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January 2010

**Building  
Tomorrow's  
Leaders**

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**Experiencing  
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*At Home With*  
**John and  
Kathy Muncaster**



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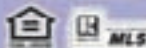


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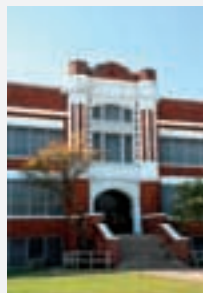
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*Ennis ISD launched the Horizons program as an alternative school for students who want to complete their education.*

*Photo by Terri Ozymy.*



# Editor's Note

Dear Ennis,

Each January, as a New Year dawns bright, we hope for more: More peace in our world or just in our family; more money to negotiate bills, college tuition or medical expenses; more successful diets or health breakthroughs to improve ourselves.

The truth is, of course, we cannot always count on more. With God's grace though, we can count on each other. So, this year, take someone's hand and help them up when they fall. Share a smile instead of ignoring someone you pass in the grocery store. Instead of upgrading your electronics, step up your giving to United Way, your church and other worthy charities.

Who knows what struggles another person is going through when they inconvenience you? Forgive them, and surprise them with grace. By looking outside our own circumstances, we may end up getting more than we ever imagined.

With all my love and my dearest wishes for a Happy New Year,  
Kelly Kovar  
EnnisNOW Editor  
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# Building Tomorrow's Leaders

— By Kyle Irion



*Thirty thousand. That is how many boxes of cookies the Ennis-Palmer area Girl Scouts ordered last year. Thirty thousand — and they almost sold every one of them.*

A big reason for this success was Cookie Coordinator Teresa Watson.

Teresa has been cookie coordinator of the Ennis-Palmer area for 10 years, and this is her last year. Her position will be filled by “cookie-coordinator-in-waiting,” Lisa Collier, an outspoken and passionate member of the Girl Scouts organization. In Teresa’s tenure, the Ennis-Palmer area has seen much growth. “It’s gotten better and better through the years,” Teresa said.

One of the results of this success was the Ennis area garnering its own delivery site, not something every area earns. The troops in the area have to sell cookies well and with consistency to get one. As important as selling is to an area’s success, the real power of growth and expansion is with people like Teresa and Lisa — people of intense dedication and belief in the cause they are supporting.

The job of cookie coordinator is a “very in-depth job,” according to Teresa. The cookie coordinator oversees the “cookie people” of every troop in their area. Every troop has a

cookie person; an individual who oversees the cookie needs of their specific troop. Teresa oversees between 18 and 20 troops in the Ennis-Palmer area, ensuring they have all the cookies they

need, that all cookie deliveries are on time and going to the right place, that the cookies are all paid for, that the money the troops make is sent to the right place and that all the cookie people are adequately trained to handle their responsibilities. Cookie coordinators are what make the entire process of cookie selling work.

When asked what got her started in Girl Scouts, Lisa simply said, “I had always wanted to be a Girl Scout, but I never got to be one. I got my daughter into Girl Scouts, and she loves it. I love it. You meet people you never would meet if you weren’t involved with Girl Scouts.”

Teresa also got involved in Girl Scouts because of her daughter. “My daughter started in first grade. She’s graduated high school and is now a lifetime member.” Teresa went on expressing an even further level of dedication. “I have one week of vacation a year, and I spend that at Girl Scout day camp.”

Both women expressed that they would be continuing their involvement even after their daughters have left. What will keep







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them involved in the future are the vast emotional gifts that an organization like the Girl Scouts gives its members. Lisa described what she appreciates the most about Girl Scouts: "Girl Scouts isn't just about the badge work and the fun aspect. It's building leaders and strength and confidence in girls to become whatever they want. We want it to empower them, so that when they step out into the real world, they can be the person they want to be."

"You meet all different types of people, and it's fun to be in," Teresa added. "It's fun to do what they do. You learn a lot. These are friends for life."

The idea of acceptance and appreciation of self and others is a



**"You meet all different types of people, and it's fun to be in. It's fun to do what they do. You learn a lot. These are friends for life."**

cornerstone of what makes Girl Scouts the organization it is. That might be why Girl Scouts currently has 2,504,962 youth members and the involvement of 896,298 adults. The organization has a long history of acceptance. While state and federal laws kept troops segregated for many of its early years, in 1917 the first African-American troop was introduced. Then in 1921, Girl Scouts began its first Native American troop. During World War II, the Girl Scouts would even open troops in Japanese internment camps. At one point, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. referred to the organization as "A force



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for desegregation.” In 1969, a national Girl Scout initiative called Action 70 was put into place in order to fight segregation.

For 97 years, the world has had Girl Scouts. In 1912, Julia Gordon Low founded the program in Savannah, Georgia. Also in 1912, Sir Robert Baden-Powell, founder of the boy scout movement began the Girl Guides in England with the help of his sister, Agnes. The Girl Guides still exist today. Both organizations are currently under the World Alliance of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts.

The Girl Scouts have three levels of esteemed recognition for service: The gold, silver and bronze awards. The highest honor is that of the gold award, which is attained by only 5.4 percent of eligible Girl Scouts. Only senior girls (ages 14-18) can win this award, and each girl must perform 30 hours of community service, the development of a plan to improve their community, and, among a few other things, 40 hours of career exploration. “So they can go out and learn various jobs, trying to figure out what they want to go into,” Lisa said. Advancement of the Scouts in more than the Girl Scout setting is incredibly important to the leaders there. “You are with a group of people that has the same mindset for their daughter or group of girls — that your primary existence is to make them better people,” Lisa explained.

As stated earlier, the job that Teresa does, and that Lisa soon will be doing, is not easy. When asked what keeps her going when the times get tough, Teresa immediately answered, “The girls.” There is a strong sense of community between the members and leaders of the Girl Scouts. “I’ve got friends in Waxahachie; we have friends in Cleburne, Duncanville, Grand Prairie. Kind of an extended family.” This community acts as a support system. “We lean on each other when we hit these hard times,” Teresa said.

Teresa and Lisa are looking forward to another year of strong sales. “We thought the economy would drop our sales, but our sales actually went up. We sold more in 2009 than in 2008,” Teresa said. Teresa’s final thought included cookies. “Please buy cookies,” she smiled. After a brief laugh Lisa added, “We will be in your area soon.” **NOW**



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# Open to the Light



**At Home With  
John and Kathy  
Muncaster**

— By Kelly Kovar

*Cold winter evenings find John and Kathy Muncaster settled comfortably in their living room, each having chosen a book to read, enjoying a view out the window of lush, red-berried pyracantha.*

*“They are not hard to grow, and in the spring they have white flowers,” said Kathy, an avid gardener, evidenced year-round by the well-tended flowers and plants inside and out.*

The view is rivaled by the large original painting by esteemed Galveston artist, Doug Sweet, which hangs over the marble surround fireplace. “We both wanted a leather couch in here, and Kathy chose the dark red,” John pointed out. “After getting the couch, we found the artwork in Galveston. The grapes in the glass bowl in the painting just match the couch,” John

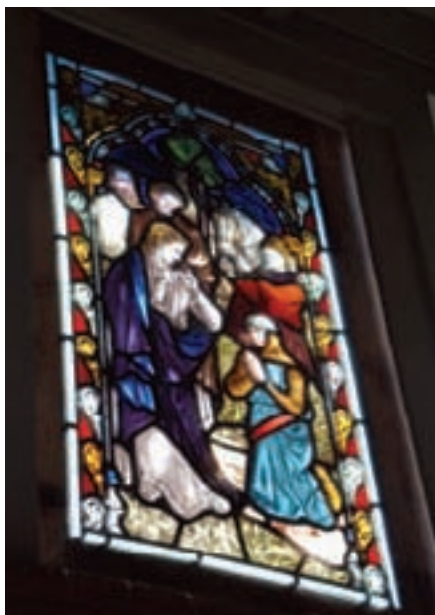






mentioned. "We are patrons of the Galveston art scene. We have built a beach house down the coast from there — that was one of our life dreams. We get down once a month."

The sitting area's original wood floors are enhanced by a handsome rug purchased on a trip to Romania. "A lot of our traveling was done to the country where our son, Nathan, worked that [particular] year," John said. "He worked in France one year, then in Brazil, then in Mexico." Another job took him to Hong Kong and then New York City. "He has been in 83 countries, many of them half a dozen or a dozen times."



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Kathy has two daughters, and John has a daughter and a son. John is originally from Western Pennsylvania, and Kathy from the Midwest. "We all love each other and talk to each other," Kathy mentioned. When John and Kathy moved here from Chicago, they left their grown children scattered around the country, but now all four live within 75 miles of the Muncasters, and Nathan works with John at Polyguard, where John is president and primary owner.

The business was, in fact, what brought the couple to Ellis County. John bought the company from its founder in

1986. "We had a lot of adventures during the next 12 years," John recalled. The factory, laboratory and offices burned on November 1, 1989. "It really took us years to get back to the point where we could actually start to move forward again. A lot of people in Ennis helped us." The generosity of the community during the bad times encouraged the couple to put the home they had purchased in Waxahachie on the market. "I thought, *How can I have a business in Ennis and live in Waxahachie?* So, we decided to live in Ennis."

They had originally bought a home

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in Waxahachie, since Kathy was employed at the time by the Waxahachie Independent School District as a teacher at Willow Brook Psychiatric Hospital. "I retired 12 years ago," Kathy said. "Now, I keep busy with my three grandchildren." She has even converted their breakfast room into an "art room" for the grandchildren. "They can be playing there, and I can be getting dinner."

Another thing that Kathy and John devote their time to is The Ennis Cancer Support Group, which meets each first and third Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. at Ennis Regional Medical Center. Inspired by classes in spirituality, which they take twice a month in Dallas, the couple began the group last summer. Many people who get cancer have found that before developing the disease, they had a great deal of stress in their lives. "Stress has been proven to damage the immune system," John explained. "The function of this group is to kick-start the immune system through spiritual exercises and getting people to share about things that are bothering them. It is very prayer-based. We believe that you can activate your immune system by getting in touch with God."

Like their philosophy of life, the couple's home is a place for quiet reflection and meditation. "We added the screened porch, converting it from a deck," John said. "In the spring and fall, this is our morning prayer area." The room has cathedral-like, high ceilings, a Mexican tile floor and looks out on a tree house and a shaded, landscaped backyard.

Adjacent to the screened porch is a wide, sunny room — a summer living area which beckons on warm days. "We call this the green room," John said. Bookshelves line one wall, and an office area is arranged at one side. A seating area with a butter-

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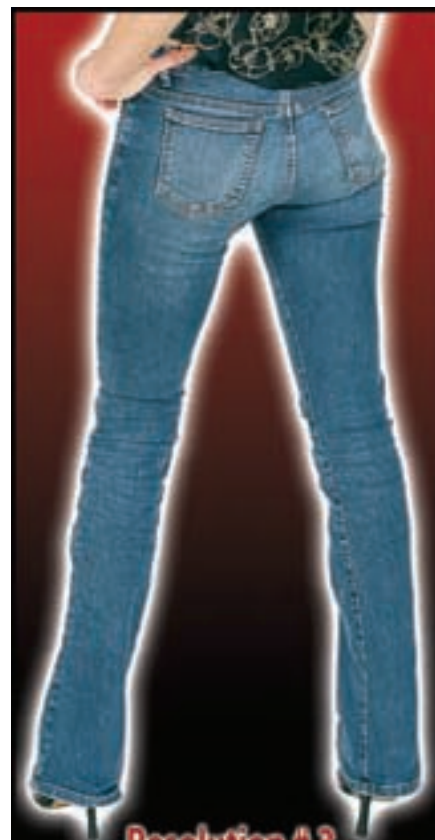
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colored, contemporary print couch gives the room an artistic flair. An unexpected feature in this room is a trap door to a hidden basement room, complete with electricity and a nicely-paneled bar. "This house was built in 1948 when, interestingly enough, people were worried about atom bombs."

The house was built by an Oldsmobile dealer, and another unique feature of the building is that



the door which goes to the backyard is a car dealership's glass door. "This was the first house in Ennis with air conditioners," John said. "We have, over the years, restored one room at a time. We like the 1950's style. We've tried to keep many of the original fixtures." Both bathrooms retain elements of their original tile, updated as necessary with newer elements. The master bath and a hall bath are the most recently renovated,

combining the two into a larger master bath and closet, yet retaining the original sink, which has been re-chromed. The bedrooms display art and antiques,

lace curtains and graceful decorating, highlighted in the master bedroom by corner windows which bring in light from all four sides.

Throughout the home, green is the color of choice for decorating. "My mother always told me that green is in nature, and pretty much every green will go together," Kathy recalled. Nowhere are these factors more uniquely evident than in the kitchen. The striking green slate floor and the modern refrigerator blend artfully with 1950's decor, which includes a round window at one end of the room.

"We used a lot of elements of the original kitchen," John observed. "We kept some of the original tile on the backsplash and put ceramic tile on the counters. There are skylights, and this is a bright and cheerful kitchen, which contrasts with the cozier, indirect lighting in the living/dining room." In the adjacent dining area, an original light fixture hangs over a dining room set, which belonged to Kathy's mother. A game table from Kathy's mother furnishes a living room nook, offering a focal point in the room which has a wide window seat under another round window.

"When we decided to move to Ennis, what we really wanted was a house with a summer place and a winter place," Kathy remembered. "When I came through this house, it had both." Over the years, the house has taken on the characteristics of its owners — warm and cozy — yet always open to the light. **NOW**



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Allen Morris test drives a car for sale on eBay at the Ennis Chamber of Commerce's ribbon cutting for Ennis e-Sales.



Presley and Jake Saenz are bundled up and ready to watch the Christmas parade.



Everyone is all smiles at the Ennis Chamber of Commerce's ribbon cutting for La Quinta Inn.



Janet Roth smiles for the camera at the Business After Hours at Citizens Bank.




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The Pontiax band delivers an out-of-this-world performance at a recent benefit for The Lights of Ennis.



Ella and Caleb Goedrich are bundled up and ready to visit the ice sculptures at the Gaylord Texan Resort.



Rich Raymond, Darla Bicknell, Joey Nichols and Aaron Green relax after a performance of *Weekend Comedy* at Ennis Public Theatre.



RaeAnn Vasquez and Katie Durham are all smiles before beginning a cancer drive at CiGi's Coiffures.



Mr. & Mrs. Bob Taylor pose for the camera at the Citizen's Bank Open House.



# Creative Journey

— By Kelly Kovar

Paul (Pappy) Middleton grew up with music in his house, and was playing in a garage band in high school by 1963. By his 20s he was rocking in the big name Dallas club band, Blackhorse, and had started his own sound company. These days, he tours as Bonnie Raitt's sound engineer and owns a sound studio in Palmer, which is managed by Milo Phillips. "I was very lucky, because my career has been over this span of 40-something years now," Pappy said.

"I've been playing guitar and bass, and a little bit of everything, ever since I was a kid," Pappy recalled. "My dad played piano and auditioned for Bob Wills, and could have had the gig, but he didn't want to move to Tulsa." Pappy remembers his dad having two vintage 1930s-era guitars at home when he was growing up — a Kalamazoo, which was one of the first Gibson guitars, and a chrome-looking metal guitar called a resonator. When Paul was in high school, he experienced a moment of rock history. "I heard the Beatles the very first time they were played in America on KFJZ in Fort Worth."

After starting college, Paul was drafted. He married his sweetheart, Carol, before he left for the Army. As soon as Paul was out of the service, he enrolled in The University of Texas in the music and drama department, but soon decided that he was ready to step out on his own in the industry. "I made the decision through the course of the next year to start a little sound company." Outlaw country had come into style in the early '70s, and Pappy got his start doing Willie Nelson shows, Jerry Jeff Walker, and Rusty Weir shows. He purchased PA systems and leased them to several area clubs, such as the Electric Ballroom (formerly the Wagon Wheel), Mother Blue's, Gertie's and the Travis Street Electric Company. "I did big concert tours all over the world with Julio Iglesias, who had done a record with Willie Nelson, *To All the Girls I've Loved Before*."



One day, in 1973, Pappy was in a club talking to the club manager about booking Point Blank, a band Pappy was helping. The band Blackhorse was performing, and when the bass player became ill during a set, Pappy offered to step in. "I played with the drummer, John Teague, and the guitar player, Gary James, for two hours." It led to a successful partnership, which lasted until 1981, although the band still does reunion gigs together. They made an album together, and came very close to opening for Van Halen during a world tour. "We were the only band to ever headline Zoo World two years, and we did it two years in a row. We were one of the top bands in the Dallas area for 10 years, and it was all because we took over the audience. We worked every single week for six years."

After the band years, Pappy started doing sound full time. He was friends with Buford Jones, who owned a Dallas sound studio. "Buford Jones had been Showco's main engineer, and he is one of the top live engineers in the business. He mixed ZZ Top, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Pink Floyd, Stevie Wonder. We were independent, but he let me work in his studio." When a call came in from Bonnie Raitt, and Buford was heading out to do the last Jackson's Victory Tour, the two-week gig ended up going to Pappy. "That was the start of my touring with Bonnie. Now, I tour exclusively with Bonnie Raitt as her sound engineer; I have for 24 years. She says she won't do a show without me."

When in town, Pappy and his love, Susie, who is an integral part of the spirit of the studio, can be found in the fascinating world of Palmyra Studios, surrounded by a 150-year-old Mason & Hamlin pump organ, which was designed for a San Francisco





ship captain, a Rupert Neve-designed control console, which came out of Abbey Road Studios in London, and a Pearl drum kit that was given to him by famed drummer Ricky Fataar. "Ricky and Eric Idol, while lying on the beach in Barbados, were the ones who came up with the idea of making a movie about the Beatles and calling it *The Rutles*. Ricky played the George Harrison guy [Stig O'Hara] in the movie."

On tour, Pappy enjoys the opportunity to interact with other creative musicians. "Rock stars are nice people, not the drugged-out crazies people are always hearing about. I got to meet George Harrison. He was a sweetheart of a guy. Buford mixed the last tour that George did. I had just gotten into London with Bonnie when I got a call from Buford,



and he had me go to Victoria Station and come out to the studio. It was the dress rehearsal day for the tour, and Eric Clapton and George Harrison were going on tour. I turned around and here is Jeff Lynne from ELO (Electric Light Orchestra), Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr. All of George's friends were there to support him."

Pappy's creative journey takes him all over the world, but home is right here in Palmer now. His sound studio is in the country, and he finds it to be a retreat when he is not on tour, as well as a place his musical associates can make music whenever they want to. "It gives us the freedom to come out here, and we can just play as long and as late as we like," he said. "This place is built to be really creative."**NOW**

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# Soccer Star

— By Kelly Kovar

Ennis High School (EHS) soccer season is during the harshest weather of the year; however, neither chilliness, nor rain, nor even snow can dissuade stalwart players and fans from persevering. Alex Montemayor, EHS senior and seasoned soccer player is an example of such dedication to the sport. “Games start in January; it is the coldest time of the season,” Alex said. “We have games until the end of March or the beginning of April. It is hard because it is so cold, but it is fun. I am ready; I am looking forward to the season.”

On the EHS soccer team, Alex plays midfielder. “Midfield is defense and offense. It is so fast-paced, switching back from offense to defense. It is a lot of running, so I do cross country to help my endurance.” Soccer requires learning ball-control skills. “You have to time yourself on your passes and make sure the ball gets someplace at the same time as the person you are passing to.”

Years of experience and working with several coaches have honed Alex’s skills. “My dad, Tico Montemayor, played soccer when he was in EHS. He is my role model for soccer; he is who I look up to.” Tico coached Alex from when she was 4 until age 12 on a coed team in Ennis called The Stars. “My dad taught me that I didn’t need to be scared of boy soccer players, because I could be better than them. He taught me that I could learn from them.”

On The Stars, Alex, and her friend, Meagan Vasquez, were the only girls, so they played defense. When she was 12, the girls joined an all-girl team, The Illusions, coached by Meagan’s dad, Mario Vasquez.” Coach Vasquez became like a second father to Alex. “He and his wife are good family friends. He taught me how to work better as a teammate; how to communicate more.

**“I am looking forward to the season.”**



He taught me how to focus not just on winning, but on having fun with soccer.”

Since getting to high school, Alex has been coached by Kim Vernor. “She has taught me that in order to be a good player you need to not get so mad at your team, because your team is what is helping you. You can’t shut down with your team. When you are playing with a new team, it takes time and you have to build communication.”

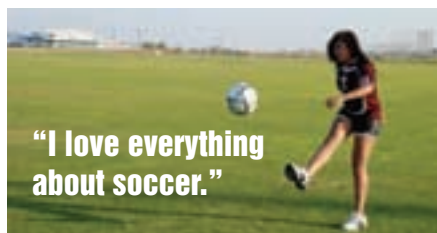
In addition to her coaches and teammates, Alex appreciates the support of family. “My mom, Monica Taylor, and my stepdad, Ken, always come to my games, even if it is cold and raining or snowing. And, my little brother, Issac, is always there. In the end he says, ‘Good job!’” Last year, Alex’s hard work paid off when she was recognized with a major soccer award. “I got First Team All District. I was surprised and happy and excited.”

She hopes soccer will continue to be a part of her life during college. “I am hoping to get a soccer scholarship, but if I don’t that is what my academics are for. It is harder for a girl to get a soccer scholarship. Coaches come see guys play more, so if you are a girl, you have to put yourself out there more. You have to contact the coaches; send them your play schedule; tell them about yourself. I’ve been trying to do that for about a year now.



My stepdad, Ken, is helping me with a recruiting site online. He keeps up with that and checks my e-mail so I can stay in touch with college coaches.”

Alex would like to go to Navarro College or Hillsboro Community College for two years and then to The University of North Texas or The University of Texas at Tyler and play on their soccer



program. She plans to study nursing. “I want to be a RN. I like taking care of people. My boyfriend, Jaime Torres, plays soccer too, and he tore his ACL [anterior cruciate ligament in his knee] last year. I saw how much he went through, so I have thought about sports therapy.” Jaime also got First Team All District last year. “He is a really good player, and he tries to help me, so I can better myself. He plays stopper.”

For this school year though, Alex keeps busy with soccer games on Tuesday and Friday and soccer practice on the other weekdays. Practices last for an hour-and-a-half or two hours each day. “With soccer, you have to work hard to get what you want out of it,” Alex explained. “It is tough to do, but I like the challenge of it. I love the competition. I hope to continue playing soccer for as long as I can. I love everything about soccer.” **NOW**

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# While You Were Sleeping

Ellis County Sleep Center can conduct a diagnostic sleep test to determine if you have a sleep disturbance.

— By Kelly Kovar

Jimmy and Evelyn Herndon, Ellis County natives, opened Ellis County Sleep Center in 2006. Evelyn is the CEO and director of the lab. “We have registered sleep techs on staff, and Dr. Margaret Mike, medical director of the lab, is a board-certified neurologist and psychiatrist,” Evelyn said. “Dr. Mike has a private practice in Dallas, where she has been voted a “top doc” for several years running by *D Magazine*. Her primary focus is sleep consultations.” Dr. Blayne Laws, local Ennis family practitioner, is also a co-medical director of the lab. “Dr. Laws has gone through additional training in sleep and plays a true role in our lab. He can come in and look at studies at any time and answer any of

our questions. He is very good to consult with on campus here.”

The Ellis County Sleep Center does diagnostic sleep testing. Their facility includes two home-like bedrooms where patients can comfortably spend one or two nights, once they have received a prescription from their physician for a sleep study. Sleep study candidates include those who have sleeping difficulties, such as: bothersome snoring, daytime sleepiness, sleep apnea or drowsiness while driving. “We are getting some really good data on sleep diagnostics because the results of 20 years’ studies are in,” Evelyn explained. “Now, we are finding out the ramifications of untreated, undiagnosed



*From left:*

One of the home-like bedrooms used in the sleep studies; CEO Evelyn Herndon; Tempur-Pedic mattresses are featured in each bedroom.

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sleep apnea and sleep disorders. Type 2 diabetes, heart attack, stroke and memory loss are sometimes direct results. Mortality rates increase when you live with untreated sleep apnea."

When arriving for a sleep study, about 8:00 p.m., patients can expect a routine similar to other diagnostic testing. They provide their insurance card and fill out paperwork. Next, however, they change into pajamas and are shown to a private room where they are connected to various monitors, before settling in for a regular night's sleep. "We have Tempur-Pedic® beds, dimming lights and soft music. You lie down and go to sleep. It is very dark and very quiet. We keep it at the optimum sleep temperature. It is a calming, relaxed atmosphere, and people don't find it difficult to fall asleep.

"From a central control room, a registered polysomnography [sleep study] technician monitors by video, audio and computer, and scores your results to see what types of sleep events happen in the night." Afterwards, a medical director looks at the study and the scored report and does an interpretation. If the diagnostic study determines a sleep disturbance is present, treatments are determined by your doctor and may include medication or mechanical devices such as a CPAP (a continuous positive airway pressure device).

Sleep studies may take place over one or two nights, which are not necessarily consecutive nights. "The first night might determine that you have a sleep disturbance, and the second night you would try out some machines to see what helps." Some people are able to do a split-night study, in which half the night is for diagnostics and the other half is for therapy. "Optimally, we like to get six hours of sleep for diagnostics." After a study, patients can be awakened as early as they desire, shower and go straight to work or back home to start their daily routine.

If a patient is interested in a sleep study, they can call Ellis County Sleep Center directly or stop by the office. "We will visit with them and suggest they either visit their family doctor or schedule an appointment with Dr. Mike and they can go and talk with her. A prescription is required from a doctor for a sleep study." **NOW**



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# Experiencing New Horizons

— By L.B. Lyon



George Bernard Shaw once said, “You see things; and you say, ‘Why?’ But I dream things that never were; and I say, ‘Why not?’”

Ennis Independent School District (ISD) had a dream of an alternative school for students who really wanted to complete their education, but for one reason or another could not in a traditional school environment. Dr. Diana Freeman is the person who transformed the dream into reality for the district.

Diana’s predecessor in the district had done a lot of the legwork looking at alternative school programs. They put together a proposal for what they would call Horizons, but there was no

funding for the computers and software. Space for the school was also an issue. Congressman Joe Barton went to bat for the district and wrote a Congressional earmark for Ennis ISD for an alternative school program. “Last April, the Ennis ISD was told they had the earmark, but they needed to get their proposal and grant request turned in,” Diana said. “I took what had been done and combined it with my work and wrote the grant in a week.

“The federal government doesn’t always move quickly, but they expect you to move quickly,” Diana smiled. Writing grants is Diana’s specialty. As the director of program development, she writes all grants for Ennis ISD. She handles all the federal programs and all the stimulus dollars. Diana is also the administrator in charge of PEIMS (Public Education Information Management System) that must file all required reports to Austin. She oversees the district employee child daycare center, and she is the homeless liaison for the district. Diana has a full platter, but in order to make Horizons come true, she concentrated on the grant and got the job done.

While waiting for word on the grant Diana began to organize how the program would work. She modeled it after a similar program she oversaw in the Mesquite school district. Notification of approval came in late July with funds to move forward, but they were left with just three weeks before school opened to get everything in place. “We started on the old computer curriculum we had and, at the end of October, we converted to the new curriculum to meet our upgraded standards,” she explained.

The Horizons program is located on the third floor of the Alamo Education Center in Ennis. “It’s not a school for troublemakers and goof-offs,” Diana said. “You are automatically disqualified if you have some disciplinary record and behavior problems.”

The program was designed for students who do not do well in a traditional classroom environment. For example, the student may be pregnant or may already be a parent. With the poor economy, Diana is also seeing some students leave school, even though they do not want to, in order to help



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support their family. Or, in some cases, there could be an ill relative at home and the student provides the mode of transportation for health care. "They have it academically. They can do the work. They just need a different setting and Horizons provides that," she said. Horizons students are young people who really want an education with the resulting high school diploma. "Because it is computer-based, it is accelerated," Diana added. "Depending on how quickly you complete the credits you could potentially graduate sooner."

Horizons is not just for seniors who have had to leave school before they graduate, but seniors with scheduling conflicts. "We have a flexible school day program," Diana said. "This means that students can select their hours. The school receives credit for their attendance based on the number of hours they attend rather than the number of days they attend. This helps accommodate students who have work that interferes with traditional school hours."

There is already a waiting list of students wanting to get into the Horizons program. Two graduations have taken place and another student is very close to graduating before the end of the year.

Students interested in the program start by meeting with their counselor at the high school. Once a need is established, the student completes an application to put in writing why they need to be in the alternative education program. "The goal is to increase the completion rate of students in the Ennis ISD," Diana said. The dropout rate is no longer what schools are held accountable for. It is the completion rate. Thus, the goal of the program is to increase the completion rate and decrease the dropout rate at the same time.

Diana has been in education for 22 years and finds this program exciting because it gives students the opportunity to complete their education, whereas previously the obstacles they faced in life might have prevented that. "I would love to grow it and staff it where we could serve all the kids who apply with no one waiting," Diana said as she pondered the future of Horizons. "Perhaps in two or three years we can do that." **NOW**

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# In The Kitchen With Betty Moore

— By Faith Browning

Betty Moore has deep family roots in Ellis County. Her paternal grandparents, the Griffises and the Slays, were pioneer settlers in Italy, Texas. She is retired from Ennis Independent School District where she taught first grade and was the first gifted/talented teacher in Ennis. She also has served two years as a curriculum director and is currently on the board of the Ennis Public Theatre. In her spare time, she enjoys teaching Sunday school at

Tabernacle Baptist Church, attending the Bluebonnet Patches Quilting Club and the Twentieth Century Club, hand embroidery, reading and playing bridge.

Spending time with and preparing meals for her family, which includes 10 grandchildren, is Betty's favorite pastime. "Before our family meals," she said, "our family joins hands and we give thanks for our food and for the bountiful blessings God has bestowed upon us." **NOW**



## AUNT MABEL'S ASPIC SALAD

1 can cream of tomato soup  
1 pkg. Knox gelatin  
1 soup can of water  
6 to 7 oz. cream cheese  
3/4 cup mayonnaise  
1/2 cup onions, chopped  
1/2 cup green bell pepper, chopped  
1 can English peas, drained  
1/2 cup green olives, chopped  
1 cup celery, chopped

1. In a saucepan, heat tomato soup.
2. Soften gelatin in water; add to soup.
3. While still hot, add cream cheese; beat well.
4. Set aside to let cool.
5. When cool, add mayonnaise, onions, green bell pepper, peas, green olives and celery; refrigerate. This molds nicely.

## COUSIN JIM'S CAN OPENER SOUP

2 cans Progresso Cheesy Chicken Enchilada Soup

1 can hominy, drained  
1 can black beans, drained and rinsed  
1 small can green chilies, chopped  
1 small jar pimentos, chopped  
2 10-oz. cans chicken

1. Bring all ingredients to a boil.
2. Serve over corn chips or corn bread.

## MOLLIE'S BROWNIES

4 eggs  
2 cups sugar  
1 cup plus 2 Tbsp. flour  
2 sticks butter  
2 squares chocolate  
2 Tbsp. vanilla  
1 cup chocolate chips  
1 cup pecans, chopped  
1/4 cup miniature marshmallows

1. Beat together eggs and sugar; add flour.
2. In a pan melt together butter, chocolate

squares and vanilla; add to egg mixture.

3. Fold in chocolate chips.
4. Pour into a 9 x 14-inch pan.
5. Cover top with pecans and marshmallows.
6. Bake at 350 F for 30 to 35 minutes.

## LEMON PUDDING CAKE

3 eggs, separated  
1/3 cup lemon juice  
1 tsp. lemon rind, grated  
1 Tbsp. butter, melted  
1 1/2 cups sugar  
1/2 cup flour, sifted  
1/2 tsp. salt  
1 1/2 cups milk

1. Beat together egg yolks, lemon juice, lemon rind and butter until thick and lemon colored.
2. Combine sugar, flour and salt; add to egg yolk mixture alternating with adding the milk. Beat well after each addition.

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3. Beat egg whites until stiff; beat into egg yolk mixture on a low speed.
4. Pour into an 8-inch square baking dish; set dish in a pan of hot water.
5. Bake at 350 F for 45 minutes, or until cake is golden.
6. Cut into squares.

#### **QUICK BEEF STROGANOFF**

**1 lb. round steak, 3/4-inch cubes**

**Flour**

**2 Tbsp. oil**

**1/2 cup onions, chopped**

**1 clove garlic, minced**

**1 6-oz. can broiled mushrooms**

**1 cup sour cream**

**1 10-oz. can tomato soup**

**6 to 8 drops Tabasco sauce**

**1/2 tsp. salt**

**Dash of pepper**

**Spaghetti or noodles, cooked according to pkg. directions**

**Parmesan cheese, grated**

1. Dip steak cubes in flour.
2. In a pan, brown meat in hot oil.
3. Add onions, garlic and mushrooms.
4. In a separate bowl, combine sour cream, soup, Tabasco, salt and pepper.
5. Pour over meat; simmer until meat is tender, about 1 hour.
6. Serve over hot spaghetti or noodles. Top with Parmesan cheese.

#### **SANTA BARBARA CHICKEN ENCHILADAS**

**1 3-lb. chicken**

**Cooking oil**

**1 lg. onion, chopped**

**1 can cream of chicken soup**

**2 10-oz. cans tomatoes w/chilies**

**Salt and pepper, to taste**

**1 Tbsp. cumin**

**1 small carton sour cream**

**Corn or flour tortillas**

**1 lb. Monterey Jack cheese, grated**

**2 cups cheddar cheese, grated**

1. Boil chicken until tender; debone and cut up.
2. In a pan, heat oil and sauté onions until clear.
3. Add soup, tomatoes, salt, pepper and cumin; simmer 20 minutes.
4. Remove from the heat; add sour cream.
5. Place a small amount of sauce in a 13 x 9 x 2-inch baking dish to cover the bottom.
6. Start with a layer of tortillas, chicken and Monterey Jack cheese; repeat.
7. Pour sauce over the top; cover with cheddar cheese.
8. Bake at 350 F for 45 minutes.

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## 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 10 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.

**8. Reduce housing costs.** Housing is a major fixed expense. Consider reducing this cost by buying or renting a smaller

place, or one with fewer amenities. If you rent, and plan on staying in an area for more than a few years, consider buying. Owning a home is often more expensive than renting at first, but the costs are usually lower in the long run. Remember, a house is an investment that generally appreciates over time.

**9. Trim transportation costs.** Transportation is another large expense for most families. Many households now own more than one vehicle. The more cars you own, the higher the costs for insurance, repairs, fuel and parking. Use public transportation or carpool, if possible. The savings in vehicle-related expenses may offset any slight inconvenience. Also, consider buying a used car. A good used auto will get you where you are going as well as a new one, and will likely cost much less.

**10. Set aside a cash reserve.** Having a cash reserve can help you stick to your spending plan and help keep you out of debt when emergencies, such as a major car repair or short-term disability, arise.

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. **NOW**

*Gary Hayden is president of Hayden Financial Partners with offices in Ennis.*

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# Inside Gardening

**When plants are brought inside the house, they need a bit more attention when the heat is on because they have a tendency to dry out quickly.**

— *By Nancy Fenton*

With the cold weather, it is a good time to review all those plants you have brought into your nice, warm house such as ivies, poinsettias or Christmas cacti. All will add oxygen to your recycled inside air and can go outside again in March. I also bring in my Chinese Evergreens to provide some color and oxygen for the colder months, but I have to wait to put them back outside until the leaves on my pecan trees come out so they will have shade and avoid burning their tender leaves.

If you received azaleas for Christmas, enjoy them in the house and then throw them away unless you are willing to change out the soil in a flowerbed for them. They love very acid soils and just “turn up their toes” at our alkaline soils.

When plants are brought inside the house, they need a bit more attention when the heat is on because they have a tendency to dry out quickly. A good technique to determine if they need water is the weight test. If they are light when lifted, water them. If they are heavy, wait a day or two. After soaking my plants in the kitchen sink, I let mine drain in the second sink before sticking them back in their container or foil to avoid water in the bottom that might cause root rot. A good soak for 15 to 30 minutes when dry (usually once a week) will help keep them in fine form throughout the winter months. **NOW**

*Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener.*



# Annual Physical Examinations

— Submitted by Dr. Fredric Puckett

For some people, the annual physical examination is a source of reassurance that they're as healthy as they feel. Others see it as an alarm system, to catch health problems before they become serious. What can you expect from your annual physical exam?

## Annual Physical Exam: The Basics.

The physical exam is an essential part of any doctor's visit. Surprisingly, though, there are no absolutes in a routine physical. A good doctor may be thorough or brief, according to his or her personal style and your individual circumstances.

## History.

This is your chance to mention any complaints or concerns about your health. Your doctor will also likely quiz you about important behaviors, like smoking, excessive alcohol use, diet and exercise.

## Vital Signs.

- Blood pressure: less than 120 over 80 is a normal blood pressure. Doctors define high blood pressure (hypertension) as 140 over 90 or higher.
- Heart rate: Values between 60 and 100 are considered normal.
- Respiration rate: Around 16 is normal. Breathing more than 20 times per minute can suggest heart or lung problems.

## General Appearance.

Your doctor gathers a large amount of information about you and your health

just by watching and talking to you. How is your memory and mental quickness? Does your skin appear healthy? Can you easily stand and walk?

## Heart Exam.

Listening to your heart with a stethoscope, a doctor might detect an irregular heartbeat, a heart murmur or other clues to heart disease.

## Lung Exam.

Using a stethoscope, a doctor listens for crackles, wheezes or decreased breath sounds. These and other sounds are clues to the presence of heart or lung disease.

## Head and Neck Exam.

Opening up and saying "ah" shows off your throat and tonsils. The quality of your teeth and gums also provides information about your overall health. Ears, nose, sinuses, eyes, lymph nodes, thyroid and carotid arteries are examined.

## Abdominal Exam.

Your doctor can use a range of examination techniques, including tapping your abdomen to detect liver size and presence of abdominal fluid, listening for bowel sounds with a stethoscope, and palpating for tenderness.

## Neurological Exam.

Nerves, muscle strength, reflexes, balance and mental state are assessed.

## Extremities Exam.

Your doctor will look for physical and sensory changes. Pulses can be checked in your arms and legs.

## Laboratory Tests.

There are no standard laboratory tests during an annual physical. However, some doctors will order certain tests routinely:

- Complete blood count
- Chemistry panel
- Urinalysis

A cholesterol test is recommended every five years. Abnormal cholesterol levels increase the risk for heart attacks and strokes.

## Physicals Should Emphasize Prevention.

The annual physical exam is a great opportunity to refocus your attention on prevention and screening:

- At age 50, it's time to begin regular screening for colorectal cancer. People with immediate family members with colorectal cancer may need to be screened before age 50.
- For most women, age 40 marks the time to begin annual mammogram screening for breast cancer.
- Everyone should have their cholesterol (lipids) checked every five years after age 20, according to the American Heart Association.

Healthy behaviors work far better than medicine at preventing illness and don't require a prescription. **NOW**

Dr. Fredric Puckett  
Ennis Regional Medical Center



## Third Monday

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

## First and Third Tuesday

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

## First and Third Thursday

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

## January 9

Bluegrass/Gospel Show: 7:00 p.m., Old Bristol Schoolhouse, 100 Church St., Bristol. Come early and join the bluegrass picker's jam from 4:00-6:00 p.m. Free admission. Donations accepted. For more information, call Jim Gatlin at (972) 846-2211.

## January 12

Navarro College SBDC's "How to Start a New Business" seminar: 10:00 a.m.-noon, Waxahachie Chamber of Commerce, 102 YMCA Drive, Waxahachie. Call (903) 875-7667 for required pre-registration or e-mail [sbdc@navarrocollege.edu](mailto:sbdc@navarrocollege.edu).

## January 15

Ennis Unity in the Community Celebration includes a presentation of *The Meeting*, a one-act play by Jeff Stetson, directed by Fran Anderson and presented by Inspiration, Inc. First place winners for MLK DVD

presentations will be screened after the presentation. Presentations on the theme "Moving Beyond the Dream" are due January 5. For details on place and time visit [www.inspirationinc.org](http://www.inspirationinc.org).

## January 18

Texas Theater, Waxahachie presents *The Meeting*. For details, e-mail [Inspire\\_Ennis@yahoo.com](mailto:Inspire_Ennis@yahoo.com) or visit [www.facebook.com/1/92faf](http://www.facebook.com/1/92faf) or [www.inspirationinc.org](http://www.inspirationinc.org).

## January 20

Ellis County Christian Women's Connection luncheon: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Waxahachie Country Club, 1920 W. Hwy. 287 at I-35 East, Exit 401B, Waxahachie. All women welcome for luncheon and speaker. Cost: \$13. Nursery available. Reservations preferred; walk-ins welcome. For reservations, contact Kay at (972) 937-2807 or [windchime423@yahoo.com](mailto:windchime423@yahoo.com) or Mary at (972) 937-9984.

## January 23

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

## January 26

Navarro College SBDC's "Writing a Winning Business Plan" seminar: 10:00 a.m.-noon, Waxahachie Chamber of Commerce, 102 YMCA Drive, Waxahachie. Call (903) 875-7667 for required pre-registration or e-mail [sbdc@navarrocollege.edu](mailto:sbdc@navarrocollege.edu).

## February 13

Ennis Czech Music Festival at Sokol Hall, 2622 E. Hwy. 34. Call (972) 878-4748 for more information.

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# Lookout Below!

— *By Becky Walker*

Lighthouses hold an almost irresistible draw for many people. There is something romantic about the idea of someone spending their life warning others of danger and helping guide them to safety. Often located on islands accessible only by ferry boat, it is the isolated and mysterious nature of lighthouses, which intrigues some. History buffs find the role of lighthouses in naval expeditions and battles fascinating; adventurers find a thrill in climbing the steep stairs and photographers enjoy the scenic views from their observation decks.

While lighthouses are wildly popular in our culture because of what they symbolize — safe passage through stormy seas — the cost of constructing and maintaining them along with the





development of modern navigational equipment made them less and less essential. One by one, they have been decommissioned and those that are still operational are now automated.

Only five historic lighthouses still exist in Texas; of those five, only one is open to climbing. The Old Point Isabel Lighthouse, located in Port Isabel, Texas, is an easy nine-and-a-half hour drive from the Metroplex, and offers a step back in time for those who visit.



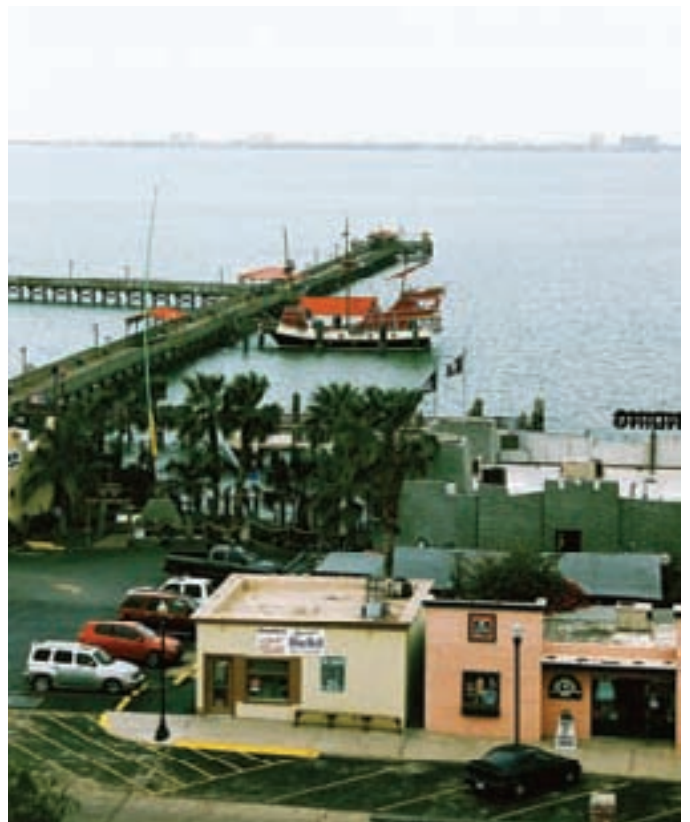
Constructed in 1852 and decommissioned in 1905, the 57-foot white brick tower is situated just across the Queen Isabella Causeway from South Padre Island and was once vitally important to the trade industry in the region. Larger ships would dock at Port Isabel and transfer their cargo to smaller vessels, which could navigate the shallow waters of the Rio Grande River to interior settlements. During the Civil War, the lighthouse was valued as a lookout tower from which to watch the movements of enemy forces. The lighthouse was occupied by both the North and the South at various times during the Civil War, and the Confederates even attempted to blow it up to keep it from falling into "Yankee" hands.

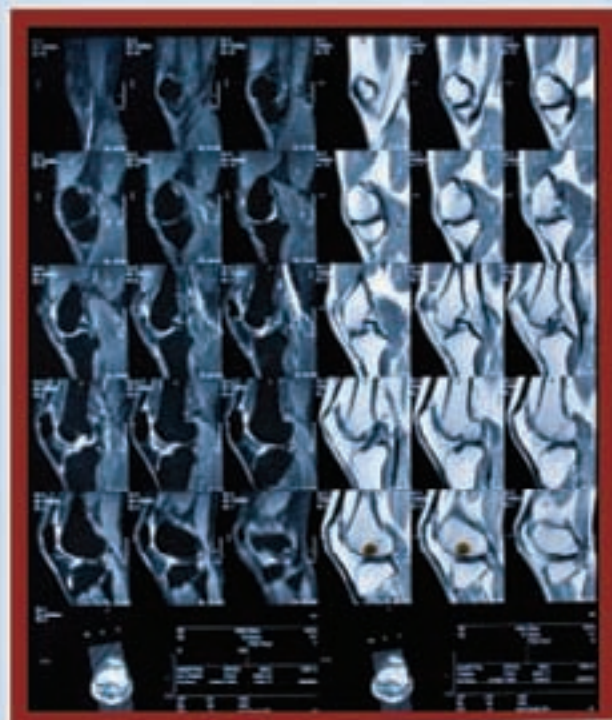
Today, the tower sits on a small rise in the middle of Texas' smallest state park, Port Isabel Lighthouse State Historical Park. Though not as tall as some lighthouses, the climb is quite steep and two short ladders must be navigated to reach the top observation deck. But the view is well worth the effort. The tower overlooks Laguna Madre, South Padre Island

and, on a clear day, the Gulf of Mexico is visible on the far side of South Padre.

The lighthouse is surrounded by shops, restaurants and antique stores boasting maritime treasures. Two additional museums, the Port Isabel Historic Museum and the Treasures of the Gulf Museum provide information about the rich history of the area, including the role General Zachary Taylor, who would go on to become the 12th president of the United States, played in the region.

Point Isabel Lighthouse, located on Queen Isabella Blvd./ Highway 100 in Port Isabel, Texas, is open to the public daily (weather permitting). Tickets to tour the lighthouse or combination tickets for entrance into all three museums may be obtained at the Lighthouse Keepers Cottage, which houses the Port Isabel Chamber of Commerce. Senior and student discounts are available. For more information, call (956) 943-7602 or visit [www.portisabelmuseums.com](http://www.portisabelmuseums.com). **NOW**





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