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January 2010

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Cedar Hill - DeSoto - Duncanville
NOW
MAGAZINE
The Community Magazine
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On The Cover

Snow Girl by Rae Nelson.

Photo by Amy Ramirez.

Editor's Note

Happy New Year, Southwest Friends,

No doubt, many of you are making resolutions to better your lifestyles. Most likely some, if not all, of these resolutions will be aimed at healthier habits. Why limit these to affecting yourself? January is National Eye Care month, so our Duncanville feature focuses on eye care for children; clear eyesight often rules out learning problems. January is also National Blood Donor month; one Cedar Hill businessman is recruiting others to join him in saving lives. DeSoto Mayor Bobby Waddle asked me some time ago to feature the Jason Foundation, through which Rich Cameron is also working to save lives. Along with our January recipes, we're serving up plenty of food for thought on where you can plug in to make a difference this year. Speaking of food, eating at Chick-fil-A facilitates donating to various community causes.

Beverly Shay
SouthwestNOW Editor

P.S. Send your story ideas to bshay.nowmag@sbcglobal.net.



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No Longer **Afraid**

— By L.B. Lyon

The need for blood and blood products does not take a break on holidays or any other time of the year. Blood products are in constant demand for cancer patients, those affected by burns and premature infants.

Cameron Ballantyne with the American Red Cross Southwest Blood Region said, “During the holiday season, more people travel to visit friends and family. As a result, we see a higher rate of travel-related accidents. Therefore, we plan ahead for such incidents.” One or two reminders of the need for blood is never enough. “We also find that regular donors become preoccupied with other priorities and don’t give during the holiday season. Therefore, we work to receive their donations before and after the holiday season.” January is National Blood Donor Month; with an increased effort to replenish the supplies depleted during the busy holiday season.

Samantha Camp, a Red Cross representative, met Jason Divis at a luncheon early in 2009 at Northwood University in Cedar Hill, her alma mater.

Sitting at the table with Jason, manager of the Cotton Patch Cafe in Cedar Hill, she shared with him information about the need for blood and conducting blood drives. The two of them struck up an immediate friendship when Jason discovered Samantha’s husband was also a graduate from Texas A&M. Jason told Samantha he would do anything to help a fellow Aggie, “Just name it,” he said.

Conducting a blood drive outside the restaurant was not number one on Jason’s “to do” list. For one thing, he has always had a fear of needles. “My wife, Natalie, always gave blood when we were in college,” Jason shared. “She’d continually try to encourage me to do the same, but I was always scared of needles, so I didn’t.” But now, he had said “yes” to Samantha. “She was very passionate about her work with the Red Cross,” Jason recalled. “It didn’t take much to convince me.”

At first, Jason thought he could avoid the needle himself and just play the part of encouraging others to donate. But then he thought back to when he was in the Navy. “Whenever we would go out to sea, our captain was actually seasick,” he laughed. “So it was kind of ironic. Here I am the captain of this boat,” he said, pointing at the restaurant, “and if

I’m not the first one giving blood, how am I going to encourage anyone else?”

So, Jason was first in line when the blood drive truck parked outside his business the first time. He not only successfully convinced most of the employees to give blood, he motivated some customers to donate, as well. He admits he was nervous about it, but now it is no big deal. He will always be first in line. Giving blood was definitely not just a one-time thing for Jason. “Each time I give a pint of blood, I’m helping at least three other people. The Red Cross workers are fantastic,” he said. “They are a great part of why I do this over and over.”

When a person gives blood, the blood is tested for a number of potential problems for the blood recipient. The tests range from blood typing to STDs and other specific antibodies. Once it passes all the testing, the blood can be donated to waiting recipients. Whole blood can be separated into three different parts. Red blood cells will help an ER patient, plasma will help burn victims and platelets will assist cancer patients. Jason’s mother is a cancer survivor, so this part is special to him. For the past three years, Jason’s wife has been involved in the cancer three-day



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walk as a show of support for his mother and other cancer patients.

Jason is so enthusiastic about the blood drives he has participated in that he convinced Hillary Boozer, manager of the Mansfield Cotton Patch, to conduct blood drives at her location also.



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“My wife asks how I can always remember my blood type,” Jason chuckled, “and I tell her it’s because I never got A-pluses in school. My blood type is A plus.”

The two restaurants now compete to see who can get the most donors. “We always win,” Jason smiled. “We do about 35 to 40 people; that will help at least 100 other people. All together, at least 160 people have donated during our drives.

When Jason gets involved in something, he jumps in with both feet. He now tries to schedule the blood drives as frequently as he can. The Red Cross requires a minimum of 56 days between blood donations. Often they try to schedule the drive in Cedar Hill on the same day as the one in Mansfield.

Jason can only laugh now about his

Cedar Hill **NOW**

past fear of needles as he has taken another big step in the donor process. "I went up to Mansfield Methodist to meet up with Sheila Winans of the Red Cross. She is the one in charge of coordinating these blood drives," Jason said. "They were doing both a blood

and a marrow drive, something which I've never been involved in before." Roslyn Hunt of the Cook Children's National Marrow Donor Program related to Jason the importance of the marrow drives and how someone like him is especially needed because he has a rare blood type.

"My wife asks how I can always remember my blood type," Jason chuckled, "and I tell her it's because I never got A-pluses in school. My blood type is A plus."

Rosalyn continued to talk passionately to Jason about the marrow drives. "The marrow drive kind of scared me because I didn't know how that worked," Jason said. "But, they talked me into doing swabs to make sure, because of my rare blood type. Just like Samantha and Sheila had, Rosalyn convinced me to become a marrow donor, so when they call on me I'll have to do my duty."

Jason would not mind seeing the blood drives become more than simply a competition between Cedar Hill and Mansfield. He thinks of how it would benefit the Red Cross if this became a corporate-wide project. He now talks about the need for blood donors and blood drives with the same passion Samantha and Sheila have.

As long as there is a need, Jason will always be prepared to be part of a blood drive, and he encourages others to become donors, as well. He always reminds people that somebody's life could be dependent on their donation. And this comes from a man who was once afraid of needles. **NOW**



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To Life

— By Beverly Shay

Health care is on the tip of most tongues these days as people strive to understand just what should be provided for and by whom. Bulletins on minimizing risks of the H1N1 (swine) flu virus flood the airwaves and e-mails. But there is a “silent epidemic” now being addressed among many educators and youth workers by providing information, tools and resources to help identify and assist those at risk.

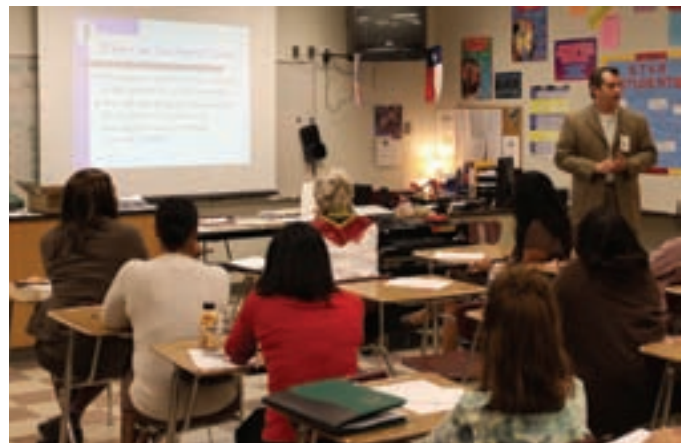
Health professionals identify risk factors for heart disease, cancer, diabetes and many other prevalent illnesses, as well as presenting preemptive steps in diet, exercise and regular checkups. Yet, few families suppose they will ever have a loved one at risk for the silent epidemic of youth suicide, much less that approximately 100 young people fall prey to this epidemic in our nation weekly. “It’s called a ‘silent epidemic’ because seemingly no apparent warnings are evident and, by and large, people don’t want to talk about it, mostly because they do not want to think that kids, with so much ahead of them, would even consider suicide,” stated Rich Cameron, senior community education specialist and Jason Foundation representative for Hickory Trail Hospital in DeSoto.

Fifteen years ago, Rich was volunteering as a one-on-one mentor, as well as teaching in church youth ministry, hearing from individual youths and aware of the youth culture as a whole. This developed into a career interest and he finished his master’s in professional counseling. His background includes public speaking (a favorite subject, in which he excelled in high school), private counseling/therapy and 10 years counseling for the hospital. “In the hospital, we offer intervention, as well as working with kids who have already attempted suicide. With the foundation, I offer prevention education to non-mental health workers that can help prevent someone from attempting suicide,” Rich explained.

“Almost everyone has young people in their sphere of life, work or church. We have a responsibility to these young people. We can — and need to — play a key role in a solution that can



Tara Beaudion, Marricarr Powers and Rich Cameron at DeSoto Freshman Campus.



prevent the loss of one more life,” Rich remarked. The Jason Foundation, Inc. was founded in 1997 by Clark Flatt after the tragic suicide of his popular, athletic, well-adjusted, 16-year-old son, Jason. The family was grieved they had not recognized, nor even known to look for what, in retrospect, were obvious signs all was not well with their well-loved son.

In an effort to spare other families a similarly devastating loss, Clark researched and compiled statistics, signs, clues based on multiple studies, including many statistics from the CDC (Centers for Disease Control) Youth Risk Behavior Survey, and combined them with his own and others’ personal experiences. The resulting foundation, now found in all 50 states and other countries, partners with mental health hospitals, schools, youth and youth leadership organizations, such as the American Football Coaches Association and even the attorneys general of

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many states, to provide information and resources which will aid in recognition of and assistance for those 4,200 youths (ages 12-19) in our nation who will attempt suicide today. The Jason Foundation's goal is to teach youth, parents, teachers and all full-time youth professionals.

Marricarr Powers, counselor at the DeSoto Freshman Campus, who lost her own brother to suicide, stated, "Rich's presentation at a counselor in-service training equipped me and gave me confidence that I can make a difference. Many kids come to my office needing someone to listen, to check up on them, to care. They may have trouble with schoolwork or relationships, but are afraid to tell their parents, not wanting

"The best thing a parent can do is learn to recognize the signs their child is struggling or worse."

to burden them or be accused of not trying hard enough. The best thing a parent can do is learn to recognize the signs their child is struggling or worse."

"Feedback following the presentations indicates most teachers can immediately identify one or more students at risk," Rich stated. "Youth today are aware of and subject to many of the same stressors adults face: lack of extended family members to ease the work load when both parents work; single parent families; job loss causing economic pressure; gaps caused by parents serving in the military, uncertainty about the future. My goal is twofold: to help educators recognize indicators of children and youth contemplating suicide and to provide both resources for them and curriculum for their students. A three-to-five day program is made available for teachers to inform kids of signs to be aware of and instruction on what to do when a friend is in trouble. Young people are encouraged to listen, to insist on honesty and to go with their friend to get them help," Rich emphasized.

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"I have been able to train 8,000 people through the Hickory Trail branch of the Jason Foundation [through October, 2009]," Rich commented. "It is crucial kids know to get their friends to a counselor or pastor or some professional who can help immediately. Teachers and counselors need to inform the parents/guardians, who must then bring these kids to services where they can be helped. I cannot emphasize enough that they act quickly."

"In 1999, the national movement for suicide prevention began when Dr. David Satcher, U.S. Surgeon General, declared suicide 'a national health problem' ... especially within youth and elderly populations," Rich's presentation stated. The CDC Youth Behavioral Risk Survey of 2007 for students grades 9-12 nationwide found that one out of four students have felt sad/hopeless daily for two or more weeks consecutively; one out of seven have seriously considered suicide in the past 12 months; one out of nine have made a plan to end their life and one out of 14 have attempted suicide one or more times in that 12 month period.

Rich emphasized, "The key to prevention is educating the three main influencers in a young person's life: peers, educators and parents. We cannot underestimate the impact suicide has on our youth, families and communities. One suicide is way too many!" Rich stated.

Clark Flatt relays countless stories of young people, who upon hearing these presentations, immediately, and often persistently, approach counselors about a friend they now realize is at risk. In a specific situation in another city, a loaded weapon was found in a school locker along with a list of those whose lives a youth planned to attack before ending his own. As a result of the information presented and acted upon by a friend and the school counselor, the tragedy was averted and the youth received the help he needed. Education of this sort will alter these shocking statistics and save lives. **NOW**

Editor's Note:

To receive more information or book a presentation, contact Rich at rich.cameron@pysolutions.com. Statistics and facts from the Staff Training Seminar PowerPoint entitled The Jason Foundation @ Hickory Trail Hospital.

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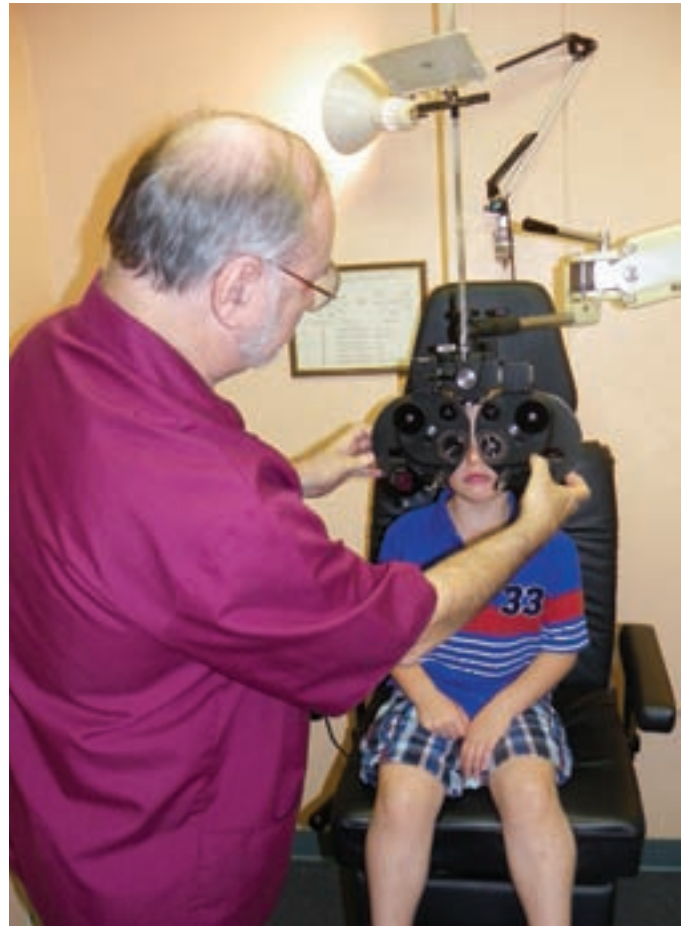
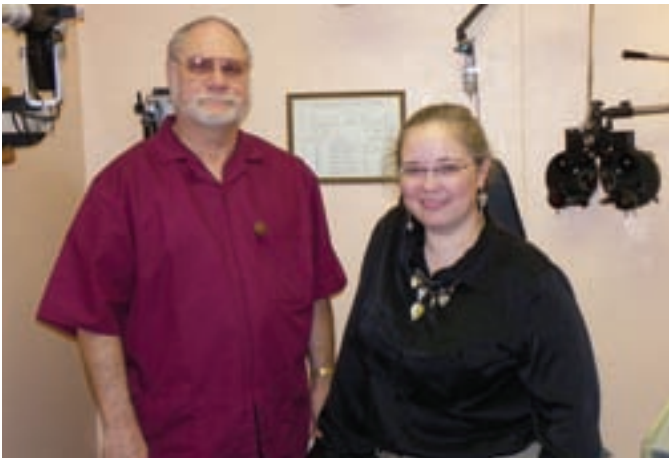
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Insight on Sight

— By Beverly Shay



Perhaps you have been asked if you were to lose one of your senses, which would be the most difficult to do without. Well, no one really wants or has to make that decision. Each of our senses adds to our quality of life, but to lose vision would be particularly devastating, which is why safeguarding it is critical. Vision exams, for all ages, should be a yearly routine, especially if there is any indication of difficulty. To emphasize that, January has been declared National Eye Care Month.


The first thing you should do is take a child to an eye doctor for a thorough eye exam “if [they are] having headaches or any difficulty reading. Vision screenings are a good start, but rarely extensive enough to diagnose actual problems. Frequently, a child’s inability to read, stay focused and complete work is not a behavioral issue, but indicates a vision problem. It’s hard to read or concentrate if you cannot see properly!” exclaimed Dr. William Dover. Both he and his partner at Duncanville Eye Associates, Dr. Tracey Yothers, have done a lot of specialty work in examining and treating children.

“I was interested in becoming an optometrist because I had a younger sister whose vision problems affected her in school. As well, I deeply respected the doctor who served our family as I was growing up. I recall how he never turned a patient away

because of lack of money. That is partially why we see so many Medicaid patients, especially children,” Dr. Dover remarked. “While that does not contribute to material wealth, it comes with other irreplaceable benefits. You can never really give more than you receive.”

“We see a lot of children who have been held back in school because they could not read, and all they needed was glasses. A proper exam and prescription for glasses or contacts can change their lives,” enthused Dr. Yothers. “Several vision problems are common to children. One is astigmatism: an eye disorder in which the cornea, the clear tissue covering the front of the eye, is abnormally curved, causing out-of-focus vision, making it difficult to see fine details, either close up or from a distance. No one is quite sure exactly what causes this, but it is thought to be a passive genetic tendency,” Dr. Yothers said. “Symptoms include squinting, frequent rubbing of the eyes, blinking and an inability to distinguish between similarly shaped letters. When kids deal with these kinds of visual frustrations while trying to learn printed language that continually appears to vary, they often develop behavioral issues. Undetected vision problems result in inability to concentrate leading the child to give up and resort to causing distractions or diversions.”

Another major vision issue is myopia or nearsightedness. “Eye care specialists have noticed an increase of myopia at a younger age, thought to be consistent with the rise in extended periods spent in an enclosed environment: playing video games, using computers and viewing TV. Years ago, children spent



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Duncanville **NOW** —

more time outdoors; their vision was focused at a distance, yet now, they are experiencing what used to be called ‘college vision syndrome.’ The need for glasses (even contact lenses) in children ages 6-8 has increased 20 percent and



for children ages 10-12 it has increased 45 percent. Even a half hour a day spent outdoors decreases the need for earlier eye prescriptions in most cases,” related Dr. Yothers.

Dr. Dover commented that even long-time pilots who “advance to flying a desk” and suddenly find themselves doing more paperwork than flying begin to develop eye problems and decreased vision. Vision changes are also indicative of other physical changes, both in aging and adolescence. “We are never *just* treating eyeballs,” Dr. Dover remarked. “Vision is part of the whole body and affected by hormones, stress levels, medications for such things as asthma, anti-depressants/anti-psychotics. Males and females respond differently to medications, so we have to look at the whole life-style picture.”

Both doctors recommend a child’s first eye exam between the ages of 6 months to a year. But how can they determine the quality of vision in a child so young? Initially, they look for “big problems” such as lack of eye alignment or improper distance focusing, which can lead to more severe issues later on. “We use cards with stripes and blank cards. A child will automatically be



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drawn to the more interesting card, and by watching their response and eye coordination as we move the cards, we get a pretty accurate idea of the acuity of their vision,” Dr. Yothers explained. “Even infants can get eye diseases, such as retinoblastoma, a type of eye cancer that can spread to the brain. Early detection leads to early treatment and better eye care.

“Children, in particular, don’t always know what they cannot see, but they can let us know their visual acuity by their behavior. As they get older, they may not answer questions for fear of giving the wrong answer or that the exam will hurt them. So we deal with their fears first,” Dr. Yothers remarked. “When they get glasses and discover the world they have not yet seen, it changes their lives. Often, parents or care-givers don’t know how to evaluate the child’s abilities, so we give them a guide to indicate what a child’s vision and motor response skills should be at various ages. This helps them determine if the child has vision needs.”

As children get older, exams include matching pictures, letters and answering more sophisticated questions about what they can or cannot see. Parents are often surprised their children have not told them what they could not see — mostly because the child did not know they were not seeing everything. “We encourage the children by saying, ‘There are no right or wrong answers; we are just determining what you can see.’ Or, ‘You are doing great. You have been quite smart in helping us figure it out.’”

These doctors have learned to get involved, listen and take the time necessary — to both examine patients and to teach them about posture and how much distance they need from what they are viewing to provide functional vision. Their years of experience have given them an edge on discerning needs and providing solutions. “If their problem is something outside our field of specialty — say glaucoma — we recommend they see someone with that specialty.

“Vision problems don’t just go away. They need to be treated,” Dr. Dover said. “God is the ultimate healer; we serve as His mechanics.” **NOW**

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At Home With

Jim and Shelia Hood



Creature Comforts

— By Janice C. Johnson

Jim and Shelia Hood have lived in their Duncanville home for 20 years, but Shelia sums up its charm and heart in one sentence. “Out front is city; out back you’re in the country.” The transformation begins as you step into the living room. Dark wood flooring, leather furniture, an equestrian-patterned chair and walls hung with hunting-dog prints give the room an English-countryside feel. Two dogs — Ezekiel, a border collie, and Butch, a long-haired dachshund — rush to greet guests, almost as if the prints had come to life. A Russian blue cat named Sophie lounges by the fireplace.

The city drops away completely as you approach the far end of the room. Antique-ivory walls with dark wood trim set off three large picture windows. These look out on a park-like setting shaded by mature trees. A patio dining table stands in a flag-stoned nook along the walkway. Beyond, two horses browse in an enclosure next to a barn. A white painted footbridge away to your right

spans a little stream bed, inviting you outside to explore.

That bridge was partly responsible for the Hoods’ decision to buy the four-bedroom home. The property had been vacant for a year when the Realtor brought them to see it. Part of the fence had fallen down around the overgrown lawn. Out back were a small greenhouse and a “pole barn” with a roof, but no



walls. Jim and Shelia headed straight for the footbridge and looked around at the trees. After a few minutes, they told the Realtor, “We’ll take it.” They still laugh over how the startled Realtor had asked, “Um — don’t you want to go inside?”

They hurried to do just that. Indoors, an explosion of harvest-gold met their eyes: countertops, appliances, flocked wallpaper, matching drapes. Jim took one look and nearly backed out. “Are you sure you want this?” he asked Shelia.

Shelia told him, “Yeah! You have to look past all this. It’s like a big old vanilla wafer; you can put whatever frosting you want on it, because it’s pretty neutral ... once you get the harvest gold off.”

“She sees potential,” Jim said. “I’m an engineer; I just see what’s there.”

They bought the home as newlyweds. In the 1980s, they worked for different telephone companies that were merging, and met at an organizational retreat.



Shelia admitted, “I really didn’t like him very much.” But as they worked together over the next few years, Jim’s laid-back charm and humor began to win her over. “At some point I said, ‘Well ... I probably do like him OK,’” Shelia said. They married in 1989 and bought the house that July.

The couple jumped right in to making the home truly their own. The first priority was to “de-harvest-gold” its interior. Shelia created a mellow country atmosphere, accentuated by her grandmother’s treadle sewing machine and a few other antiques. Her collection of historic house replicas fits right in. What drew her to the two-dimensional, painted wood cutouts was the designer’s

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unusual name, “Shelia,” spelled the same as her own.

They even named the property. Shelia had bought some llamas, and was filling out forms to register them. One blank asked for the name of the farm that owned the animals. As she gazed out the window, considering possible names for her suburban “farm,” she noticed two large cedar trees beside the footbridge. She wrote “Twin Cedars Farm” in the blank, and to this day the name has stuck.


Meanwhile, Jim and Shelia also ventured into new careers, looking for a more comfortable fit. Jim, essentially a people-person, left the engineering field to work as a financial adviser. Shelia

is the administrative pastor at Trinity Church in Cedar Hill. She also serves Cedar Hill’s Chamber of Commerce as chairman of the board.

The Hoods have enjoyed working on Twin Cedars since they bought it. They built a separate one-bedroom guest house, where Shelia’s mother now lives. The backyard, accessible from the living room and through French doors in the master bedroom, is their favorite place — so they have spent many hours making it comfortable and inviting. One innovation is the outdoor dining patio they created by expanding a section of the flag stone path that leads out toward the horse enclosure. When they began

entertaining there, they hit upon the idea of hanging a chandelier from an overhead tree limb low enough to light the table. The effect was so elegant they jokingly dubbed the patio “The Veranda.” That name stuck, too. Jim and Shelia often donate “Dinner on the Veranda at Twin Cedars” as a popular prize for Chamber of Commerce and church auctions.

Shelia has a passion for animals, especially horses. Her “A-list” renovations included restoring the fence and finishing out the barn. The barn now makes a cozy home for Badger, her 6-year-old, registered Quarter horse, and Dolly, a 27-year-old, “rescue” horse.



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Shelia's two biggest challenges are putting weight on Dolly and keeping it off Badger. An avid rider, she diligently looks after the horses' comfort. Some years ago, she took the front wall off the greenhouse and converted it to a "horse spa." Here she can bathe them in any

weather, sheltered from the wind.

Jim, too, loves animals. He cares for some feral cats, which live in the horse spa and garage, even though "raccoons keep stealing the cat food." Surprisingly, Jim does not share Shelia's interest in horses. "They're just foreign to me,"

he said. "I've been a fisherman all my life; my granddaddy taught me to fish when I was young." Jim has a boat and schedules regular days off for fishing.

But the Hoods' different interests only serve to highlight how compatible the two are. Shelia said, "I ride; Jim goes along to help. What's important to me is important to him, because it's important to me." Shelia, in turn, has gone fishing with Jim many times, though she does not enjoy the sport. As she put it, "We are mutually supportive. I have an independent spirit, and he's OK with that; he's OK with my successes."

That level of security comes partly from their shared values. "We love God and our church — so we're together on that," Jim said. Shelia added, "We know we have a purpose to fulfill; it's not just about us." She paused. "I really like Jim Hood — a lot."

"That's a process, like most things," Jim quipped, leaning back in his chair and smiling at his wife. He looked as comfortable as Sophie the cat, curled up by the fireplace. **NOW**



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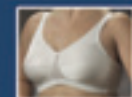


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Going for It

— By *Beverly Shay*

"I never liked art while I was growing up," grinned Duncanville resident, Rae Nelson. "It was boring." Yet she found herself sketching while on the phone. "Well, I was on the phone a lot; I worked 30 years for an answering service. I do remember sketching jewelry as a child, especially rings — I liked rings. My boss was the one who upon seeing my sketches said, 'You should do something with this.' I didn't really know I could draw."

Rae took a six-week drawing class at Cedar Valley College. "It didn't spark anything much in me. But I learned to draw a still life, a self-portrait and some perspective drawings," Rae reminisced.

"When the Ranch in Cedar Hill opened their art studio, my encouraging husband, Charlie, who backs me whatever I want to do, urged me to take classes. I took one class in oils and had just started the second one when I fell while dancing at a wedding, jamming my fingers. Thinking I was not all that badly hurt, I got up to keep dancing ... until I noticed how swollen my wrist was," Rae mentioned. "Turned out I had broken my right wrist along with other injuries, so following surgery I was in a wheel chair for five weeks. Growing bored while in the hospital with my arm in a cast from my knuckles to my upper arm, I asked my daughter to bring me a pencil and paper and began to draw left-handed, something I had never done before," Rae recalled,



satisfied at being able to continue something she had finally become passionate about.

"Although my wrist was initially too stiff to use, I began a pastel class last January. I loved it!" Rae enthused. "I wondered why I hadn't studied art sooner. My instructor was surprised to find I hadn't studied professionally for years. My confidence grew. She was always telling me to darken my colors, even though I have always been intimidated by color."

"I guess it is easier to teach someone who doesn't know than someone who thinks they know something already. But I was eager to learn. Now I seem to want to paint or draw everything! I am always seeing someone or something I want to capture," Rae said.

"One time when Charlie and I were in a book store, shopping separately, I saw a man sitting with a book; he had on a coat and a hat that made me think of a Greek fisherman. I wanted to go up to him and ask if I could paint him or take a photo to paint later. When Charlie met me later, he told me he'd seen a man and thought, *Rae will want to paint him*. But when we walked back to where he'd been sitting, he was already gone," Rae sighed. "I guess that's what happens when you've been married to someone for 52 years," she smiled.

"I want to paint this little boy at our church, a little curly towhead. Portraits are my forte. Landscapes don't do much for me, although I do like Italian villas. I love eyes — eyes are very important," Rae emphasized.

Rae's home, with trees on the walls and a bathroom door she painted to look like a curtained balcony overlooking a beach, showcases most of her art. "Charlie doesn't want me to sell anything, because he loves them all!" Rae and Charlie have lived in their present home for nine of the 32 years they have lived in Duncanville. The dining room with its sliding glass door has become her studio. Charlie bought her a shallow-drawer tool

chest for all her art supplies.

Her gallery boasts an impressive collection; one is a truly stunning portrait of a jazz performer, whose photo she took off a DVD. The vivid blue, pink and purple on the black background belies it is a pastel. "It was my third painting, the first with color to that extent." Another is a self-portrait from a Polaroid Charlie took 40 years ago.

Rae has worked on sanded paper and vellum, as well as painting over the utility



box in her backyard. "It had bugged me for years, so I painted it to blend in with the bricks. I have a commission to do someone else's, too!" Rae mentioned.

Another special commission came from a grandmother whose grandson in Tennessee had died as a result of a brain tumor. She asked Rae to paint a portrait from a photo. "I prayed over it, because I was sort of intimidated by the responsibility. I did it and was very pleased with how it turned out."

Her advice to others is: "Experiment. Pursue. Follow your interest. I enjoy encouraging others to try something new. I think people should do what they want to do so they won't have any regrets later. I am big on having fun. I love people — I guess because I am a happy person. If I do something, then I can encourage others, and they may encourage someone else. I learned that from my grandmother who raised me," Rae confided. "Find your passion and go for it!" **NOW**

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Chicken Rules

Luanne Alcaraz aims to get you to “eat more chicken” at her Cedar Hill Chick-fil-A franchise by offering great food and great service.

— *By Beverly Shay*

“Although I had my own leather import business, I was looking for a company with a strong foundation and good moral values,” began Luanne Alcaraz, Chick-fil-A franchise owner. Hearing Chick-fil-A was noted for strong foundations and ethical practices, she visited the Irving store, where she worked initially. Later she bought a franchise in the Galleria Mall in north Dallas, where she raised business 17 percent in two years. In 1998, she moved on to Cedar Hill.

Chick-fil-A, founded in Atlanta, Georgia, by Truett Cathy in 1946 has grown to some 1,700 franchises in 38 states. Luanne has 52 employees, including a core daytime shift of 16 or so full-timers. “Our biggest benefit is being

closed on Sundays because the business is built on biblical principles and family values,” Luanne explained. “We treat each other, as well as our customers, with dignity, honor and respect.

“The core values are pretty basic: customers come first; we work together as a team; we strive for continuous improvement; we emphasize personal excellence; and good stewardship: to whom much is given, much is expected,” she said. The company’s mission statement is simple: to be America’s best quick-service restaurant at winning and keeping customers. Its corporate purpose is to glorify God by being faithful stewards of all that is entrusted to them and to positively influence all who come in contact with Chick-fil-A.



From left:

Cedar Hill Chick-fil-A restaurant; Luanne Alcaraz, Cedar Hill franchise owner; employees Sylvia Rodriguez and Eliseo Alcaraz man the cow costumes.

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One key to its success is relationships with local schools. Luanne acknowledges “teachers as the core of the community.” She is also on the Chamber board, chairs the Education Council and was named Woman of the Year for Cedar Hill by the Chamber. Chick-fil-A is therefore naturally involved in the community fundraisers and volunteer work. “It’s basic — it is in giving that you receive,” stated Luanne. Any nonprofit group — schools, churches, mission groups — can have a spirit night where 20 percent of that evening’s sales are donated. Other fundraisers are New York cheesecake and calendar sales. Chick-fil-A has also donated food for the mayor’s quarterly prayer breakfasts.

Luanne is quite proud of her family. She met her husband, Eliseo, while in Paraguay with the Peace Corps. “He works with me,” she smiled. “Today he was the cow, but he also works with inventory control, purchasing, receiving and repairs. My daughter, Amanda Skinner, now Cedar Hill Chamber president, was my marketing manager for 13 years. She has two sons and one daughter. My other daughter, Amelia Trojacek, also worked in marketing for us. Now, she and her husband coach in South Lake, where they are also both teachers. They have two young sons.”

Chick-fil-A provides extensive employee training on everything from customer relations to food processing and company policies. Franchise owners and spouses (3,000 plus) attend a yearly, expense-paid, four-day work seminar packed with motivational speakers and training. Twice a year, a “recipe for training” seminar is also provided. “The home office staff arrives at the yearly seminar three days ahead of time to prepare and serve a meal for the entire hotel staff as a way of honoring them,” Luanne remarked.

Would you believe this high-volume restaurant goes through an average of more than 12,000 pounds of chicken a month? Its most popular menu items are the original sandwich and fresh-squeezed lemonade. “We juice about six 50-pound cases of lemons daily,” Luanne said, noting that about 65 percent of its business is drive through. **NOW**



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Her interests include menopause management, obstetrics and in-office surgery. She believes most major surgeries can and should be done with minimally invasive techniques, and actively utilizes the state-of-the-art DaVinci Robot Surgical System for most major gynecological surgeries.

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In The Kitchen With Jennifer Johnson

— By Faith Browning

Although Jennifer Johnson has prepared many home-style meals, she also enjoys trying gourmet recipes. "I love to cook! I am always looking for new recipes and trying to duplicate dishes from our favorite restaurants," she said. "I have enjoyed cooking all of my life, but more so in the last 13 years. I found that I really enjoyed the smile on my husband, Chris', face when I put together

a great meal."

Jennifer has many fond memories of cooking with her grandmother and mother, Anell Shipman. "My mother now cooks with my daughter, Lily, and I love seeing Mom teach her the same things she taught me," Jennifer expressed. "When Mom compliments my cooking or asks for one of my recipes, I am always so proud!" **NOW**



GRANNY'S CRANBERRY RELISH

5 lg. firm delicious apples
6 cups cranberries
4 lg. navel oranges (using peel and all)
2 lg. boxes black cherry Jell-O
1 small box black cherry Jell-O
6 cups granulated sugar
3 cups pecans, chopped

1. Core apples and remove seeds.
2. Grind up all fruit using a food grinder. Drain off juice and set aside.
3. Make Jell-O according to package directions, adding the fruit juices to water to create required amount of liquid.
4. Stir in sugar until dissolved. Allow to cool at room temperature.
5. Mix fruit, pecans and Jell-O together.
6. Put in lidded containers and refrigerate overnight.

BEER BISCUITS

3 cups Pioneer Buttermilk Biscuit Mix
1/2 cup sugar
10 oz. beer, room temperature (Shiner Bock is best.)
1/2 cup butter flavored Crisco (1/2 stick)

1. Preheat oven to 375 F.
2. Mix biscuit mix and sugar. Add beer to form wet, tacky dough.
3. Place Crisco in baking pan; set into oven to melt. Take pan out of oven when Crisco melts.
4. Dust hands and work surface (I use a paper plate) with Pioneer mix.
5. Spoon and pat out dough into 1/2-inch thick biscuits.
6. Dip each biscuit into melted Crisco; place close together in pan.
7. Tilt pan around to spread the remaining Crisco evenly among the biscuits.
8. Bake for 20 minutes or until golden brown.

BROCCOLI SALAD

1 cup mayonnaise
1/2 cup sugar
1/4 cup red wine vinegar
2 bundles broccoli florets
2 Tbsp. chives or green onions, thinly sliced
1 cup cashews
1 cup golden raisins
1 pkg. bacon, fried crispy and drained

1. Mix mayonnaise, sugar and vinegar.
2. Chill while prepping other ingredients.
3. Combine all ingredients and chill before serving.

ORANGE-PECAN FRENCH TOAST

4 eggs
2/3 cup orange juice
1/3 cup milk
1/4 cup sugar
1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg
1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
1 tsp. orange zest
1/4 cup orange liqueur (I use Grand Marnier.)
1 8-oz. loaf French bread, sliced
1/3 cup butter, melted
1/2 cup pecan pieces

1. Whisk together: eggs, orange juice, milk, sugar, nutmeg, vanilla, orange zest and orange liqueur.
2. Place single layer of bread in a snug, sealable container. Pour above "custard" mixture over bread.
3. Cover and refrigerate overnight, turning once.
4. Preheat oven to 400 F. Pour melted butter in a jellyroll pan; spread evenly.
5. Arrange soaked bread slices in a single layer on pan. Bake for 10 minutes.
6. Flip bread slices over. Sprinkle pecans over bread.
7. Bake another 10-15 minutes or until bread

is golden brown.

8. Serve with maple syrup, fresh fruit and link sausages.

MOMMA'S FUDGE MUFFINS

1 stick butter or margarine
1 square unsweetened baking chocolate
3/4 cup flour
2 eggs
1 cup sugar
1 tsp. vanilla extract

1. Preheat oven to 350 F.
2. Melt butter and chocolate; set aside to cool.
3. Mix flour, eggs and sugar; blend in melted chocolate thoroughly.
4. Add vanilla and stir.
5. Place 12 liners into muffin tin. Fill each cup half full of batter. Bake 25-35 minutes.

JEN'S TACOS

1 lb. ground chuck
1-2 oz. Adkins Taco Seasoning
1/3 cup water
Flour and/or corn tortillas
Oil for frying tortillas
1 cup freshly grated Muenster or Monterey Jack cheese
1/2 cup sour cream
1 to 2 tomatoes, diced

1. Brown the meat; do not drain.
2. Add approximately 1-2 oz. of Atkins Taco Seasoning.
3. Add water. Bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer for 15 minutes.
4. While meat is cooking, fry the flour and corn tortillas. Drain on paper towels.
5. Serve tacos with cheese, sour cream and tomatoes.

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Control *It*. Before *It* Controls You

— By Debi Choate

You've just *got* to have *it*. You can't *live* without *it*. *Everyone* has *it*. Once you got *it*, the question is, do you still use *it*, wear *it* or even like *it*? If you are like most of us, you probably don't even remember where *it* is anymore. Plus, you wish you had the money you spent on *it* so you could spend *it* now on the latest *it*.

Advertisers entice us to buy products we don't need. They spend billions of dollars to convince us that we can't live without their products. And we fall for the hype. A recent survey by Teen Research, Inc. found that teens alone spent more than \$169 billion in one year on "stuff."

Before you waste your money on the next "must-have," here are some things to think about:

1. Ask Yourself Why

Get down to the emotion of why you want *it*. Sometimes, we're just bored or think *it* will make us feel better. Buying *it* isn't the solution. It didn't help the last time; *it* probably won't help this time.

2. Set Smart Goals

You hear this all the time, but really, stop and think about what you want — what's important to you. Is buying *it* going to get you to your goal?

3. Never Pay Full Price for Anything

If you promise yourself to always buy on sale, you're less likely to overspend on the latest *it*.

4. Be Thankful

The key is to be satisfied with what you have. This way the urge to buy does not take control of you. The more you can be thankful for what you already have and focus on the non-material things that make you happy (like friends, activities, family, faith), the more control you have over your own life. **NOW**

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The Wonders of Whiplash — Preventing Permanent Injury

— By Dr. Lesa G. Ansell, D.C., R.N.

Whiplash, also known as a “sprain-strain” injury to the neck, is caused by injury to the soft tissues of the neck that occurs from a sudden jerking or “whipping” of the head. This type of motion strains the muscles and sprains the ligaments of the neck beyond their normal range of motion. Whiplash often occurs when a vehicle stops suddenly in a car crash or is struck from behind. Either of these two actions causes things in the vehicle to be thrown forward — including passengers.

Although a seat belt will keep a person’s body from being thrown forward, the head may snap forward, then backward, causing a whiplash injury in the neck. In addition to car accidents, whiplash can be caused by roller coasters and other amusement park rides, sports injuries or being punched or shaken. (Whiplash is one of the hallmarks of shaken baby syndrome).

Most people “shake it off” as no big deal. The muscles hurt for a few days or weeks, but when the pain goes away, they think they are “healed.” Unfortunately, the soft tissue damage that was done can cause a more permanent bony injury to begin, known as osteoarthritis. This occurs when the bones have been in a malpositioned state for too long. The overstretching of the ligaments and tendons allows for the bones to remain out of place unless they are corrected through spinal manipulation. Medications will help with the symptoms of pain and headache, but cannot fix the soft tissues.

Some of the more common symptoms are pain and stiffness in the neck, head, chest, shoulders or arms. You may also experience blurred vision or dizziness, difficulty swallowing, nausea, ringing in the ears, vertigo, irritability, fatigue, pain between the shoulder blades or numbness

and tingling pain in the jaw or face. In worse cases, the pain may even extend to legs, feet or hands. This is because an injury to the upper spinal nerves can contribute to pain throughout the body.

It is important to seek treatment early, even if you do not believe you are hurt. Once the ligaments have been stretched 30 percent beyond their normal capacity, they will not return to their normal position and, therefore, will not provide the proper support for the structures in the neck. The best rule of thumb for home treatment is R-I-C-E, which stands for Rest, Ice, Compress and Elevate.

Specific techniques on how to do this vary by region. You should consult your chiropractor, nurse practitioner or medical doctor for specific treatments in this area.

Another consideration is prevention. Headrests should be elevated to where the head lands on the middle of the headrest. Also, keep a safe distance between you and other vehicles. As they say, prevention is the best medicine!**NOW**

Dr. Lesa G. Ansell, D.C., R.N. is the CEO of Pro-adjuster Chiropractic Clinic and a supervisory nurse specialist for Texas 4 DMAT.



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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.



—Happening **NOW**

Mondays

Pool tournaments: 6:30 and 8:30 p.m. at the Ranch Steakhouse, 1435 N. Hwy. 67, Suite 200, Cedar Hill. \$20 buy in, 3-8 people. (972) 291-4530.

New Ballroom Dance: 7:00 p.m.-8:30 p.m. at Cedar Hill Rec. Center, 310 E. Parkerville Rd. Cost: \$80/couple for four sessions/month. Call (972) 293-5288.

First Mondays

Readers On The Hill Book Club: 7:00 p.m. at CH Library (972) 291-7323.

Second Mondays

Diabetes Support Group: 6:00 p.m. at Methodist Charlton. (214) 947-7262.

Tuesdays

Senior Access Tai Chi classes: 8:00-8:45 a.m. at Methodist Charlton Medical Center. Cost is \$6 to learn ancient art of combining exercise, stretching and balance. (214) 947-4628.

Wii games, chess, Cranium, dominoes and other games available for teenagers: 4:30-6:00 p.m. at the Zula B. Wylie Library meeting room in Cedar Hill. www.zulabwylie.lib.org

Sound Options Pregnancy Center parenting class: 6:00-8:00 p.m. at 658 Big Stone Gap, Duncanville. Especially good for pregnant or new parents. RSVP (972) 230-8101.

Tuesdays and Thursdays

Essence Dance: Tuesdays: 5:30-8:30 p.m. and Thursdays: 5:00-6:15 p.m. at CH Rec. Center. Beginner/intermediate/advanced for teenagers/adults. Private coaching available. Cost: \$65/month. (972) 293-5288.

Second Tuesdays

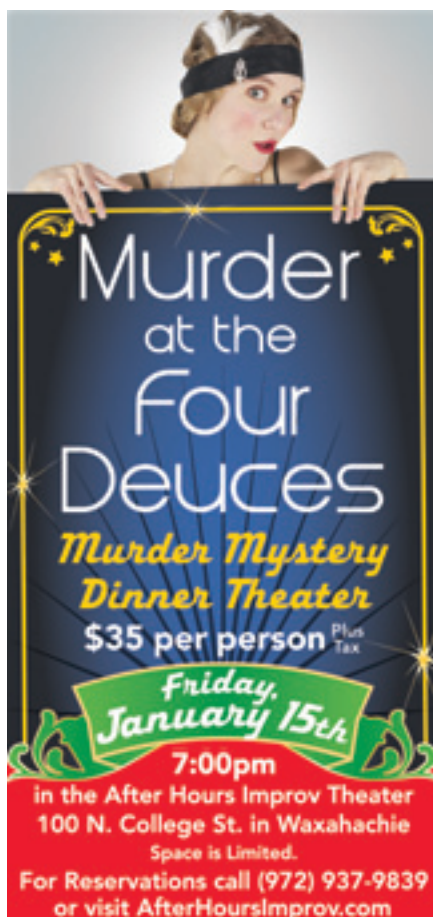
The Dallas Area Writers Group: 7:00 p.m. at CH Library. Visit dallaswriters.org.

Second and Fourth Tuesdays

Cedar Hill Lions: Noon-1:00 p.m. at Good Shepherd Church, 915 Old Straus Road; (972) 291-0651.

Wednesdays

Rotary Club of Cedar Hill: 7:00-8:00



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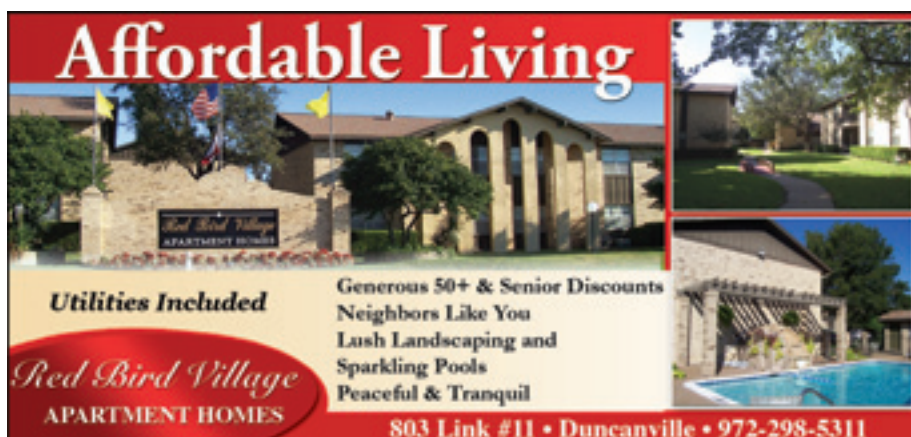
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Lookout Below!

— 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. **NOW**



Happening **NOW**

a.m. at CH Recreation Center, 310 East Parkerville Road.

First and Third Wednesdays

Duncanville Business Interchange: 7:30 a.m. at the Chamber.

Second Wednesdays

Cedar Hill/Duncanville Early Childhood PTA: 10:00 a.m. at Cedar Hill Hope Lutheran Church, 917 N. Straus Road.

Wednesdays and Fridays

Preschool story time at CH Library: 10:30-11:45 a.m. (972) 291-7323.

Thursdays

Sound Options Pregnancy Center parenting class: 4:00-6:00 p.m., 658 Big Stone Gap, Duncanville. Especially good for pregnant or new parents. RSVP (972) 230-8101.

Fridays

Walking program: 9:00-10:00 a.m. at Methodist Charlton Medical Center, conference room 6. (214) 947-4628.

Karaoke: Sign up: 7:30 p.m. at the Ranch Steakhouse, 1435 N. Hwy. 67, Suite 200, Cedar Hill. (972) 291-4530.

First and Second Fridays

Line dancing in the Methodist Charlton Medical Center auditorium: 11:00 a.m.-noon. Reservation required: (214) 947-4628.

Saturdays

Star Force One at CH Rec. Center: tap, ballet, jazz, hip-hop, lyrical, song & dance and competition dance teams. Beginner/advanced classes: 8:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. for ages 2-adult. Ballet and tap for special needs children. Register at Rec. Center.

Second Saturdays

Baby Boutique Resale: 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. at Sound Options Pregnancy Services, 658 Big Stone Gap, Duncanville. Formula and lots of gently-used baby clothes/items (972) 230-8101.

Third Saturdays

Cedar Hill Star Party: sunset-11:00 p.m. at J. W. Williams Park, 1605 High Pointe Ln. (beside West Intermediate School). Bring

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January 2 and 9

Recycle Christmas trees: 7:00 a.m.-noon in containers at Cedar Hill High School parking lot (until bin is full). No decorations, bases or plastic bags.

January 4 – February 3

Registration for Daddy/Daughter Valentine Dance to be held on February 6: 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. for ages 4-8; 2:00-4:00 p.m. for ages 9-12 at Cedar Hill Recreation Center, 310 E. Parkerville Rd. Cost: \$30/couple or \$15/person; includes Daddy/Daughter photos, refreshments, gift bag for each girl and live DJ. Register online at cchrec.com or at the Rec. Center by February 3. (972) 293-5288.

January 6

The Duncanville Women's Club: 11:00 a.m. at The Golf Club of Dallas. Soup/salad buffet: \$14.00 per person. Speaker: the one and only Rosemary Rumbley; her topic will be "Etta and Ebby" two famous Dallas heroines. Ms. Rumbley is a noted humorist, actress, historian, journalist, author and doctor of communications. For reservations or information contact Diana Hersey at (972) 298-8219 or Wilda Chancey at (972) 572-0608.

January 16

New Year, New You women's event: 10:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at Methodist Charlton Medical Center. Speaker: Anna McCoy and topics: healthy weight, wellness for women, exercise you can live with, cosmetics for looking and feeling your best, uterine fibroids. Also available: free chair massage, BMI screening, refreshments and giveaways. No cost; register online at www.methodisthealthsystems.org.

January 28

DeSoto Art League monthly meeting: 7:00 p.m. at the DeSoto Presbyterian Church, 212 W. Pleasant Run Road. Demonstration on Dichroic glass by artist, Nan Phillips. Contact Sandy Reese at (972) 217-1546 or www.DeSotoArtLeague.org.

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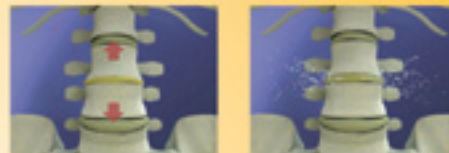
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- ☒ Actually enjoy watching football with husband
- ☒ Get out of debt

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Dr. Catherine Thomas, OB/GYN; Dr. Donald Ross, OB/GYN (behind); Sharon Roberts, WNP; & Dana Vincent, WNP

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