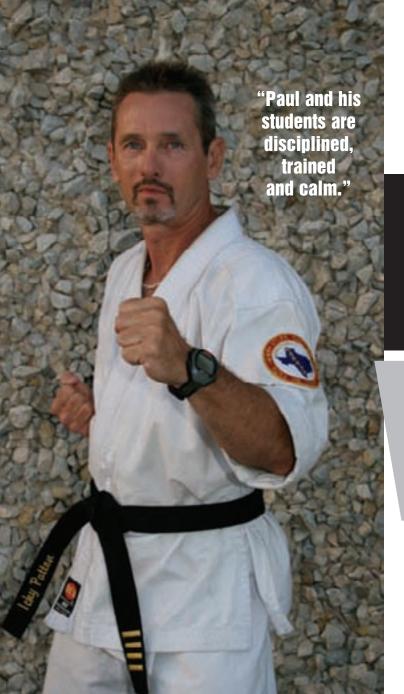
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Sports

- By Adam Kohut

When a man who looked to be in his late 60s pulled a knife on Paul Patton, a 52-year-old FedEx truck driver, during an ordinary package delivery, he was making a mistake. Paul is a fourth-degree black belt in karate, which he has been practicing since the early 1980s. He plans to test for a fifth-degree belt in May 2010.

With the help of a few neighbors, Paul was able to subdue the man and continue about his route. "It's kind of funny how [your training] just kicks in. First, he took a couple of swings at me, but I just blocked them and kept my distance. I wasn't going to hit him — I just wasn't going to do it. Then a couple of his neighbors saw it and they came out and grabbed him, and everything was good," he recalled. "That's what we try to teach the kids: if you get mad, you're going to lose the fight. If you keep your head, you stay in control. If you learn what we teach you, you're going to be fine, which is how I was taught. It's almost embarrassing to have somebody try to do that to you, but [karate] paid off because I didn't have to lay a hand on him."

Paul has a teaching degree. Earning his black belt helped him earn a master's degree in physical education as well, but he has never taught school. He loves driving for FedEx. "I've been working for FedEx for years now," he said. "I'm outside; nobody's messing with me; you're on your own. I like it a lot." Even though education has not been Paul's career choice, he does use his teaching skills. He teaches two karate classes two nights a week at the Waxahachie YMCA. The first class is for children. The second class, which caters to teenagers and adults, has seven black belts actively participating, including one national champion, Jeremiah Arnold. The other six black belts are: David Vyers, Dr. Kelly Felty, J.T. Felty, Ray Porter, Will Porter and Matt Stoll. This is almost unheard of, because it can take as long as four or five years to earn a black belt.

The level of commitment from his students, Paul said, is astounding. It is not just young people on the team, either.



The black belts on the Waxahachie YMCA squad include a doctor, a CPA and a truck driver. "These guys raise families. They have full-time jobs, but they're ... putting in three or four hours a week up here, getting that black belt," Paul said.

Paul has been teaching at the Waxahachie "Y" for over 10 years. This has allowed him to watch many of his students grow from beginner to black belt. "Watching these kids grow up is 10 times more rewarding than winning tournaments," he said. "I've won my share of trophies. I had my heyday back then, but you watch a kid earn his black

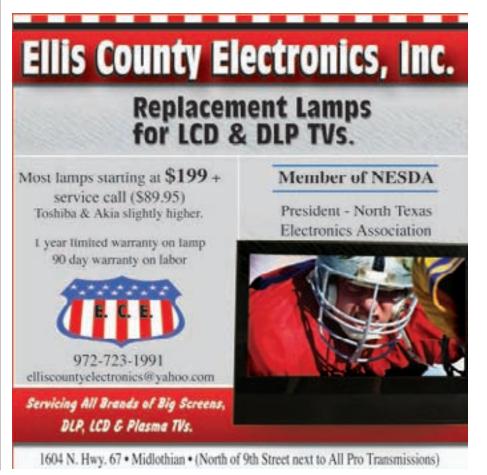


"No one who is learned in karate actively looks for a **fight.**"

belt, and it's five or six years' [worth of] consistent, hard work. I know what it takes because I went through it."

Paul and his students are disciplined, trained and calm. "Karate is not about violence," he explained. "It's a sport. No one who is learned in karate actively looks for a fight. It's not just about hitting somebody; it's not getting hit. It's balance, body control and keeping your head. We want to make good young men and women. We're not out here trying to make the baddest kid on the street. My guys know — we all





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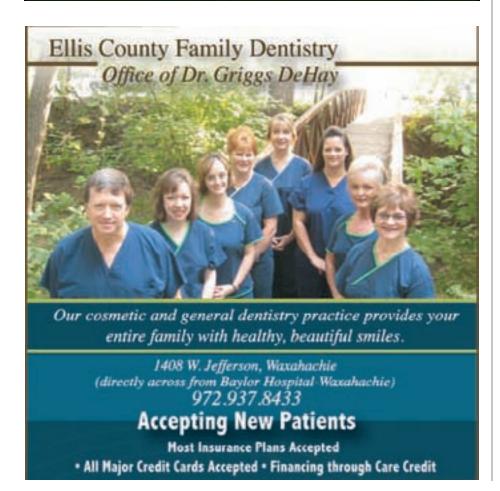
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talk about it — if you don't throw the first punch, nine out of 10 times there's not going to be a fight. If the other guy throws the first punch, then you win the fight. It's that simple."

The best thing about teaching at the YMCA, Paul said, is the parents. They are supportive, involved and helpful. "When we have a belt test," he said, "this room will be full of parents and grandparents watching those kids."



The YMCA team competes in tournaments year-around. Paul especially encourages tournament fighting as students get closer to their black belts, in order to get them as much experience as possible.

Paul loves to compete, but he has found something more rewarding in teaching. He finds it fulfilling, which is why he will teach for as long as possible. "I never would have thought that this would be more fun than competing, but it is. Watching these kids test, watching them improve, watching these kids put in four or five years of work; you have great teams, you have great parents. I've been very lucky here. I'd have never dreamed of being here with seven black belts because of what it takes," he said. "This group is really unusual, because probably nine out of 10 don't stay in long enough to do it. To have seven black belts, and we only have an average of 25 to 30 people total on the team, you know that's a testament to those who have staved that long. If I quit tomorrow, it would have been worth it." TOW













Sharing Their Bounty

By Sandra Skoda

Thanksgiving is a holiday that tends to bring friends and families together for a time of sharing and caring. For Christ the King Lutheran Church, it marks an annual event that continues to grow in numbers each year. "On the Saturday before Thanksgiving, we host a dinner for local nursing home residents and clients from the area special needs centers," Christ the King Pastor Robert Hemsath explained. "Our intent has always been to bring people who have no family into our congregation for a Thanksgiving meal. It's a wonderful thing for everyone involved."

The first dinner was orchestrated by Louis Dawson, a gentleman who also happens to be a long-standing church





member. Church members volunteer and prepare all the holiday fixings, from turkey and mashed potatoes to pumpkin pie. In recent years, the congregation has added sugar free pies to the menu for those who live with diabetes. If needed, food can be pureed, but most attendees can eat the food as prepared. "It is truly Thanksgiving for the Church of Christ," Robert said. "We give thanks to God for the bounty, and then we share that bounty with others in the community."

Over the years, Robert and his congregation have mastered the gathering that currently serves no fewer than 65 people. "We've learned what works and what doesn't. We've got a great assembly line going. It's a very smooth affair," he said, also mentioning that 2008 was a year of "flattening out." "Last year, we served somewhere between 60 and 70 people. Up until then, we were adding tables and chairs each year because it just kept growing." Anywhere between six and 12 men will volunteer their time and their vehicles to pick the residents and clients up. "The nursing homes and special needs centers look forward to the annual Thanksgiving meal," Robert shared. "They call us before we have a chance to call and remind them."

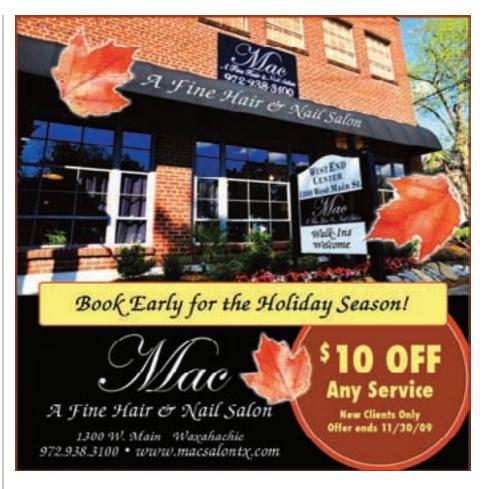


What Robert and his congregation are most proud of is the fact that they have never had to turn anyone away. Each year, needs are met in big ways, and it is quite common to have repeat attendees. "There's a husband and wife that come yearly. He resides in a nursing home and she doesn't, but they've attended the dinner together for the past three years," Robert recalled. "One lady that comes each year has an infectious laugh. Last year, we thought she was missing until the last van pulled up." It is common to see the same 20-30 special needs attendees, accompanied by their numerous wheelchairs and walkers. "Everyone has a blast," Robert added.

"Our intent has always been to bring people who have no family into our congregation for a Thanksgiving meal."

Robert has learned that the Christ the King Thanksgiving dinner is not just a well-planned, well-orchestrated and well-attended annual gathering; it has also proven to be a great community public relations tool. "It's a great ministry," he stated. "We are definitely making an impact within the community. We minister to individuals and families. We offer God's grace and love to those who may not, in their current lives, be experiencing grace and love." He also took it one step further as he cited God Loves Me, So What?, a video curriculum taught at Christ the King. "We are being Jesus with skin on," he stated. "That's what we are, Jesus with skin on."

Christ the King Lutheran Church is conveniently located at 301 W. Highway 287 Bypass West. For more information on the church's offerings, please call the church office at (972) 938-1633 or visit www.christ-thekingwax.org.







Education



Guide to Success

- By Kyle Irion

For her second year, Karen Lopez has been a strong advocate and member of the GUIDE (Guiding, Uniting, Informing, Demonstrating, Encouraging) program at Cliffs (formerly Turner) Middle School. GUIDE is a program that works with incoming "year zero" teachers. The goal of the program is to give these new teachers any kind of emotional or informational support they need to succeed in their new role as educator.

The first year for teachers can often be as harrowing for them as it is for first-year students. Karen described the first-year experience as, in a way, "being in the trenches and you're the enemy." The school itself is in its second year. It is a new building at a new location with a new zeal for hiring, while also keeping quality teachers in place. Too often, according to Karen, new teachers get thrown into teaching unprepared for the strain it can cause. Completely overwhelmed, many quit. Now in her eighth year as an educator and her fifth in Waxahachie, Karen works hard to prevent this trauma by utilizing the GUIDE program and her own personal desire to see her fellow teachers flourish.

There is a staggeringly high rate of failure for teachers in their first year. Why is this rate so high? "I believe it is because many young teachers have no one to go to, and that they are shocked by the everyday crises and drama that go



on," Karen said, explaining that it is important to feel at home in your school and to feel like your leaders support you. She believes that the "principals are the pulse point of every school," and that oftentimes, first-year teachers get overlooked and are not given the support they need. This gap in support can sometimes be fueled by an overall feeling of unfamiliarity. "Every district has its own personality," she added. "They [the district] do things their own way."

The Waxahachie Independent School District (WISD) is hoping to turn back this trend by securing and maintaining a strong, long-lasting teaching staff that is deeply rooted in their school, their district and their classroom. According to Karen, the WISD orientation process, called "Meet the Teachers," is one of the best orientations for first-year teachers that she has ever seen. Great efforts are taken to make new teachers feel at home and welcomed by the district, as well as their individual schools. Incoming teachers are shown information about the city, the town and its rich history. They get to meet the administration and their principals.

Karen believes familiarity with the district is paramount, which is why the GUIDE program picks up where the "Meet the Teacher" orientation leaves off. Guides like Karen quickly take first-year teachers under their wings, providing them with support in a number of capacities — any capacity the first-year

Education

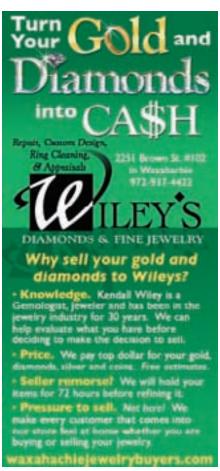
teacher needs, from logistical support with how to set up a lesson plan or how to work the finicky copier to how to relate to a student having a difficult time opening up.

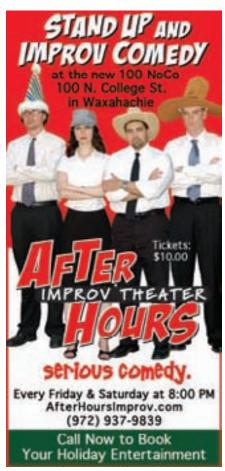
In her time as a guide, Karen has noticed that a consistent sticking point or stumbling block for new teachers is a feeling similar to culture shock. Lack of experience in a classroom setting and an idealistic image of themselves as educators and their students as learners often lead to a crestfallen feeling and a great wave of disillusionment with the profession of teaching in general. "The reality of the classroom is the hardest part," she explained. "Whether you've seen a class or not, it's still a realization that you're not always a bright shining star. Kids don't see you as a star and don't always want to learn."

When Karen started teaching, it was with an emergency teaching certificate, straight out of the business sector. She, herself, had a mentor that she said she would have been lost without. Of her mentor, Karen said, "She enhanced my first year and gave me so much good, useful, nuts 'n' bolts information." Karen understands the daunting task that meets first-year teachers upon their arrival to their new school. She describes her first year as "a blur" because of how much she had to learn. "It was exhausting," she said. It is from her own experience as a first-year teacher that Karen has gained much of her zeal. When they sent out the e-mail describing the program and requesting volunteers, she leapt at the opportunity.

Apart from the tasks implemented by the GUIDE program, Karen has her own policy for helping other teachers: a 24/7 open door policy. She does this because, in her own words, this opportunity "is service. This is an honor. It's something I chose to do." Her dedication runs so deep; she has even helped a fellow teacher deliver a litter of puppies. Now, if that is not a sign of dedication, what is?









LOOK Who's Cooking - By Faith Browning

IN THE KITCHEN WITH RACHAEL STAGNER

Since Rachael Stagner was 3 years old, she has had wonderful memories of cooking. "I love helping mom with the baking and decorating Christmas cookies. I have also had a lot of fun learning to make strudels with my grannies," she recalled. "My fondest memories are going to the deer lease with my mom and dad, hunting with my dad and roasting marshmallows under the Hill Country sky, then coming home and making

deer klobase with my dad and PoPo."

Rachael has already made a mark in the Waxahachie cooking world by placing first in the annual Burleson Honey Bake Off with her Buffalo Chip Cookies and her Chocolate Sheet Cake. Her other interests include: singing, swimming, hunting, archery and tennis. Rachael also stated, "I am very proud to say I go to school at St. Joseph Catholic School in Waxahachie!"

RACHAEL'S BUFFALO CHIP COOKIES

- 1 cup butter
- 1 cup Crisco
- 2 cups brown sugar
- 2 cups sugar
- 4 eggs
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 4 cups flour
- 2 tsp. soda
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 2 cups oatmeal
- 2 cups corn flakes
- 1 cup coconut
- 1 lg. bag chocolate chips
- 1. Melt butter and Crisco together; mix in both sugars.
- 2. Add eggs and vanilla.
- 3. Sift flour, soda and baking powder together.
- 4. Mix dry mixture with butter and egg mixture.
- **5.** Stir in oatmeal, cereal, coconut and chocolate chips.
- 6. For each large cookie, drop 1/4 cup dough on cookie sheet.
- 7. Bake at 350 F for 15 minutes.

CHOCOLATE SHEET CAKE

- 2 cups flour
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 stick butter or margarine
- 1/2 cup Crisco
- 4 Tbsp. cocoa
- 1 cup water
- 1/2 cup buttermilk

- 2 eggs, slightly beaten
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- ICING:
- 1 stick butter
- 6 Tbsp. milk
- 4 Tbsp. cocoa
- 1 box powdered sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 cup nuts, chopped
- 1. Combine flour and sugar. In a saucepan, add butter, Crisco, cocoa and water; bring to a boil, stirring well.
- 2. Pour over flour mixture; mix well.
- 3. Add remaining ingredients; mix well.
- **4.** Pour into a 13 x 11-inch greased and floured baking pan; bake for 20 minutes at 400 F.
- 5. Prepare icing by melting together the butter, milk and cocoa.
- 6. Add powdered sugar and vanilla; mix well. Pour over the cake while it is still hot in the pan.
- 7. Top with nuts.

APRICOT CRUNCH

- 1 pkg. dry apricots
- 1 cup water
- 1 3/4 cups sugar
- 3/4 cup butter
- 2 cups flour sifted
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 1/2 cups coconut
- 1 cup pecans, chopped

- 1. Cook apricots in water until soft. Beat the soft apricots with 3/4 cup sugar.
- 2. In a separate bowl, cream together butter and 1 cup sugar; beat well.
- 3. Blend in flour, salt and baking soda.
- 4. Stir in coconut and pecans.
- **5.** Press 3 cups of crumbly mixture in the bottom and halfway up the sides of a greased 13 x 9 x 2-inch pan.
- **6.** Bake for 10 minutes at 400 F. Spread the apricot mixture over the crust; sprinkle remaining crumbs over the top.
- 7. Bake 20-25 minutes. Let cool; cut into squares.

EASY MANDARIN ORANGE CAKE

- 1 box butter cake mix
- 4 eaas
- 1 cup cooking oil
- 11-oz. can mandarin oranges, undrained FROSTING:
- 16-oz. Cool Whip
- 1 lg. can crushed pineapple, drained
- 11-oz. can mandarin oranges, drained
- 2 pkgs. instant French vanilla pudding
- 1. In a large bowl, combine all cake ingredients by hand.
- 2. Pour in three greased and floured 8-inch cake pans.
- 3. Bake at 350 F for 15 20 minutes.
- 4. Combine all icing ingredients; mix well.
- 5. Frost the cake.





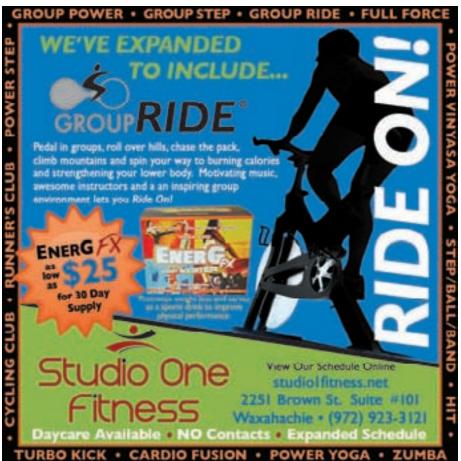












Do You Have a Plan for Your Employees?

If you are self-employed or the owner of a small business, you probably understand the difficulties in finding and keeping qualified employees. There are many factors that an employee will consider when deciding where to work. One that may be overlooked is the availability of a tax-qualified retirement plan.

According to a recent survey by the Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI), 25 percent of small business owners stated the most important reason for offering a retirement plan was recruiting and retaining employees. Another 19 percent said the positive effect on employee attitude and performance was the most important reason they offered a plan.

The Simplified Employee Pension (SEP) and Savings Incentive Match Plan for Employees (SIMPLE) plans are two tax-qualified plans available to employers. If a plan is considered tax-qualified, contributions are not subject to current federal income tax; all earnings grow tax-deferred until withdrawn; and taxes are payable by the participant when benefits are actually received, generally at retirement when the participant may be in a lower tax bracket and entitled to an additional standard deduction at age 65.

Unfortunately, a number of employers are unaware of the tax-qualified retirement plans available. The 2003 Small Employer Retirement Survey conducted by EBRI indicated that 47 percent of business owners had not heard of SEP plans while an additional 26 percent had heard of them but knew little about them. The numbers for SIMPLE plans were 32 percent and 20 percent, respectively.

An advantage of the SEP plan is the ease in establishing and maintaining the plan. Any business with one or more employees, including the owner/employee, may set up a SEP IRA. The plan may be set up by completing IRS Form 5305-SEP and no employer tax filing is required.

As an employer, you decide each year:

- 1. Whether you will contribute to the plan, and
- 2. If a contribution will be made, the amount of the contribution to each employee's SEP IRA. Employees are immediately 100-percent vested in the SEP IRA proceeds.

A SIMPLE IRA is a salary reduction plan with little administrative paperwork. If you have 100 or fewer employees in your business, you are eligible to begin a SIMPLE IRA by completing IRS Form 5305-SIMPLE.

SIMPLE IRAs are funded by employee salary reduction contributions and employer contributions. You, as the employer, can either match the employees' contributions dollar for dollar up to three percent of their salaries, or contribute two percent of each eligible employee's salary. Eligible employees are immediately 100-percent vested.

Employees may take withdrawals from a SEP or SIMPLE IRA at any time. However, they will generally be subject to a 10 percent tax penalty if they are under age 59¹/₂ at the time of the withdrawal. The tax penalty increases to 25 percent for SIMPLE IRA withdrawals made during the first two years the employee participates in any SIMPLE IRA.

Finding qualified employees that will stay on the job can be difficult. Fortunately, there are retirement plans available to make your business more attractive to job seekers. Speak with a qualified investment professional to discuss which plan may be appropriate for you.

Adam Rope is a State Farm agent based in Waxahachie.



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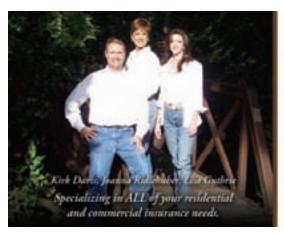
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Hope for a Better Future

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.

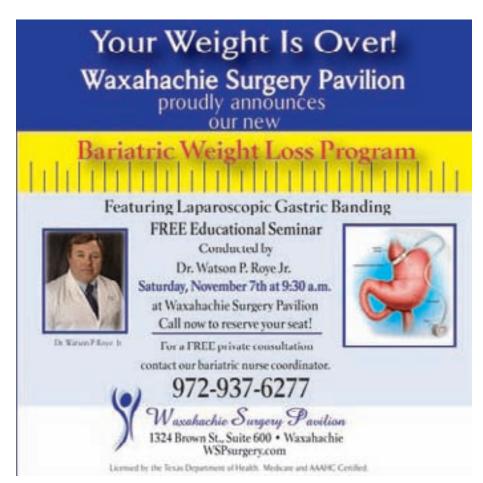
Although there is no cure yet, early detection is still useful and important. Early diagnosis allows one to be an active participant in planning for future care. It permits you to have a say in legal matters regarding your estate while you can still do so. Becoming involved in support groups will help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

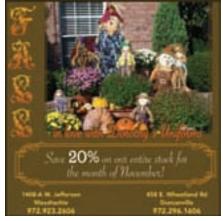
Yes, there is always hope, and it may be in early diagnosis. Research continues to advance in this area and early treatment may become crucial. Early detection can give you an opportunity to receive treatment or participate in clinical trials that can slow down the progression of the disease. Knowing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

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















Outdoors

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. Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener.





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November 2009 community Calendar

First Thursday

ABWA Empowering Women Express Network will meet at 5:45 p.m. at the Midlothian Conference Center, located at 1 Community Circle in Midlothian. Please visit www.abwa-empoweringwomen.org to RSVP a seat and dinner reservations.

Second and Fourth Tuesday

Get Smart: Strategic Marketing and Research Technologies (formerly Waxahachie Business Interchange Networking) is held from 7:30-8:30 a.m. Network with other professionals and promote your business. Call (972) 937-2390 for location of the next meeting.

Every Friday and Saturday

After Hours Improv Theater: Stand-Up Comedy Show, beginning at 8:00 p.m., will feature five touring, professional stand-up comedians. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$8 for groups of 10 or more. The theater is located at 100 N. College St., Suite 11, in the Rogers Hotel. Call (972) 937-9839 or visit www.AfterHoursImprov.com.

November 3

WRC Pregnancy Center of Ellis County will hold their annual Roundup 2009 benefit dinner at 6:30

p.m. at Creekside Church located on Highway 287 between Waxahachie and Midlothian. The guest speaker is Jody Dean, a journalist from North Texas and the *KLUV Morning Show* host. Tickets are complimentary, but reservations are required. Call (972) 938-7900 or (972) 878-0784.

November 6

Infinite Care Home Health Golf Tournament at the Brick Yard in Ferris. Proceeds go to Hope Clinic. Contact Shirley McLeroy at (469) 363-7043.

November '

Ellis County Veterans Appreciation Ceremony will begin at 10:00 a.m. at the Waxahachie Civic Center located at 2000 Civic Center Ln. The multi-generational program will honor those in the nation's armed services. Contact David Hudgins at (972) 937-1200 or Perry Giles at (972) 937-6171.

November 12

The Networking Mixer will be held at Movies at Buffalo Creek located at 507 N. Highway 77 from 5:00-7:00 p.m. Come mix, mingle and network. Bring plenty of business cards and be prepared to meet new people. Refreshments will be served. Call (972) 937-2390.

November 14

The Pre-Christmas Craft Fair will be held at Waxahachie High School. Proceeds will benefit the Sunshine/Student in Need Program. Contact Kim Kriegel at (972) 617-5928 or visit kkriegel@wisd.org.

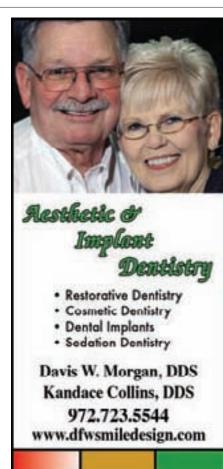
November 27-29

The Candlelight Tour of Homes, sponsored by the Waxahachie Downtown Merchants Association and the Waxahachie Chamber of Commerce and CVB, begins this weekend from 2:00-8:00 p.m. The first weekend of three consecutive weekends will feature four unique homes dressed in their holiday best. \$15 per weekend or \$12 per weekend with pre-sale tickets available until November 13. Children 12 and under are free. Call (972) 937-2390 or visit the Web site at

www.waxahachiechamber.com/candlelight/.

For more community events, visit our online calendar at www.nowmagazines.com.









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