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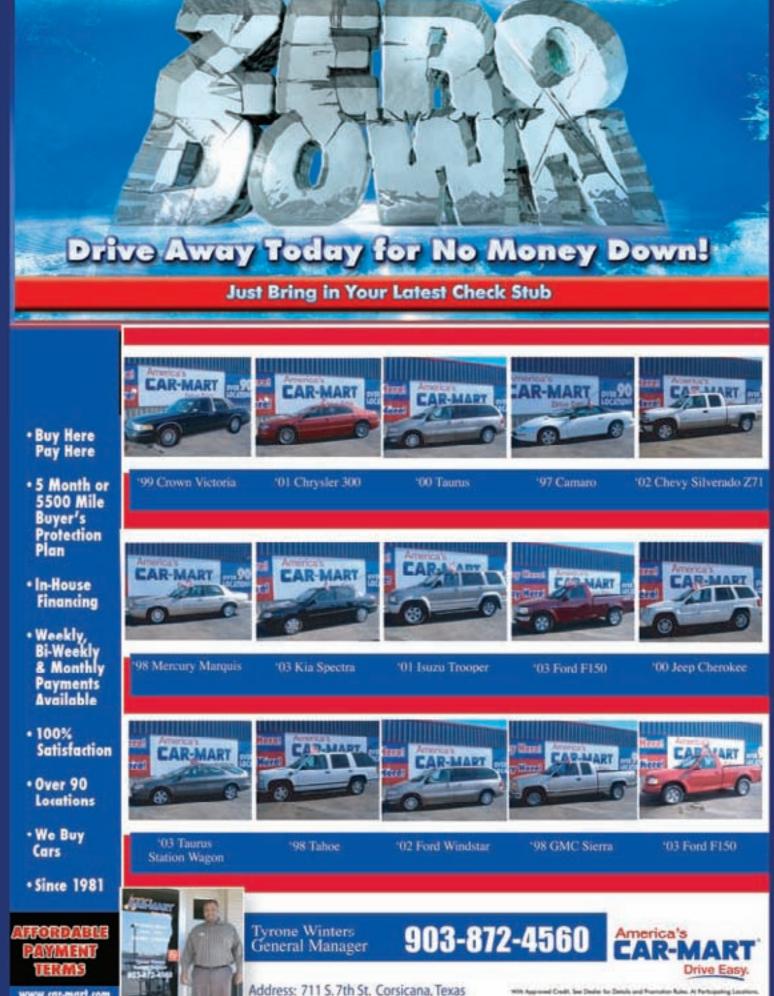
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A decorative arrangement graces a table in the Villarreal home.

Photo by Terri Ozymy.

## Editor's Note



#### Dear Readers,

There is something hopeful about the beginning of a new year. It is as if we see new opportunities and feel a new energy to make improvements in ourselves, our lives and the lives of others. It is fitting that, at this time, we

retell the story of the kings who brought gifts to honor a child whose life would change the world. You will want to read about Epiphany, a group of people who bring caring gifts to enhance the lives of young people all year long. You will meet Dr. Weaver who works to facilitate the students' path to higher education, and Carmack Watkins who adds to their learning by taking visitors on safari to another country to learn about exotic animals. You will also encounter the family of Dr. Xavier Villarreal who works to provide health care for all of us.

I wish you all a Happy New Year!

Joan Kilbourne CorsicanaNOW Editor





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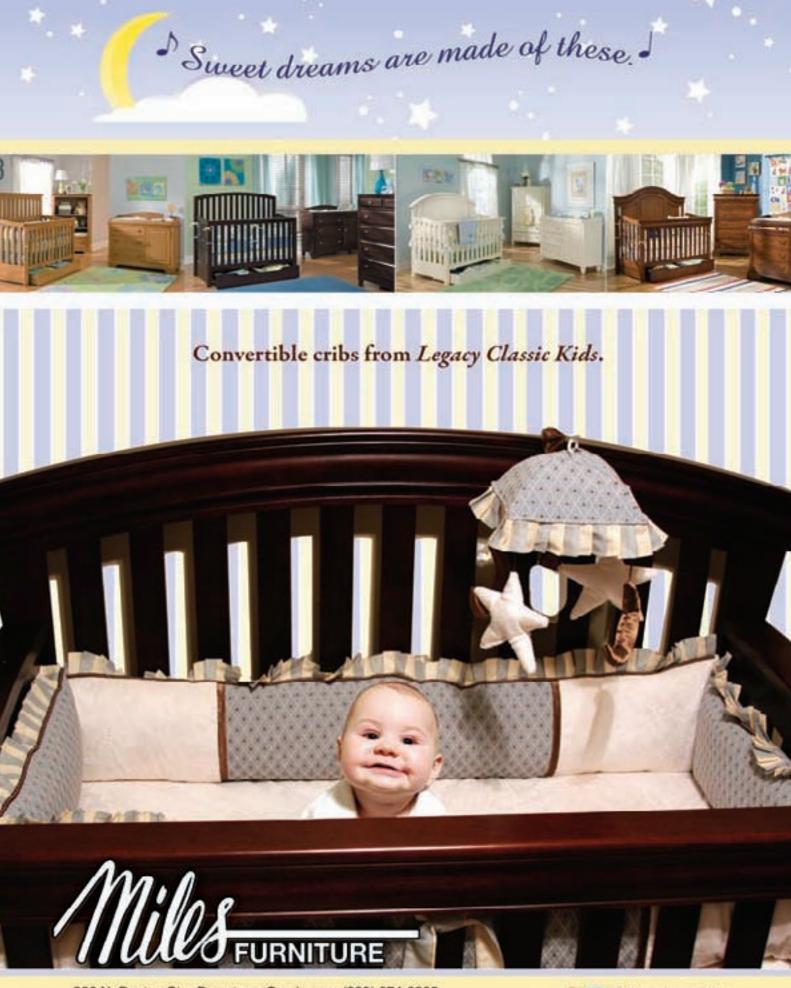


Sandra Willard, Volunteer Coordinator, poses with Epiphany volunteers Linda Bach and Mark Luera.



## The Children's Epiphany – By Joan Kilbourne

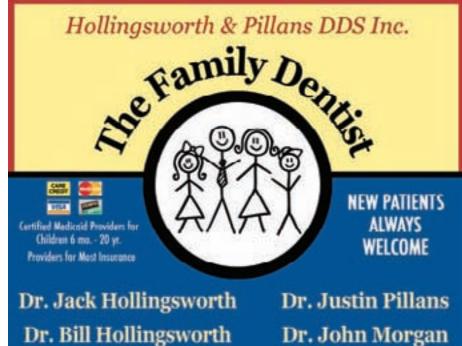
This was a special day on the campus of the State Home in Corsicana. From a van parked next to the gymnasium, people were unloading a pizza-warming oven, an electric piano keyboard, and many mysterious boxes with crepe paper streamers sticking out from under the lids. A stream of visitors was signing the volunteer book at the entrance gate. This was the special Friday when the three-day Epiphany retreat was about to begin and the Epiphany team was coming on board. The Epiphany Ministry of Texas identifies itself as "a mission to facilitate change in the lives of young men and women incarcerated in juvenile justice facilities. It is their stated goal to manifest God's love through a three-day short course in Christianity and an on-going follow-up process to those incarcerated youth known as 'Stars.'"



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Epiphany volunteers come from all around Navarro County and from areas around the Metroplex. Some travel, at their own expense, for an hour-anda-half or more and stay, again at their own expense, in a local motel during the weekend. The volunteers attend four training sessions to prepare for each weekend event. Jerry Boch said, "They are reminded repeatedly that their mission is to listen, listen, love, love." Jerry, the spiritual director for this

weekend, has been the chaplain to the

## "Our mission is to listen, listen, love, love."

Corsicana and Smith County Juvenile Services for eight years. He describes himself as a "not quite retired" consultant to oil refineries. "I built and sold several businesses related to chemistry," he said. Six years ago, when he no longer had business in Dallas, he moved to Tyler and became interested in the work done by the Epiphany Ministry of Texas. Another key worker for the weekend is Linda Williams, a volunteer

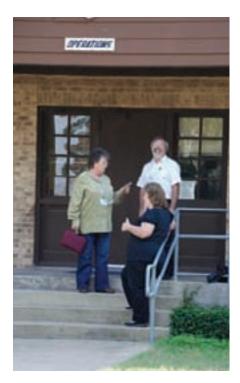


from Corsicana who, as weekend coordinator, has the essential task of organizing all the elements that make a successful event. "I love working behind the scenes to make this a wonderful experience for the kids," she said. She pointed out the birthday cakes and bags of presents and the little bags holding letters from the team members. "I like surprising them," she said smiling.

The weekend program follows the guidelines and procedures contained in a manual provided by the state board. Each program requires a staff including a lay director, an assistant director, a spiritual director, a weekend coordinator and an outside kitchen person. Four months before a session, volunteers attend four training sessions. Each of



the young people expected to attend the weekend is assigned to a "family" of five students and three adult team members, so that on the occasions when 45 to 50 students are expected to attend, 10 or more volunteers are needed along with the administrative team. Many of the



volunteers sign up for all three of the weekend meetings held at the Corsicana State Home.

The outside kitchen coordinator arranges to cook some of the food in either the First Baptist or First United Methodist kitchens. Linda oversees the decoration of the gym and the eating space using crepe paper streamers,

## "I was in prison and you visited me ..." Matthew 25:36

posters and a table setting that includes placemat drawings made by school children in Corsicana. "These kids really look forward to what they call 'free food,'" Linda said. "They mean food they would get outside such as hamburgers, hot dogs, chicken strips and pizza." The Epiphany team brings in a large oven to heat the food. "We have







International, Inc., an organization addressing the spiritual needs of incarcerated men, women and children,

represent the prayers of inmates in adult prisons. These links are provided

snacks twice a day, too. The kids really like to eat with us," Linda added.

Perhaps the most impressive sign that something good is going on is the prayer chain. Orange, yellow and white paper rings are joined together like a paper chain made to hang on a Christmas tree. The name of the person praying is written on each link. The chain is hung in 3- or 4-foot loops all around the entire wall of the gym. Individuals sign up for a 30-minute time slot in which they will pray for the students so that the children are surrounded by prayers day and night through the weekend. Linda said, "The children spend a lot of time just looking at the chain displayed on the walls. They wonder why someone would



"There has never been a discipline issue during any of the 18 weekends we have done. The children are respectful and appreciative of what we do with them. Even the guards like to see us come. They say the campus is calm all weekend when we are here."

want to pray for them. When they learn how they are embraced with hundreds and hundreds of prayers they get teary. They just lose it."

The yellow and orange links represent the prayers of the church members who wish to support this mission. These links are collected in the weeks before each weekend. The white links have special meaning to the students as they

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## House Warming Gift

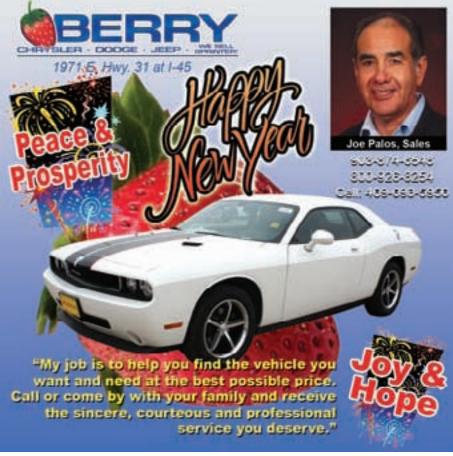


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their families and those who work in the prison environment.

Jerry pointed out that, "There has never been a discipline issue during any of the 18 weekends we have done. The children are respectful and appreciative of what we do with them. Even the guards like to see us come. They say the campus is calm all weekend when we are here." On the first day of the event, students are called "Stars" and each Star is assigned an adult Star guide who will listen to them and pray with them and be a caring presence in their life. Students who come to more than one weekend become "Super Stars" and

## "I love working behind the scenes to make this a wonderful experience for the kids."

earn the privilege of becoming part of the presenting team. Super Stars help in the kitchen and perform, in costume, in the Bible-based skits. Students can, and often do, write letters to their guides after the weekend retreat is over.

Besides the three weekend retreats, the Epiphany volunteers return to the campus once a month for a Saturday morning reunion. They sing, pray and read the Bible, and listen to the Stars they have encountered on the retreat. On Christmas morning, once again the Epiphany volunteers appear on campus. They are one of several groups, including community groups from Corsicana, which bring food and gifts to the student dorms. Some of the adult volunteers become official volunteer mentors who visit once a week with their special Star student. Some of the Epiphany volunteers work with Sandra Willard, the campus volunteer coordinator, to become reading tutors. The men and women who volunteer to do this work take seriously the biblical challenge found in Matthew 25:36: "I was in prison and you visited me ..."

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At Home With Xavier and Tiffany Villarreal

# Special Soul Mates



— By Sandra Skoda

Do you believe in love at first sight? Do you think everyone has a special soul mate? If you were to ask Xavier and Tiffany Villarreal these two questions, they would look at one another, smile and then answer without hesitation. "I never saw myself as a wife and mother," Tiffany said, "but when I saw Xavier for the first time, I knew without a doubt he was the man I was going to marry."



As she spoke about their first meeting in the halls of the Eastern Oklahoma Medical Center, Xavier held on tightly to Isabella, the younger of their two children, grinning and nodding his head in agreement.

That was just a little over five years ago. At 29, he was the CEO at the hospital, and she was about to begin nursing school. It was not long after this

## "It was love at first sight for both of us."

first meeting that Xavier proposed and a very short engagement began. They were married September 25, 2004. "It was love at first sight for both of us," he said.

The young couple moved to Corsicana when Xavier accepted the CEO position at Navarro Regional Hospital. They both laughed aloud as they remembered house hunting and trying to decide on the one abode that would be right for their growing family. "He spent two to three weeks living in temporary housing while looking at possible homes, while Michael, our oldest, and I waited in Abilene," Tiffany said, also mentioning that she remained behind to complete her education in nursing and earn her associate's degree. As Xavier looked at





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newer homes, Tiffany spent countless hours on the Internet house hunting. "I found this home and fell in love with the sunroom," she confessed. "It had been vacant for nearly a year. The yard was grown up and the in-ground pool needed lots of attention."

In the beginning, Xavier did not want to seriously consider the two-story, three-bedroom, two-and-a-half bath, traditional style home because of the elbow grease it was going to need at the onset. That soon changed after some "persistent pushing" from Tiffany. "I compromised," Xavier said. The remodel with its Old World charm included a fresh coat of paint throughout, refurbished hardwood floors, new carpet and updates that modernized the house and transformed it into exactly what



Tiffany had envisioned when she first saw it.

The master bath was the only room that was completely gutted and redone in the remodeling process. Xavier said, "We upgraded the room to allow for height. We made something very small into a room that is much more functional." The stonework, soothing earth tone colors and natural skylight





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## Stuart Smith

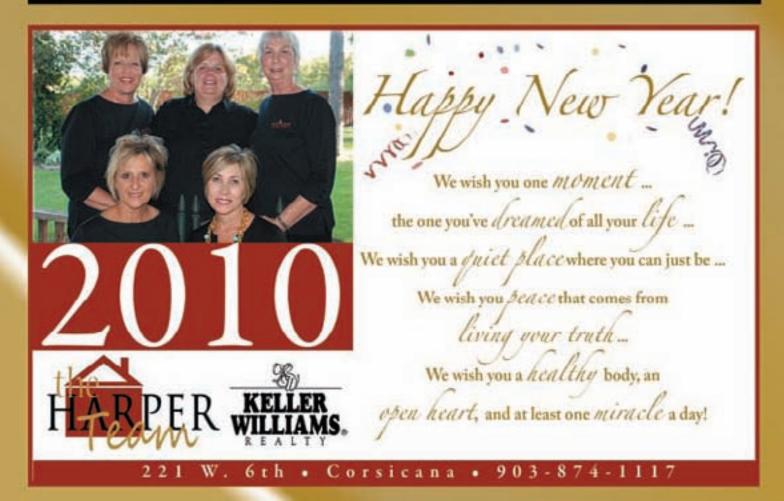


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give the room a spa-like feeling. "It was money well spent," Xavier added.

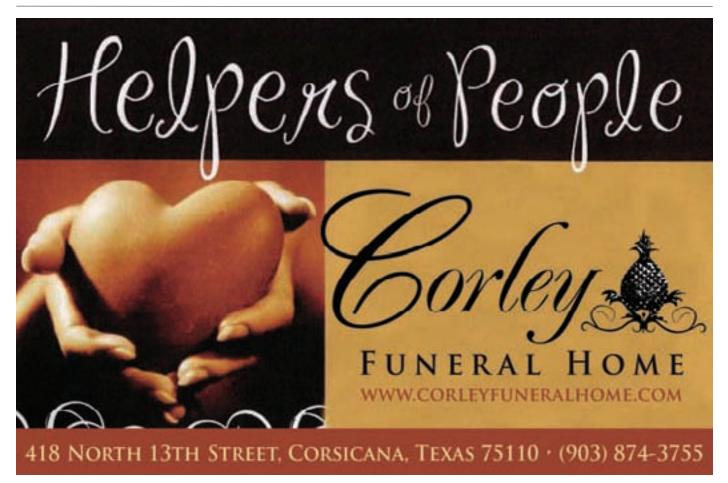
Wallpaper was removed and replaced with textured walls and paint colors that change from room-to-room, yet all are complementary to one another. The Jack-and-Jill bathroom upstairs received a much-needed facelift that included paint, new tile countertops and the addition of a shower. "My dad converted the tub into a tub with a shower," Tiffany explained. "I laid the tile on both countertops to match his work in the shower." Thanks to her father, HGTV and a rented wet tile saw, Tiffany's handiwork turned out to be something she and Xavier



are very proud of, and it only took her one weekend to complete the task.

One wall downstairs comes with a story all its own. "The longest wall in the formal dining area was nothing but floor-to-ceiling mirrors," Xavier recalled. "People would stare at themselves," Tiffany added. "Sometimes they would even scare themselves." They turned the "aerobic wall" into a sheet-rocked, textured and painted wall that is now the showcase for the family's collection of crosses.

As members of Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Corsicana, the family's faith is felt and also seen throughout



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the house. Aside from the collection in the dining room, almost every other room displays at least one or more crosses, while very special crucifixes protect Michael and Isabella. "The crucifix hanging over Michael's door was my mom's christening cross," Tiffany noted. "The one hanging over Isabella's bedroom door was given to us by Xavier's father and his wife. It was brought back from the Holy Land, and it was blessed by a priest in Xavier's hometown of Corpus Christi."

In this new home, Tiffany's childhood Barbie doll collection remains carefully boxed up and stored in the attic. Tiffany's vast collection may be stored away, but that has not stopped her from starting a collection for Isabella. "Every year from now on she will receive a celebration or holiday Barbie," Tiffany added. "The entire collection will all be Isabella's one day."

As an avid reader of the written word, Xavier collects books, lots and lots of books, as evidenced by the built-in bookshelf in the home office. With a wife, two small children and a







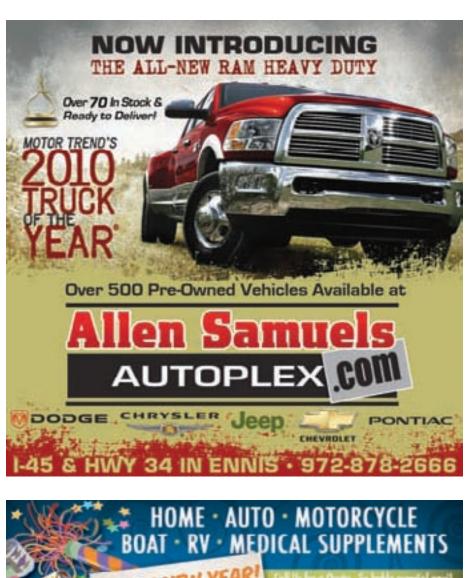
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demanding position at the hospital, he does not always find the time he would like to spend reading, but when the extra time does present itself, he does not hurt for a good book.

## The sunroom is the most comfortable, lived-in area in the home.

Other items that are sentimental to the couple include a Bible that once belonged to Tiffany's grandparents and a piano that Xavier grew up with. "Michael bangs on it now to his own tune," Tiffany smiled. A bookcase that was built by Xavier's dad when he was in high school holds Tiffany's large collection of cookbooks. "It's very functional," she said, "but it also has such deep meaning." A silver tea set that once belonged to Tiffany's grandmother, and Limoges china and crystal are lovingly displayed in the china hutch.

The sunroom is the most comfortable, lived-in area in the home. With two walls of floor-to-ceiling windows looking out to the backyard and pool area, the natural lighting offers a great place for



the children to play during the day, while becoming a movie room for the adults in the evenings and on weekends.

Looking back over the past five years of their marriage, Tiffany confesses it was love at first sight prompting her



to want to become a wife and mother. Today, marriage and children have enriched her and Xavier's lives in so many ways. "When we're alone or away, we miss the kids," Xavier said. "Life now is focused on the children," Tiffany added. "We are very blessed."





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## MexiaNOW



"This is a great place to live, no matter how you pronounce it," joked Mexia Mayor Troy Miller. While Mexia is pronounced in a variety of ways, there is no denying where it sits on the map. "Geographically," Troy said, "we are in the center of the

southern U.S.," an equal distance between the East Coast and the West Coast. "We're in the heart of everything!" But it was the heart of *Mexia* that brought Troy back to his hometown after graduating from Baylor University with a degree in education and, excluding his collegiate years, kept him here for more than 61 years.

"I like the small town atmosphere," he said, adding that the "big city life is not all that it's cracked up to be." The combination of traffic, higher costs of living and unfamiliar faces offer too much stress. "Here," he said, "you know who people are; you know you can call on them."

Still, the mayor sees great opportunity for growth in the city of Mexia. The new year, he hopes, will bring in new business and opportunities. New water lines and sewer systems, the



renovation of the water tower and upgrading the rodeo arena are already in the new budget, but Troy also hopes for park renovations and that additional schools will be built.

"You hope the generations to come will see the value of small town America and return to their roots," Troy said. "But we need to keep it [Mexia] growing and thriving to be the city of the future." While Mexia is the largest city in Limestone County, Troy understands that "we have to provide enough education, as well as job opportunities to have them want to come back."

> His love of rural America spawned Troy's interest in local politics. "I was on the school board for nine years because I wanted to give back to the schools what I had received." After serving two terms as a city councilman, he became mayor.

Troy is quick to mention that he does not make decisions alone, but works closely with the city council members to accomplish the business of the city. In fact, anything that has to do with the city requires debate and voting among the city council members. As for a big office with a big desk and paycheck, the mayor laughed, "No such animal exists!" But Troy, who works as the staff coordinator for the

Mexia State Supported Living Center, does promise, "I have an open phone and open door policy." There is great heart and hope for the future in the city that is in the heart of the South.



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## ArtsNOW

# Returning to



— By Kyle Irion

Bobbie Ross is an artist with passion and belief in the power of creative expression. A recent transplant from the Chicago area, Bobbie loves Corsicana. Her work is a mix of personal exploration and light-hearted whimsy. Next to her painting of a barb-wired Israel there is an acrylic painting of a couple of cows eating steaks, smiling



up at the painter. This mix of heavy and light emotional elements speaks of Bobbie's passion. It is not just a way to release the negative emotions life can sometimes deal; for Bobbie, art is also an act of celebration.

Bobbie has been painting since she was 3 years old. "My mother didn't like the house we moved into when I was 4, so I painted the walls. My parents did

not like that," Bobbie said. She painted throughout high school, but stopped for roughly 20 years once she got married and had children. She took it up again in 1986, once all the children were out of the

house. She was living in Illinois at the time, working on a master's degree in gerontology (the branch of science dealing with the elderly).

While taking her core classes, however, Bobbie decided to dabble in art again. It was in this class that she met an influential art teacher who would become her mentor. Every year he would take a group to Door County, Wisconsin, which is, as Bobbie described it, "the Cape Cod of the Midwest." When asked what the most rewarding part of her Door County experience was, besides the art, Bobbie said, "The friendships I made. I made friends with a lot of great artists."

After receiving her degree, Bobbie worked in a number of nursing homes

and community centers with senior citizens. The experiences, she said, really influenced her art. She did an entire series of paintings while on a trip to Israel with one of the senior groups. "I was showing the beauty of Israel that also had

an element of fear, always tension, so there'd be a soldier standing there, or a jeep or barbed wire," she said. She also did several landscape paintings on trips to Florida, Alaska and Mackinac Island, Michigan, a place that does not allow vehicles, only horses and buggies.

Eventually, Bobbie moved to Texas to

## ArtsNOW

be closer to her daughter, but that was not the only reason. "Two years ago, I shoveled 56 inches of snow and thought, *It's time to move to Texas.*" Bobbie's art has flourished since she arrived. "I'm loving Texas. I'm really finding a lot of material, a lot of places to paint." She has also joined the Corsicana Art League. "They're motivated," she said. "They're talented people who really love art and want to promote it here." Bobbie's involvement in the League has resulted in her appointment as co-president.





Bobbie's most recent work, entitled Guardian Angel, was in a juried show at the Warehouse Living Arts Center. "My mother died when I was very young, and I had this aunt that I had never met. Her husband, my mother's brother, had had a falling out with my mother, so I never met her. At the funeral everyone was having their own grief because my mother was very young, so I was sitting all by myself. Then, this beautifully dressed woman came and sat next to me. It was my aunt. She sat and comforted me. That's what a guardian angel is. They come into your life when you need them



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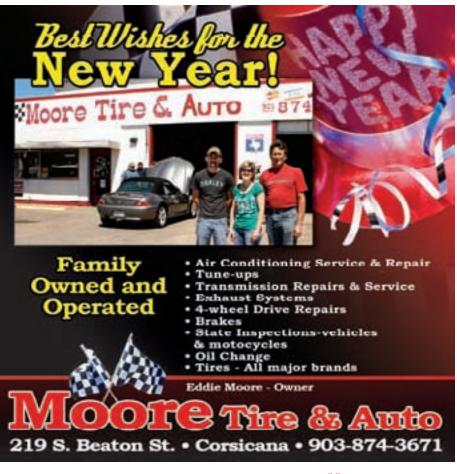




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## ArtsNOW



the most," Bobbie said.

Guardian Angel is not Bobbie's only showpiece. She has previously had work shown in Illinois, has been involved with the Coalition for Women's Art and the Skokie Art League, which aided her in being shown in art fairs in the Chicago area. She has sold some art, but likes to hold onto it for a bit before letting it go. "I like to bond with the pieces." She believes showing one's work is an important part of growing as an artist. "I used to be embarrassed to show my work, and it was a frustration to not be able to show it," she admitted. "When I started putting my work out and getting feedback it was wonderful. It was a whole new feeling of motivation - motivation to do more."

Bobbie also has strong opinions concerning art in schools. "I think there's a real need for art to be put back in [schools], because it gives children an outlet for their feelings and their thoughts and their emotions and without that, they sometimes can get into trouble," she explained. "They look for negative ways to release their emotions, whereas art would bring out a more positive element for them to get things off their chest."

One thing is easily discerned when speaking to Bobbie: she loves what she does. She loves art, and she loves life — because after all, that is where all art comes from. While it took more than two decades to return to the hobby, Bobbie never lost her love of art. Today, she's glad to have found her way back.



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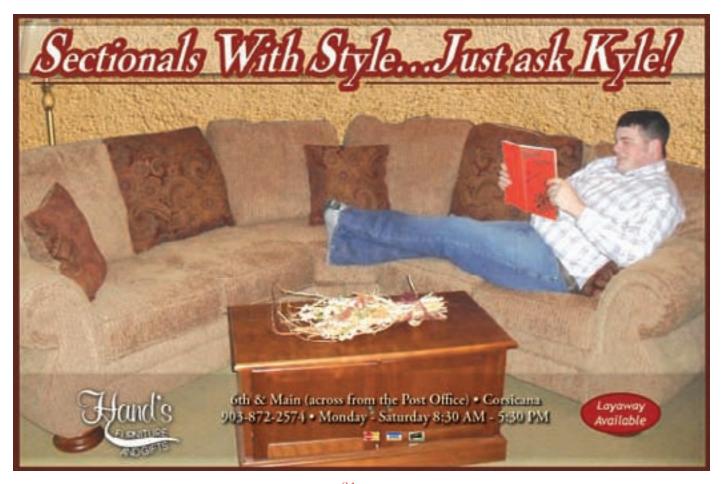
> -Leeza Gibbons Journalist, Producer, Mors

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## Sports **NOW**

# On Safari MM Based States of the second states of t



#### — By Joan Kilbourne

The Walking Tour of Historic Corsicana booklet recommends a visit to the Trophy Room, located where 15th Street meets Highway 45. The room is like an up-close, hands-on zoo attended by a guide who likes to tell wonderful stories about all of the animals. When one walks into the great barn-size structure that is the Trophy Room, they feel they have been magically transported to the plains in Tanzania, Africa. The wall at the end of the room disappears into the foothills below Mount Kilimanjaro. There are animals, large and small, filling the room so that one hardly knows where to look first. Then a guide appears preparing to lead visitors through his amazing jungle.

Carmack Watkins slipped into his tan safari jacket with bear cub claws on the epaulettes, and said with a smile, "This is what to wear on Sunday when you are on safari in Kenya." Carmack knows about safaris. In the center of the room is a tent, furnished with a cot and chairs, that was home base for Carmack and his wife, Norma, during a 21-day hunt near Mount Kilimanjaro. "I'm responsible for about half of the trophies here," Carmack said, gesturing toward more than 300 trophy animals. "Some others come from family members," he added, "and others are brought here by men whose wives tell them, 'Don't bring that thing into my house.""

The tour began with a collection of



bejeweled swords, brought here from Buckingham Palace by a former Palace guard. Alongside the swords is a pair of ornate silver spurs donated by Lee Apperson, artist and hunter. Apperson knew the widow of Pancho Villa and obtained from her a pair of spurs worn by Pancho Villa's first officer. "I knew they were authentic," Carmack said "when I saw them in a photograph of the riders." Another simpler weapon hangs from the antlers of a deer, an ancient bolo made of ropes tied around three rounded stones. Carmack demonstrated how Brazilian cowboys used it to hobble cattle.

There are small animals like the dikdik, the smallest of the antelopes, and



a covey of quail displayed in a grassy mound. There is a small sheep with four horns. "The King Ranch bred this four-horned sheep. It is easy," Carmack explained. "In just three generations you can breed animals with no horns or with four."

When he takes young children on tour he shows them a small deer head taken during a dry spell in 1990. "It was small because it didn't get enough to eat when it was growing up," he explains. Next to it is a full-sized head of the same type of deer. "This one had enough greens to eat," Carmack tells the children, "so you need to eat your spinach."

There are larger animals like the brown and black bears and many varieties of

## Sports

antelope and deer. A painting on one wall was done from a photograph of Norma, riding back to camp after shooting a bear. "She goes with me on most of my hunting trips," Carmack said. "She likes to hunt, too." There are leopards displayed against the African background. One angry looking animal peers down from a tree branch. Below him is another leopard that looks off into the distance with a bewildered expression. "We call him the pie-faced leopard," Carmack laughed. "The two leopards are good examples of good and not-so-good taxidermy."



Most impressive of all are the sizable animals like the Bongo, the largest of the antelopes, and a buffalo and an elk that towers over visitors. "The buffalo was one of my herd," Carmack said. "I started with just one to cut the grass. Then I raised buffalo for the next 60 years. I had 242 head of buffalo at one time. I don't have buffalo anymore, but I have 64 elk living right here in Corsicana city limits."

Another very large animal is an alligator found in the brackish water of the Trinity River where the river meets the sea. Nearby is a white bird perched on a branch, looking at the alligator. Carmack told how the alligator lures an egret by lying still and blinking his eyes. The egret thinks it sees bugs moving in the mud and becomes alligator lunch. Other displays also tell how predator and prey exist in the wild. There is a great, long python wrapped around a small antelope it has killed and a cobra is poised to strike a mongoose. "The snake won't be having lunch today," Carmack said. "The cobra thinks it has captured the mongoose because it has its tail wrapped around it, but the mongoose is so quick that when the snake strikes, the





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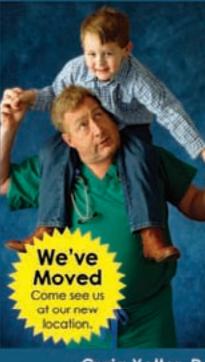
mongoose will bite its head and kill it."

Near the African hunting tent is a pair of tusks so large they do not seem real. They are the tusks of an extinct mastodon. "They are probably 20,000 years old," the guide said. Standing nearby is a huge black and white Ankole-Watusi with great, long horns. "This is the breed of cattle raised by the Maasai people in Kenya," Carmack said. Above the Watusi hangs the head of a huge, black elephant. It is Black Diamond, a circus elephant made famous when he went rogue and killed a spectator during a parade in Corsicana.



Born in 1925, Carmack was 4 1/2 years old when the Barnum and Bailey circus parade came to town. He was perched on his father's shoulders watching the parade when the elephant flipped a car over and thrust his trunk into a coupe with a woman sitting in it. Carmack remembers hearing cars cranking up, horses rearing and people screaming, all trying to get away from the angry animal. Looking into the story years later, Carmack learned about the 30-year-old elephant that had spent 25 of those years living in a boxcar chained to the floor. He located the head of Black Diamond in a Houston museum and brought it to the Trophy Room. He can show you the worn places on the tusks that came from the steel bands fastened to his tusks to prevent the elephant from raising his trunk. "He usually walked the parade with a female elephant chained on either side of him," Carmack said. He added sadly, "This time he just had enough. He was not in his right environment." When he finished his story it was clear that, unlike the unfortunate elephant, Carmack Watkins is a hunter who is in his own right environment. **NOW** 

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### Business



# **Shopping Partners**

S & S is a dress shop where ladies looking for trendy clothing can find something special. — *By Joan Kilbourne* 

The S & S Designs shop represents a turnaround in the life of Shae and Mickey Hillock. Shae is a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA) who was the rehabilitation manager at nursing homes in Corsicana and Athens for four years. She now drives around the county making home health calls, helping elderly people maintain function. "I love helping them. They amaze me." Much as she likes doing this work, Shae had another idea in the back of her mind.

"I'm a shopper," Shae said. "My grandmother, Mary Farmer, was always well dressed. She saw that I had pretty clothes to wear." Inspired by that history, Shae presented the idea of opening a dress shop to her husband, Mickey. He liked the idea of opening a store in Corsicana that would meet the needs of women who were going to Dallas to shop. For 15 years, Mickey was involved with the Industrial Foundation whose mission was to bring business to Corsicana. Mickey had managed a bottling company and then, in 1996, when he bought property on Highway 287, he built and managed a gas station and a fast food franchise. With this experience under his belt, he was ready to try something new.

"He's my shopping partner," Shae said of Mickey's involvement in the dress shop. Mickey agrees that he likes to accompany Shae to the markets to buy merchandise for the store. They go to Dallas and Las Vegas to attend what is called "the Magic Show" in February and August. Mickey established his credentials as a shopper when he spotted a little vest



Mickey and Shae Hillcock enjoy shopping together for merchandise to sell in their store.

**S&S Designs** 106 W. 7th Ave, Suite 400

Hours: Tue. - Fri., 10:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Sat., 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

### Business

he liked a lot. "Shae thought it would not sell," he said smiling at her. "It was the first item we rang up when we opened."

"We talked for three months and then just jumped in. We found a space in the Pace Warehouse. I loved the old building with its brick wall and the iron doorframe in the lobby and the wood floors in back" Shae said. Mickey's son, Stuart, built the large black-painted rack that now dominates the store's lobby. They added some wall systems to hang clothing and hung large fashion posters on the walls. "People who know the clothing retail business have complimented the look of the shop," Shae said. She took off one month from her work as a COTA to work full time getting the shop ready, and "Mickey was still hanging the sign 10 minutes before we opened.

"We cater to people of all ages who look for trendy clothing," Shae said. "Grandmas come to find clothes for their granddaughter and then they take home jewelry, purses and shoes for themselves. My favorite thing is when someone is going someplace and wants something to wear. I like to find clothes for her that look good. When they go away happy with what they found, that makes my day. One woman just came back from shopping in Dallas disappointed that she had not found what she wanted. She found it all here. We like the idea that we are keeping business in Corsicana."

At present, both Shae and Mickey move back and forth between the shop and their other work. Kim Willis works full time at the shop and, Shae added, "We get compliments all the time on how she works with customers." And more and more customers learn of the store every day. "One woman liked an outfit she saw in our ad and her husband came in and bought the whole outfit. I told him he was making me look bad," Mickey joked. "It's neat to meet people from all around the county."

There are plans to build a Web site so that shoppers can see what is in the store and buy without having to drive to town. Visitors will see the S & S Design sign at 106 W. 7th Avenue, where they can turn in the drive to Suite 400 and enjoy the shopping experience provided by Shae and Mickey Hillock.





### Education



# Shortcut to Success

Eight years ago, 31 county high schools chose to participate in a dual credit program with Navarro College. Dr. Harold Housley supervises the career/technical track and the college core curriculum track operates under the supervision of Larry Weaver, Ph.D., dean of the Department of Arts Science and Humanities. An important outcome of this program, Dr. Weaver said, "is that it tends to eliminate some perceived barriers. Students in high school are wondering, *Can I afford to go to college?* When they see what they have already achieved in a dual credit class, they go on to complete a degree program because they see, *I can do this.*"

Important changes are taking place at both the beginning and the end of a student's school experience. Educators are urging legislators to mandate prekindergarten programs. At the other end of the spectrum, programs are already in place to help students graduate earlier with credits beyond the high school diploma. These changes are driven by current economic realities. Research indicates individuals with college degrees earn 67 percent more than those who lack these credentials or some equivalent training in technical school. Perhaps more important than the wage difference is that for those with no more than a high school diploma, there are few jobs available paying enough to support a family.

"I would like to see a college-going culture starting in middle school," Dr. Weaver said. "At present, there are more than 200 students enrolled in dual-credit courses at Corsicana High School, and more than 1,500 students are enrolled from other schools. There are many benefits for both the students, who finish their college work in less time, and for their parents who save money," Dr. Weaver said. "We send representatives from the college to work with the high school counselors to offer Information Nights about the benefits of the dualcredit program. Students and parents have an opportunity to ask questions about eligibility, financing and regulations. A big benefit for the parents is relief from the rising cost of going to college. A major expense in college is for room and board. A student living at home as a high school student does not have housing and meal plan costs for the first two years of study."

Students become eligible to enroll in dual-credit classes in their junior year. Those who maximize their efforts may graduate from high school with enough credits to skip a full year of college. A few hard workers manage to graduate with both a high school diploma and an Associate of Arts degree at the same time. They can earn a college degree in just two more years. Dual-credit classes are taught in the high school when there are teachers who have the credentials to do so. In some schools, instructors from Navarro College travel to the high school campus to teach the classes. "These are college-level classes so they must meet the standards for credit set by both the high school and the college," Dr. Weaver explained. "We use common course numbers for the dualcredit classes. That means that the high school class meets the standards of the

### Education

college curriculum and credit earned in this way transfers in a block to any other public college or university."

In some high schools Advanced Placement (AP) classes are offered along with the dual-credit classes. In other schools, only AP classes are available. Dr. Weaver said, "One advantage of the dual-credit program over the Advanced Placement classes is that a passing grade of C or better in the dual-credit class carries an assured college credit that will appear on future college transcripts. Credit for an AP class may or may not be awarded by different universities depending on the grade earned on the AP final exam. Another advantage is that some school

#### "I would like to see a college-going culture starting in middle school."

districts may offer financial assistance to students who cannot pay for college enrollment in the dual-credit classes."

Larry Weaver followed an unusual path to becoming an educator. He graduated as an officer from the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado with a Bachelor of Science degree in business management. He flew helicopters and continued his studies, earning a Master of Science degree in management and a Ph.D. in international relations. He took his laptop computer to the Gulf War to work on his doctoral dissertation. On retirement, Dr. Weaver came to Corsicana to begin a ROTC program at the high school. A lifelong student himself, he was in the right place to create the dual-credit program when he accepted a position at Navarro College.

"I want to tell parents and students that the dual-credit program is a worthwhile investment in time," Dr. Weaver said. "Parents need to encourage their sons and daughters to continue their effort to complete the classes needed to earn a degree. At the same time," he added, "the students need to realize that college courses require more effort than high school classes and poor grades stay on transcripts forever. Parents need to teach their children that it takes persistence to achieve good results."







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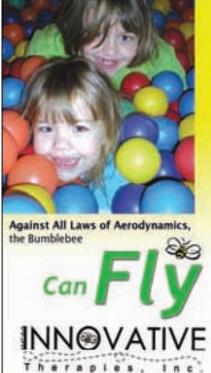


John and Samantha Gonzalez compete in the Jingle Bell Jog.

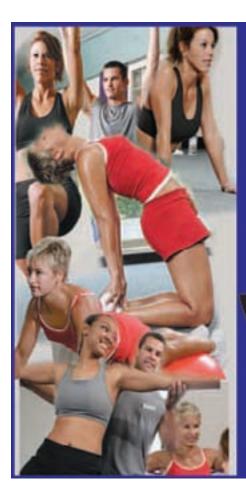


Dr. Hockner celebrates his one-year anniversary with an open house and canned food drive.





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## Who's Cooking **NOW** In The Kitchen With Joyce Heard

Since she was a girl, Joyce Heard has enjoyed cooking with her rather large family. Joyce and her sister, Lois, are one of three sets of twins in her immediate family. "I had many brothers and sisters and Mom would stay busy with just cooking and baking," she recalled. "She was a stay-at-home mom and always had breakfast, lunch and dinner fresh and ready."

- By Faith Browning

For the past 18 years, Joyce has happily been providing meals for the students at James L. Collins Catholic School. She also enjoys reading, playing cards, spending time with her three daughters and watching her son play sports. "We have a tradition in our family to have a sit-down evening meal together," she said. "This is the time of day we have family time." NOW



#### **CHOCOLATE SHEET CAKE**

2 cups flour 2 cups sugar 2 sticks butter 4 Tbsp. cocoa 1 cup water 1/2 cup buttermilk 2 eggs, slightly beaten 1 tsp. vanilla 1 tsp. soda FROSTING: 1 stick butter 4 Tbsp. cocoa 6 Tbsp. milk 1 16-oz. box powdered sugar 1 tsp. vanilla 1/2 cup nuts, chopped

1. Mix flour and sugar in large bowl. 2. Put butter, cocoa and water in a

saucepan and bring to a boil. Pour over flour and sugar.

3. Mix in remaining ingredients. 4. Pour into a greased 11 x 17-inch pan. Bake at 400 F for 20 minutes. 5. While cake is baking, prepare the frosting. Boil butter, cocoa and milk. 6. Stir in powdered sugar, vanilla and nuts. Pour over cake when you take it from the oven.

#### FRENCH VANILLA COOKIES

1 1/2 cups butter 1 1/2 cups shortening 1 qt. plus 1/2 cup powdered sugar 1 tsp. salt 3 tsp. vanilla 3 eggs 1 1/2 gts. flour

#### 3 tsp. baking soda 3 tsp. cream of tartar

1. Cream the butter, shortening and powdered sugar.

2. Add salt, vanilla and eggs; beat.

3. Add flour, baking soda, cream of tartar; beat.

4. Bake at 350 F for 13 minutes.

#### CATHOLIC SCHOOL'S CHILI FOR 50 PEOPLE

10 lbs. chili meat 1 lg. onion, chopped 1 large can (#10) tomato juice 1/2 tsp. black pepper 4 Tbsp. salt 2/3 cups paprika 2 Tbsp. cumin 1 cup chili powder

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#### 1 Tbsp. garlic powder 5 cups flour, made into paste

1. Cook meat, onion and tomato juice until done.

2. Add seasonings.

3. Bring to a rolling boil.

4. Stir in flour paste gradually. Cook until well done. *This recipe is best when cooked a day before eating.* 

#### **CHICKEN AND DUMPLINGS**

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour 2 tsp. baking powder 1/2 tsp. salt 5 Tbsp. shortening 1/2 cup milk 4 chicken breasts 2 qts. water 2 tsp. salt 1 tsp. white pepper 1/8 tsp. thyme

 Combine flour, baking powder and salt.
Cut in shortening with two knives or a pastry blender until mixture resembles coarse cornmeal.

3. Add milk, mixing well.

4. Roll dough to 1/8-inch thickness on a lightly floured surface. Cut in 1-inch squares.

 Boil four chicken breasts until done. Save chicken broth and add water.
Add salt, white pepper and thyme to broth; bring to a boil.

 Slowly add dumplings one at a time into boiling broth. Cook for 45 minutes and add cut-up chicken breast to dumplings.
Cook another 15 minutes and serve.

#### PARMESAN FRENCH BREAD

1 Tbsp. chives, chopped 1/8 tsp. garlic salt 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese 1/2 cup butter softened 1 lb. loaf French bread, sliced

1. Combine chives, garlic salt, cheese and butter.

2. Spread on bread slices.

3. Reassemble into a loaf, and wrap in aluminum foil.

4. Bake at 350 F for 20 minutes. For crisper bread, leave foil open.

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

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### FinanceNOW

### Making Smart Choices About Your Money

— Provided by Gary Hayden

Making smart choices about our money is a task that many of us overlook, or don't give proper attention. Many times, what may seem to be a small or insignificant decision about spending can pay huge dividends in the future or can cause us great regret. Here are seven tips to assist you in maximizing and stretching your hard-earned cash:

**1. Create a spending plan.** Many people resist the idea of a budget and associate it with hardship. Instead, look at it in a positive way. Create a monthly "spending plan" for your fixed and discretionary (optional) expenses. When you plan your spending, you may find you spend more wisely, because you're taking control.

**2. Pay yourself first.** Put savings at the top of your spending plan. If you wait until the end of the month to save any leftover cash, you may find yourself without a nest egg when you need it most. A good general

rule of thumb is to save at least 10 percent of your income before spending the rest.

**3. Track your spending.** Record your expenditures for a month, especially for small optional items. You may be surprised to discover how easily purchases costing only a few dollars can add up. At the end of the month, review your expenditures and adjust your spending plan accordingly. Once you see where your money is going, you may want to make different choices about your spending.

4. Live within your means. Many people feel they never have quite enough to live on, yet they probably know people who manage successfully on less. Spending is relative. Ask yourself, "Do I really need that extra-large screen TV?" If you live within your means, you will never overspend.

**5. Shop for value.** Look for opportunities to get more value from each dollar spent. Join a warehouse or shopping club and buy in bulk. Purchase clothing, furniture and household goods when they are on sale. Consider buying used cars and appliances.

Big-ticket items like these often depreciate substantially in the first one or two years.

**6. Minimize debt.** Keep your debt level low. By reducing debt, you also minimize interest and finance charges. When you are tempted to charge a purchase, remember that you are committing yourself to pay for it from income you have not yet earned.

**7. Eat in.** Restaurant dining can be expensive, since you are paying for service, as well as food. Tips and meal taxes can add 20 percent or more to the bill. Liquor and desserts (which you otherwise might not eat at home) can boost the tab even higher.

Cutting back on excess spending does not have to be difficult, nor does it mean that you must continually deny yourself many of life's simple pleasures. You will find that when you live within your means, and pay yourself first, your debts will decrease as your savings grow. A personalized spending plan can provide that "extra" income, and may be one of your wisest financial decisions.

Gary Hayden is president of Hayden Financial Partners with offices in Corsicana.



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# Health Mother Knows Best, -By Betty Tryon, R.N.

The fear is palpable as swine flu sweeps across our nation. To employ an oft used phrase — take a deep breath. Information has, and always will be, the cure to lower fear. Swine flu, or the H1N1 virus, is an influenza virus that came to the attention of Americans early in 2009. It spreads in much the same way as the seasonal influenza virus, which is by droplets in the air from emissions (sneezes, coughs) of infected individuals and by touching a contaminated object and then touching your nose or mouth. A common scenario for this would be if an infected individual has droplets of the virus on their hands, fails to wash or disinfect their hands and opens a door or picks up an object thereby contaminating it. Since the virus can live up to many hours outside the body, an uninfected person can handle that object, fail to wash or disinfect their hands, pick up something to eat and unwittingly pass the virus into their body.

One of the reasons the swine flu inspires such fear is the potentially devastating effect on children. Children are always at high risk for the flu. Underlying health conditions and/or respiratory problems can cause serious complications with a child who has the flu. That is why vaccination is so important for them.

Some of the symptoms of the flu are cough, sore throat, fever, body aches, chills, vomiting and diarrhea. Antiviral medications are the best treatment for the flu. Addressing the discomfort of individual symptoms is the only other option available for treatment of the influenza. High fevers can quickly dehydrate the body so keeping yourself hydrated at this time is very important. Remember, your body is fighting a battle. Proper rest is required to allow your immune system to function at its peak.

The control of swine flu can best be summarized as - listen to your mother. Wash your hands frequently. Keep your hands out of your mouth, nose and eyes. Cover your mouth when you sneeze and then clean your hands. If you use a tissue when you sneeze or cough, throw it away. Use alcohol-based hand wipes if soap and water is not available. Use hand sanitizers. Stay home and rest when you are sick, not just for your health, but also for the health of others. A good rule of thumb is to stay home until you have been fever free for at least 24 hours. A little common sense will lower the incidence of swine flu and the fear.

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



### COUGHING, SHORTNESS OF BREATH, WHEEZING, YEARS OF SMOKING

Chronic bronchitis or emphysema — also known as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) — is a lung disease that gets worse over time. COPD is most often caused by cigarette smoking. Although there's currently no cure for COPD, research is being conducted to find treatments to help prevent and control symptoms. A worldwide research study is now underway to test an investigational, long-acting treatment for COPD.

Who is eligible to participate in this study?

- You may be eligible if you:
- · Are 40 years of age or older
- · Have a history or diagnosis of COPD
- · Are a current smoker or were a smoker in the past

For more information, call :

**Corsicana** Medical Research 903-875-7226 • 903-872-3005 ext. 352



### Adults with Atrial Fibrillation or Flutter Needed

To participate in a clinical research study

#### You may be eligible to participate if you:

- · Are 18 years of age or older
- Have atrial fibrillation or flutter
- Have 1 or more of the following:
  - 75 years of age or older
  - Prior stroke, mini stroke, or blood clots
  - Heart failure
  - Diabetes
  - High blood pressure

### Participants may receive, at no cost, study-related:

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### Happening

#### January 4

Public meeting, sponsored by the PUSH committee: 5:45 p.m., Corsicana Public Library Nancy Roberts meeting room, 100 N. 12th St. Open to the public. Residents, business owners and managers throughout Navarro County encouraged to attend. For more information, contact Dennis at (903) 872-2641, Ann at (903) 874-6079 or Vicky at (903) 879-5841.

#### January 5

Corsicana Chapter No. 118, Order of Eastern Star stated meeting: 7:30 p.m., Corsicana Masonic Lodge. Potluck supper: 6:30 p.m. All area OES members invited. For more information, call Bonnie Mathison at (903) 874-0226.

#### January 12

Home Rebekah Lodge No. 128, I.O.O.F. meeting: 6:00 p.m., 3330 W. Second Ave. Visiting members welcome. For more information, mail inquiries to P.O. Box 1511, Corsicana, TX 75151.

Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1009 meeting: 7:00 p.m., Sirloin Stockade, 2508 W. Seventh Ave. Membership is open to veterans who served on active duty (for other than training purposes) in the Republic of Vietnam between February 28, 1961, and May 7, 1975, or in any duty location between August 5, 1964, and May 7, 1975. The veteran must submit a copy of his/her DD Form 214 along with application and dues. Members and guests are invited to come early to eat and visit prior to the meeting.

Corsicana Emergency Corps monthly meeting: 7:30 p.m., 416 S. 12th St. Open to public. For more information, call (903) 872-5072.

Navarro County Branch of the NAACP general membership meeting:

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### -Happening **NOW**

7:00 p.m., Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center, 1114 E. Sixth Ave. All members are asked to attend. Executive committee members meeting: 5:30 p.m. Contact the Navarro County NAACP at P.O. Box 284, Corsicana, TX 75151-0284.

#### January 13

Navarro College SBDC's "How to Start a Small Business" free workshop: 10:00 a.m.-noon, Corsicana/Navarro County Chamber of Commerce, 120 N. 12th St. For more information or to register, contact (903) 875-7667 or sbdc@ navarrocollege.edu.

#### January 16

Corsicana Lodge No. 63, I.O.O.F. statewide degree rally: 3330 W. Second Ave. Lodge opening: 8:00 a.m. Degree work: 10:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Visiting members from various lodges as well as officers of the Grand Lodge I.O.O.F. of Texas will be present. For more information, mail inquiries to P.O. Box 1342, Corsicana, TX 75151.

#### January 18

Schools closed for Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

#### January 19

Community Development Committee meeting: 3:00 p.m., Chamber of Commerce. Call (903) 874-4731 to confirm meeting dates.

#### January 21-30

Greater Tuna: first performance of the season at the Palace Theater. Call box office at (903) 872-5421 for times and tickets.

#### January 26

Home Rebekah Lodge No. 128, I.O.O.F. meeting: 6:00 p.m., 3330 W. Second Ave. Visiting members welcome. For more information, mail inquiries to P.O. Box 1511, Corsicana, TX 75151.

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Dr. Fredric Puckett Family Practice 972-875-7799 ERMC Medical Office Building Suite 101 STARTING JULY 1



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