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M A G A Z I N E

NOVEMBER 2011

NOW

CARING ON WHEELS

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Also Inside

Capturing the Candid Life

Neighbor to Neighbor

In the Kitchen

With Cynthia Seskes

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On The Cover



Kitty Balkum decorates
her yard beautifully
for fall.

Photo by Shana Woods

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Editor's Note

Dear Friends,

The Blue Star Flag — this unofficial flag symbolizes a family member in the military. It is so simple with its white background, red border and a blue star for each loved one active in the military. I bring this up because the Thanksgiving holiday tends to overshadow Veteran's Day on November 11.

As we are reminded every day this month to be thankful, let us please remember those who served and those who still serve to protect this nation. We are all indebted to them. This is my prayer for Thanksgiving: May our veterans be blessed, and for those who actively serve, may God bring them home safe and whole.

I am thankful and honored to be a part of this community, enriched by your friendships and grateful to call it home.

I wish all of you a wonderful Thanksgiving!

Betty

Betty Tryon
MidlothianNOW Editor
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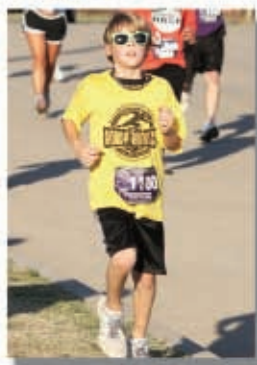
Panther Spirit at the Midlothian Fall Festival



Keeping Kids Rowdy is a Healthy Idea

At the Midlothian Chamber of Commerce's Fall Festival, 198 of the 506 5K runners were MISD Rowdy Runners.

The Rowdy Runners idea started at J.R. Irvin Elementary. Coach Timm, Irvin Elementary physical education teacher, and Principal Jean Embry received a Midlothian Education Foundation grant that funded a walking/running track located around the back of Irvin Elementary. Within a short time period, Coach Timm started the popular after-school running club called the Irvin Rowdy Runners.



The running program eventually grew to include all elementary schools — hence the name MISD Rowdy Runners.

A Community Reading Event

November 8 from 6:00 p.m. -7:30 p.m.

MISD Multi-purpose Stadium

Each year over 900 students and parents attend this fun event. The Midlothian community is invited to bring books and blankets to read on the field at the MISD Multi-Purpose Stadium. Come see the middle school bands, a half-price Scholastic book fair, face painting and a visit from *The Books of UMBER* author, P.W. Catanese, who will sign copies of his Bluebonnet Award nominated title, *Happenstance Found*.

Blogging and Pictures

Throughout the Midlothian community, many will find MISD superintendent, Dr. Stewart, with a camera around his neck and a notepad in hand. In addition to his regular superintendent responsibilities, he is extremely passionate about telling stories through a lens and writing about his perspective on school-related topics and events. Access Dr. Stewart's blog and pictures online at www.midlothian-isd.net.

Hike for our Special Olympians – 5K Walk/Run December 12 6:00 p.m.

The sixteenth annual Hike for our Special Olympians benefits the Midlothian Special Olympics. The event will be held on Monday, December 12, at 6:00 p.m. starting at the Midlothian High School cafeteria entrance. Registration forms can be picked up in any school office. Early registration is \$20, due by December 2. After December 2 and the night of the walk, registration will be \$25. All participants will receive a T-shirt.

The MHS Peers and Leadership (PAL) classes sponsor the walk/run, and all proceeds go to Midlothian Special Olympics. Sponsorship is solicited for refreshments and T-shirt expenses, so that all moneys from registration can go directly to Midlothian Special Olympics.

"PAL is a service organization. We have been honored to be a part of this exciting event for the last sixteen years," said Laura Truett, PAL teacher. For more information, contact Laura Truett at (972) 775-8226 x1171 or e-mail laura_truett@midlothian-isd.net.

A.H. Meadows Public and High School Library now offers: OVERDRIVE MEDIA - a digital download service.

(Click library link located on the MHS website www.midlothian-isd.net/mhs)

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Wishing you a Happy Thanksgiving.

MISD closed for Thanksgiving Holiday from November 21-25, 2011

Hernandez Named National Hispanic Scholar

Midlothian High School senior, Andrew Hernandez, has been named a 2011-12 scholar in the College Board National Hispanic Recognition Program. Hernandez entered the College Board-sponsored program by taking the Preliminary



MHS counselor, Melissa Tomlinson, Andrew Hernandez; and Principal Dr. Al Hemmle

SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test as a high school junior identifying himself as Hispanic.

To be identified as NHRP Scholars, students must be at least one-quarter Hispanic, have achieved a minimum PSAT/NMSQT/PAA score for their region and have a grade point average of 3.5 or higher.

District Earns A Gold Award For Financial Transparency

MISD has earned the Gold Leadership Circle Award from the Texas Comptroller's Office for financial transparency as a district for the second year in a row. The Comptroller's office is awarding local governments that provide clear and consistent information in a user-friendly format, which allows taxpayers easy access to financial information all located on its Web site.

The District makes budgetary information, check registers, the annual financial report and supporting financial data available on the www.midlothian-isd.net/departments/finance.html MISD finance Web page. Superintendent, Dr. Stewart said, "Midlothian ISD is honored to accept the Texas Comptroller Leadership Circle's Gold designation - the highest designation for financial transparency online. The fact that participation in this program is voluntary makes this designation even more meaningful. MISD is committed to good stewardship of its resources, and financial transparency is an important component of this commitment." For more information about the recognition, please visit www.texas transparency.org

Are you on MISD and Campus Facebook and Twitter Pages?

These popular social media services provide real-time updates on district and campus news, sport scores, school closures or delays and more. We want you to "Like" us on Facebook and "Follow" us on Twitter.

Your Bond Dollars At Work!

On May 14, 2011, Midlothian ISD voters approved the district's \$97.3 million bond package to build high school #2 (phase 1), elementary #7 and Frank Seale Middle School addition. For updates on the bond projects, visit www.midlothianisd.net/bond

VLK Architects will design all three of the bond projects. Charter Builders will build High School #2 (phase 1) and the addition to Frank Seale Middle School. (No CM has been selected at this time for Elementary #7.)

Bond Oversight Committee: The 21 community member committee's objectives are to: 1) Monitor the use of school district funds in the 2011 bond building objectives. 2) Receive information on all aspects of the 2011 bond buildings.

E-mail bond questions or comments to: info@midlothian-isd.net or call (972) 775-8296.

Show your love for MISD

The Midlothian ISD Education Foundation is giving away free "I Heart MISD" car window clings at the MISD Administration Building. Stop by and pick yours up today, but don't stop there. By contributing \$50, you will receive an "I Heart MISD" yard sign showing your support of MISD students and staff. Contributions can be made online at www.misdef.org. Signs will be available within a week of ordering for pick up at the MISD Administration Building, 100 Walter Stephenson Road.



Calendar of Events

November (Events are free and open to the public)

Nov. 7: MISD 2-hr. Early Release

Nov. 11-12: MHS Theater Production *Mystery*, 7:00 pm, MHS Auditorium

Nov. 21: No School/Staff Development

Nov. 21-25: *Thanksgiving Break*

December (Events are free and open to the public)

Dec. 2: All City Choir Performance, 7:00pm, MHS Auditorium

Dec. 8: MHS Holiday Choir Concert, 7pm, MHS Auditorium

Dec. 13: MHS Band Holiday Concert, 6:30pm, MHS Auditorium

Dec. 16-17: MHS Theater Arts Performance, 7:00pm, MHS Auditorium

Dec. 20: MISD 2-hr Early Release

*** Winter Break December 21 - January 4**

For more district events visit www.midlothian-isd.net/calendar.

Caring on

— By Betty Tryon

The day held every promise of becoming blistering hot. Sitting in his open garage with a box fan catching the last cool breezes of the morning, Clarence waited patiently for his daily meal. It was not easy for him to get around in his wheelchair, but he managed. He did not have long to wait because Sheila Whatley, a volunteer for Meals on Wheels, soon arrived with a container of food for his lunch. Twice more during her weekly route, Sheila stopped to deliver welcomed meals for those who would have difficulty preparing food for themselves. Knocking on a door that is decorated with a festive Christmas wreath year-round, Sheila was greeted by Shirley, another recipient, who not only received lunch but breakfast also. The last delivery on Sheila's route was always a treat. It gave her the opportunity to reconnect with Robbie who used to babysit her kids many years ago. Stepping into a room made brighter and more cheerful by the decorated pillows on the sofa and butterfly plates on the wall, Sheila was greeted with a big smile as Robbie received her lunch for the day.



n wheels

“I just like to go out and deliver meals and see people!”




The recipients of the meals were happy and thankful to see Sheila, and she was equally grateful for the opportunity to deliver to them, calling her time the highlight of her week. “Getting started is very simple,” she stated. “I introduce myself to them. The routes are easy because they give you directions on how to get to the person’s house. I just like to go out and deliver meals and see people!” Sheila began volunteering with Meals on Wheels several years ago. She became interested after her husband, Boyce, participated in a program called Mayors on Wheels.

Boyce represented Midlothian as mayors nationwide made the meal deliveries for one day. This was to bring more awareness to the plight of senior citizens’ hunger and encourage more people to volunteer for service. “Meals on Wheels has a full-time nutritionist who plans out the meals based on the calorie needs of each person. Some of them are diabetic meals, too,” Boyce stated. “It’s really pretty sophisticated. They are going to open a kitchen here in Midlothian that will make all the meals for Ellis and Johnson County. They work with the North Texas Food Bank to acquire goods and surplus vegetables. They will have a lot more quality control when it is done internally rather than using a vendor. In the end, it will be a much higher-quality product, and certainly the logistics of having it delivered right out of Midlothian will make it better for the clients.”



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The Meals on Wheels organization delivers about 1 million meals a day to seniors across the country who are unable to prepare their own meals due to mobility problems or illness. Even



though the organization recently started providing meals for the senior's pets, their purpose is to provide senior citizens with a nutritious meal once a day. "Another nice thing about Meals on Wheels is sometimes it extends an individual's ability to stay independent," Boyce said. "One of the things I've recognized being a part of Meals on Wheels is how fragile some people's situations are."

Seeing clients weekly gives Sheila an opportunity to observe them and possibly detect if anything is wrong. "I went into someone's home and they seemed disoriented," she explained. "That was very concerning to me, so I called Meals on Wheels to let them know. They have a list of emergency contacts for each person. If they [seniors] have any concerns or any issues come up, I can bring it to someone's attention. I've heard of stories where a volunteer has actually



been able to intervene when someone was ill and get help.”

Many times, Sheila feels blessed by the people she sees. “A frail little lady named Odette had fallen while rushing to the phone and broke her hip. Whenever I delivered her meal on Tuesdays, she was having Bible study and the group would always offer up a prayer for me, if I had any prayer concerns. Another woman I delivered to was the type of person you want to give a hug to every time you see her. She was always sitting there in her chair reaching up to me to give a big hug. She was really sweet,” Sheila said.

Speaking about several of the seniors, Sheila remarked, “Sometimes when I’m feeling blah, they pick me up!” Smiling,



she remembered a gentleman she delivered to for two years. “He called me baby doll! Whenever I saw him, he would say, ‘Hello, baby doll!’ I also delivered to a lady named Annabelle from my church. She was very instrumental in me coming closer to God. I used to go to Bible study with her. She always remembered me as being the baby Christian.”

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Sheila's concern for the seniors goes beyond her weekly visits, and she looks for ways to show them she cares. Sometimes on special days, Sheila will make something special for them. On Valentine's Day, they may receive a bag with candy and hearts. "At Christmastime, I will deliver an ornament along with their meal for something different," she added. "When I've gone on vacation, I'll send them a postcard as if to say, 'Even though I'm not there, I am still thinking about you.' One time, I was delivering to several people who had dogs, so I would take dog treats with me. The recipients got a kick out of it, too, because they knew their dogs were looking for me. The dogs knew I was coming, and I had those treats!" She laughed.

Sheila hopes to encourage others to give of their time to Meals on Wheels. "Hopefully, others will get an opportunity to come out and volunteer. It doesn't take a lot of time. I can do it on my lunch hour and still have lunch. Most of the time I am greeted at the door, or I just barely step into the house. If I can, I spend a few minutes with them. I never really have to set the meal up. There is no greater reward than going to see somebody who is homebound, and you just offer them a smile, a hello and a comforting hand to hold. I've really enjoyed spending what little time I get with them. They are a part of the community who need to be looked after, even if it is to say, 'Are you taking care of yourself? Are you staying hydrated?' It's a great thing and a great gift to give someone else." **NOW**

For more information on Meals on Wheels, contact (972) 351-9943 or e-mail info@monjec.org.

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Serving Is Lion Size

— By Betty Tryon



Blindfolded, the camp counselors were in a world of darkness as they tried to make their way from one side of the campus to the other to eat lunch. They wanted to live for a few minutes in the world that some of the kids at the Lion's Club camp consider just another day. The counselors had to get their food without seeing, manage to get to a place to sit down and eat in total darkness. Helpers guided their efforts but the experience was, nonetheless, profound. One of the blindfolded counselors was DeAnna Zell. Recounting her experiment, she stated, "They gave us lasagna. After we ate, we had to get up and put our tray away. When we finally got to take off the

blindfolds, we had made such a mess all over ourselves and our table! It was such an eye opener. That was just an hour's worth of time to see what it felt like to not be able to see. It was worth it for us to be able to have the perspective of a person who is blind and experience how important it was for us to tell them about a step, a hole in the ground or uneven surface. Every little step with them, you had to think about what it is they don't know, and you've got to tell them. That was memorable."



The Lion's Club, known for its altruistic work in fighting blindness, also has a camp for children with disabilities. DeAnna's experience with the Lions Club began in her senior year of undergraduate studies at Tarleton State University where

*"I trust
my gut on
things that
feel right."*



she was studying to be a special education teacher. She worked at a part-time job as a program assistant in a residential facility for adults with development and mental disabilities. It felt like a right fit for her. "I trust my gut on things that feel right," she explained. "I'm a Christian and I pray about things and, when I feel like God is showing me a direction to go, I listen. When I first started college, I just wanted to be a teacher. But when I took that job at the residential facility, I fell in love with the adults with disabilities." DeAnna's experience with the adults made her want

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to work at a camp during the summer, so she found a job as a camp counselor for the Lions Club.

DeAnna loved working with the children at the camp and recalled that many of the children were afraid when they first arrived. However, after arrival their attitude changed quickly. "Their faces lit up like sunshine, and they were so happy," she recalled. "It was so much



fun at the camp. It was awesome. We tried to make their entire week amazing from beginning to end. We camped out, cooked fajitas and s'mores and did the camp songs to give them a real camp experience. We adapted everything to their needs. If we had a kid who couldn't use their arms, then we helped them to do the activity."

DeAnna acknowledged the work is not easy. There is a lot of physical energy involved in caring for children with disabilities. "You work hard," she said. "You have to push wheelchairs up hills, and some of the kids are paralyzed. You have to hold them up in the water in the



pool. They have many communication needs. We have kids who are deaf and blind, and they get to be themselves [at the camp]. A kid who has spina bifida gets to go there and be with a lot of other kids who have spina bifida. They can go to the camp until they are 16 years old. There is a sense of belonging, understanding and appreciation of differences between each other. It's just beautiful."

Hard work does not occupy all of their time, however. Some of it is spent in hilarious laughter. DeAnna remembers a special time with a little 6-year-old in a pink motorized wheelchair. "She was trying to turn around between bunks in her wheelchair and, as she turned around, she got stuck. So, she was going forward and backward between us. We just cracked up until we were crying. She was laughing so hard at herself. I just remember her spirit was so fun and bubbly."

DeAnna's experience at the camp cemented her desire to work with those with special needs. She graduated from Tarleton with a degree in interdisciplinary studies and a certification to be a general elementary teacher or an all-level special education teacher. "I started off teaching special education in Lancaster. I also worked as general ed teacher. Any teacher can tell you a general ed teacher has all kinds of kids from different backgrounds. Kids with disabilities, kids with dyslexia — they are all in the classroom, so I was able to use my special ed background in my general ed setting."

One fourth-grader with anger



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Midlothian, Texas — July 7, 2010 — Community Health Accreditation Program, Inc., (CHAP) announced today that Approved Home Health Care has been awarded CHAP accreditation under the CHAP Core & Home Health Standards of Excellence. This is the beginning of the fourth year CHAP accreditation has been awarded to Approved Home Health Care.

Approved Home Health Care provides a variety of nursing and therapy services to patients and their families in Ellis, Johnson, Tarrant and Dallas counties, and surrounding areas. They are locally owned and operated by hometown folks with over 50 years combined home health experience.





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problems and emotional difficulties is very memorable for DeAnna. Before leaving elementary school, she wanted him to have better coping skills. After trying everything she could think of to help him, DeAnna had the school psychologist come in to see him. As the psychologist intern was talking, DeAnna became interested in her job. "It fit a lot of what I wanted to do. I asked her how she got the job," she laughed. "She told me about Texas A&M University-Commerce's school psychology program. I had chills up and down my body while she was talking about it, and it was so clear to me that God was telling me to do this." It took DeAnna five years, but she earned her degree as a specialist in school psychology. "In Texas, we are called licensed specialist in school psychology



(LSSP). I love it! I love it! I'll be working in Duncanville this year." DeAnna credits her husband, David, for his support in helping her as she worked through school, particularly with the extra help with their two children, Cody 9 and Camryn 8.

"When I see Lions Club members out in the community working, I try to go up and tell them, 'Thank you.' I tell them that I worked at Texas Lions Club as a camp counselor in the summer of 1999 and saw what they did for those kids. I introduce myself and tell them what they do for the kids is appreciated, and it does make a difference. When my two kids are 18, I am going to encourage them to be counselors at the camp because it was life changing. It's amazing." **NOW**

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The Finest of Palettes

— By Zachary R. Urquhart

In July 2010, Larry and Kitty Balkum moved into a beautiful, 10-year-old house in the Coldwater Creek neighborhood of Midlothian. Moving from Arlington, the couple was looking for a new house with more room, inside and out. During their search, they fell in love with their roughly one-acre corner lot the moment they saw it. Kitty has always loved decorating for each season and holiday, especially in the six years that she has been retired. "It's just fun for me," she admitted. "I've always done it. Now I just have more room to cover."



Though Kitty describes her decorations with frivolity and humility, she delicately creates a scene for each season that would put even the most casual passerby in the mood for whatever holiday or time of year it might be. Kitty decorates

for fun and for her family, and in the process, she has made her house a home.

If decorating is like painting, then Kitty starts with the finest of palettes. As a corner lot, the house features a well-kept lawn connecting two streets, giving

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KITTY BALKUM**





the appearance of being much larger than the acreage hints. That initial curb appeal grabbed Larry and Kitty's attention. "The landscape caught our eye," Larry said, "and we knew this was the place." Inside, there are formal sitting and dining areas that frame a spacious living room. Their master bedroom splits to one side of the house and offers access to a backyard featuring a well-kept koi pond. Many mornings, Kitty starts her day on a bench set up next to the pond, with a view of the rest of their backyard oasis. Though the expansive lawn and terraced backyard



visible from the road suggest otherwise, Kitty has just less than one acre, with a 3,000-square-foot home to adorn. Although the finished product will turn up magnificently, she remains nonchalant in describing her decorating process.

For the fall season, including Halloween and Thanksgiving, Kitty keeps it simple. She removes a few of the otherwise year-round decor items and fills her house and property with scarecrows, pumpkins and hay. Though Kitty downplays her decorating prowess, she uses effortless style to fashion a wonderful scene. Though Kitty may not have elaborate decorations, it is the time and joy involved in her bedecking that



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make her home a sight to see.

For the weeks leading up to Halloween, Kitty does include a few spooky items, although she misses having the trick-or-treaters that once frequented their house in Arlington. Larry and Kitty get a few visitors looking for treats, but not many. It is a shame, too, as the house is not the only thing dressed up for the occasion. "A few of my girlfriends and I get dressed up every year for Halloween. We have witch outfits, so we go eat lunch in Fort Worth. I just leave it on when I get home. It's the only time I can get

away with being weird." Once November hits, Kitty does away with the ghosts and witches and adds more pumpkins and scarecrows to complete her fall motif.

The highlight of the decorating year for Kitty is Christmas. She has more embellishments for Christmas than any time else and says it takes her several days to complete the winter beautification of her home. "Really, I just start one day around Thanksgiving, and I keep putting out lights for a while. There is something new almost every day." Kitty decorates for every season and holiday,



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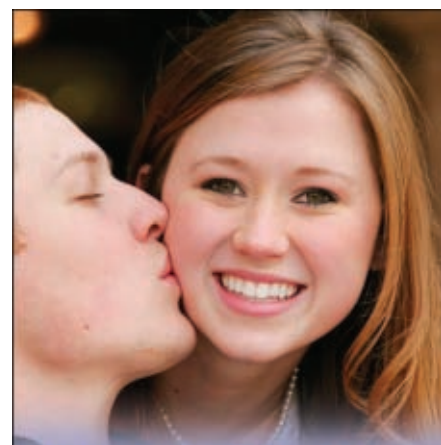
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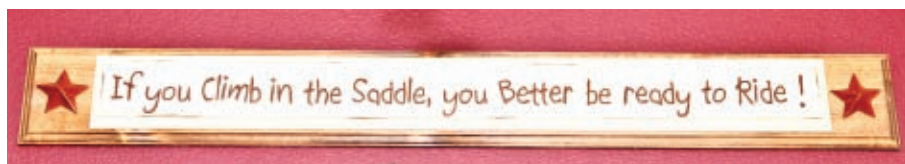
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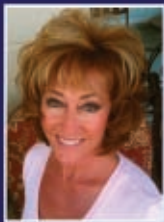
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but Christmas is her pièce de résistance. Along with innumerable lights, Kitty incorporates trees, garland and a herd of deer in her Christmas decorating.

One of her Christmas pieces is a large sign that reads, "Welcome Ya'll."

The backbone of all of her decorations may best be summed up with that very idea of welcoming. Larry and Kitty love having people over to their house. Whether swimming, relaxing or listening



to the full-sized jukebox in the screened-in patio, Kitty is a hostess at heart. She goes through the trouble of decorating, in part, to occupy her time with tasks other than taking care of their three dogs. More than a pastime, though, decorating is Kitty's way of preparing her house for all of those guests. And her favorite guests are her kids.

Larry and Kitty have three children and three grandchildren, and Kitty attributes much of her seasonal decorating to her desire to have something fun for the little ones. "I do it for the kids, and especially the grandkids," she confessed. "I want them to like what I do over here." The

whole family is expected to come over for every holiday and, thus, for every decorative season. If anyone protests, Kitty explained, "I might have to throw a little fit, but everyone ends up coming together." Larry and Kitty have made each holiday something special by creating traditions to complement Kitty's decorations.

Because the kids, like most adult children, have to share holiday time, Larry and Kitty have put a few twists to make visits to their house unique. "None of us really wanted one more turkey and dressing dinner, so a few years ago we had steak and lobster. Now, even the grandkids want us to promise we are



continuing that 'tradition' before they come." To accommodate everyone's busy holiday schedule, Larry and Kitty celebrate Christmas the Saturday before the actual holiday. The whole family fits nicely in the plentiful home. Even at mealtime, Larry and Kitty's open kitchen offers

ample space for the kids and grandkids to enjoy company, as much as they might enjoy any meal they will be sharing during the visit.

One year ago, Kitty never imagined that her simple fall decorations would garner any special attention. She has always loved spending her time creating the most welcoming environment possible with her home decor. When she and Larry moved into their new home, Kitty was merely continuing the tradition of garnishing the house for every season. Whether she is preparing for her family, hosting a community soiree or greeting a stranger for the first time, Kitty uses her simple style to make her house a home. **NOW**

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Run for your Life



— By Donna Kubecka



If you are like most Americans, you haven't been jogging or walking in a while. Many people strive to get fit and stay healthy throughout their life. Wouldn't it be nice to give your children a head start when it comes to fitness?

You may not exercise regularly, but you probably wish you had the time and energy to do so. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), fewer than two in 10 Americans get the recommended levels of exercise, and more than a quarter of U.S. adults do not devote any time to physical activity.

"I want kids to have a love for running and enjoy it. I talk a lot about health benefits of a lifelong walker," Ryan Timm said.

Ryan is in his second year of teaching physical education (P.E.) at the J.R. Irvin





Elementary School in Midlothian. "My goal as a physical education teacher is to give these children the knowledge of how to become lifelong advocates of healthy living." Ryan's passion for instilling healthy habits in the students is evident not only in his speech but in his actions as well.

Ryan played a large part in obtaining a much-needed walking track and organizing a running club, the Rowdy Runners, for the elementary students. "I found out that when the kids from Irvin went on to middle school, where they have to run a mile, they tended to be at the back of the pack. Last year, before they had the walking track, the kids would have to run in the grass. It was a real mess in the gym on wet days," Ryan admitted.

Irvin Elementary received a \$5,000 grant from the Midlothian Education Foundation, a nonprofit organization made up of citizens who strive to enhance education in the Midlothian Independent School District. This covered the majority of the cost to build the walking track and organize a running club. The parent/teacher volunteers paid for the rest.

It wasn't hard for Ryan to get the backing of the middle and high school track coaches on his application for the grant. "The running club helps to build a stronger athletic program from the ground up," Ryan stated. "It will help these kids become more successful



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in competitions, not just track, but in all sports.” He is excited about the improvement he has observed in the children’s fitness. “The children have already shown their aerobic capacity is getting stronger. They are able to walk faster and play games longer as their endurance has increased.”

According to the National Institute of Health, most children need at least one hour of physical activity every day. Exercise is so important for growing children because it builds muscular strength and bones, while helping in overall development. It also defends against diseases like type 2 diabetes and helps prevent obesity. Regular exercise can even help children feel less stressed, better about themselves and help them sleep better. Walking is an excellent source of exercise for people of all ages. “This new club is not just about the athletic team. The exercise will also help the children academically,” Ryan explained. Physical activity has been shown to help students perform better in school and in their studies.

Teachers and students at recess use the track daily. In their P.E. class, the students start walking, jogging gradually and increasing length and speed as they get used to it. There’s always a warm up, and each lap takes as long as the student wants it to by going at his or her own pace. Kindergarteners walk or run two laps around the walkway, while first- and second-graders do four laps. Third-, fourth- and fifth-graders run six laps, which is almost a mile. “The faster

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they get it done, the more free time they have. This is motivation for them to jog more laps and get more free time for the remainder of the class period,” Ryan said.

Irvin is the first school in the district to have an elementary running club, and Ryan’s desire is to see that the benefits are even more far-reaching than Irvin. “The goal is to become a district-wide running club. Hopefully by next year, it will be open

“I want kids to have a love for running and enjoy it.”

to one or two more elementary schools.”

The running club is now open to third-, fourth- and fifth-graders. Currently, there are about 40 children participating. The club meets every “Walking Wednesday” from 3:00-3:45 p.m. Parents, teachers and even little brothers and sisters can exercise with the running club. “Parents who walk with their children, when they are able to, set a wonderful example for the little runners who look to them as role models,” Ryan added.

Many parents have expressed how much the kids enjoy being part of this group. “Kids love it,” Ryan exclaimed. “They look forward to it. It also gives them motivation to do their homework,

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so they can go to the club.”

Each week, laps that the children walk are logged in. Each individual's goal is to do one more lap than they did the previous week or jog more than they walk. “It was a little chaotic at first, but after a few weeks the kids got into a routine of preparing for the run. Now we crank up the music, and the kids are ready to go!” Ryan has put the older fifth-graders in charge of making sure everyone has done the important step of stretching before the run.

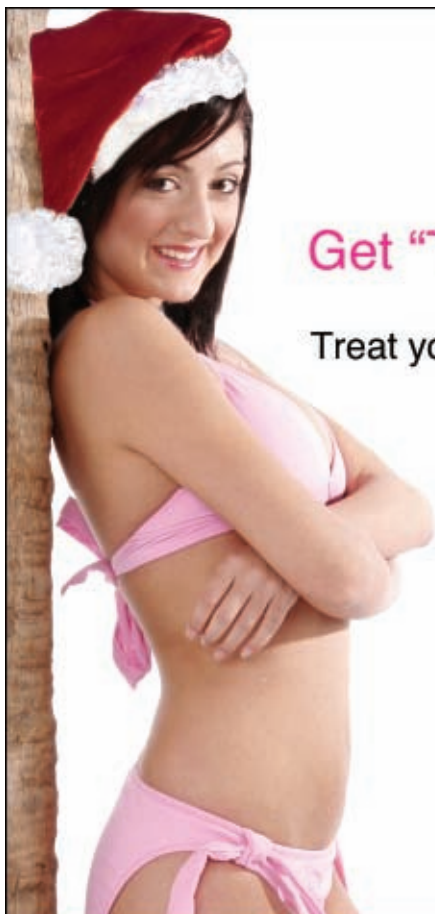
The club also participates in 5K runs, which is equal to 3.1 miles. To prepare, the children try to do 19 to 23 laps around the track. Even walking, one can complete the 19 laps in 45 minutes.

In the Downhill Dash 5K last fall, two fifth-grade girls beat Ryan, completing



the run in less than 30 minutes. On May 14, 10 children participated in another 5K, where a fifth-grade boy won second place and a fifth-grade girl won third. “These kids have been my inspiration to get running myself,” Ryan confessed, who has started setting some running goals for himself. The kids are encouraged to set goals and have a partner so they can encourage one another to reach their goals. The partners also help ensure that no one gets lost when the children participate in the run. They wear bright green, matching T-shirts so they can't be missed.

Good physical exercise habits and fitness must begin at early ages, because inactive children are likely to become inactive adults. The kids in Irvin Elementary are getting a leg up, though. “The result of using this walking track and having the running club has been amazing,” Ryan admitted. “These children are forming habits that are going to benefit them for the rest of their lives.” **NOW**



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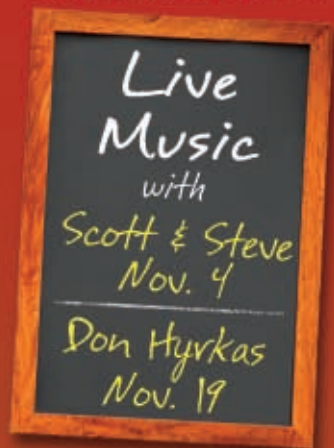


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Capturing the *Candid* *Life*

— By Sydni Thomas



For Valerie Dick, photography was a passion discovered in high school that got lost in the shuffle of the real world, work and beginning a family with her husband, Chris. After the births of their two sons, Valerie's photography passion was reignited. She left her job to become a stay-at-home mom, who photographed for pleasure when she had extra time. Now she is set on capturing the special moments in her sons' lives as they grow up. "I drive my husband crazy, because I can't just let the moment be sometimes," Valerie said. "I'm trying not to have to capture everything, but the temptation is always there."

Living a digital life makes it a lot harder to get around to printing out images. With instant access to the photographs, Valerie can pull them up on the computer screen anytime she wants. Since she takes a lot of photographs of their life events,

it would be next to impossible to print them all out. Only a select few are chosen. "Chris' mom made a beautiful scrapbook for each of the boys' first year," Valerie said. "I love seeing the pictures in there, because honestly, most of my photos of them are digital — trapped in the computer, with the exception of a few on the walls, in a drawer and on Christmas cards."

Valerie hangs the photos they do get printed on the wall. While Chris prefers blank walls without holes, Valerie likes to walk by and see her family looking back at her. Most of the photographs hanging on the walls of Chris and Valerie's home are of their family. Above the mantel is the latest family portrait taken by Valerie's father, Tom Padgett. On other walls, Valerie has hung photos of her sons



growing up — capturing moments of eating watermelon, playing in the snow and being with family. "I plan to one day have a collage of old family photos from generations past from both sides of our family," Valerie said. "I've been collecting photos, now I just have to figure it all out and get it done!"

Valerie's father used to be a photographer as well. Tom has taught Valerie a lot about photography over the years. Anytime she came across problems, he would help her work through them. He helped her with the technical side of photography and showed her how lighting affects a photograph. "He taught me to just get out there and start taking pictures," Valerie said. "I'll still call and get his advice on things. When it was time for us to take our family photo, I looked around at other photographers, but decided to use my father. He knows



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my style and just what I wanted it to be."

After leaving her marketing job, Valerie had more time to commit to photography. She was able to photograph more events like the pumpkin patch, Lord's Acre and vacation Bible school at her church, First United Methodist Church — Midlothian. Some of her favorite things to photograph are children and families interacting. Special moments for Valerie are when the people at these events don't notice her or forget that she is around taking photographs. These candid moments give Valerie a window into their lives, and she captures the once-in-a-lifetime shots for them. "The kids at these church events are so fun," Valerie said. "I get to capture them learning about Christ."

Giving back to the church is only one of the ways Valerie uses her photography to benefit her community. When the community came together to raise funds for the burn victims of the May 19, 2011, accident at the TXI plant in Midlothian, Valerie knew she wanted to help out in any way she could. She had the opportunity to photograph the Helping Our Hands Auto Show held in town to support the four men injured in the accident. "At that show, I got a chance to witness Christ in such a special way," Valerie said. "The sheer number of people who participated in order to help those men was awesome! I loved every moment of it."

As a photographer, Valerie never knows when inspiration or a perfect moment will happen. Inspiration usually strikes in the most simple and natural settings. This is where she feels the most creative. She was out

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taking candid photographs in Waxahachie when a cardinal flew onto some branches not too far away. Luckily, she had her camera. Once the shot was composed, Valerie snapped the shutter and an award-winning image was produced. Each year since 2007, when the Midlothian Photo Expo rolls around, Valerie chooses a few photos to enter. Last year, Valerie took the year off, but this year she decided



to enter her cardinal photograph. "I've gotten a few honorable mentions in the past," Valerie said. "I was surprised I won second place this year for my photograph of the cardinal."

While photography is her dream and preferred method of artistic expression, Valerie enjoys discovering new ways to be creative. Recently, she began teaching herself how to sew, making curtains for the living room. From time to time, she dabbles in painting, too. Her home shows her artistic way of thinking with the mixing and matching of old and new

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furniture. If it lets her use her creative juices, odds are Valerie will try it. She even tries her hand at gardening, because it lets her be creative and get dirty at the same time. "I think I like photography so much because it lets me get dirty," Valerie said. "I get my creativity from my mother. She was always making something. She used to paint ceramics, and she made some of my clothes. I wish I had more time to do those creative things, but for now, I have a lot going on."

Once the boys are older and are both in school, Valerie will be able to devote more time to her passion of photography. For now she keeps a healthy balance between her family and her photography interests, both with people and in nature. Her favorite subjects are her two sons, and she tries to capture the best moments of them growing up. Valerie always keeps her camera around to snap those unforgettable moments in time. "I really love what I do," Valerie said. "I'm blessed to know I'm doing what God has called me to do, and it gives me great joy to do it. Best of all, I get to be a wife and mom first. That is my most important role." **NOW**

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Greg Albrecht, Donna Schmalian and Kenny Barrix are building homes and neighborhoods.

Neighbor to Neighbor

Kenny Barrix of Kenton Homes takes elements from the past and makes them modern in his homes.

— By Betty Tryon

Imagine sitting on your front porch enjoying the warmth of the day on a lazy Saturday afternoon. One of your neighbors waves as she strolls by for a walk. Another neighbor shouts a greeting as he walks by with his dog. Children laugh as they run together to the local treat shop. Does this sound like a time gone by? Perhaps. However, Kenny Barrix is creating a neighborhood that encompasses all of these elements in The Kencraft Series located in MidTowne Estates, a new development in Midlothian.

"This neighborhood is built where family can be family and neighbors can interact. I want it to be a community," said Kenny. "I live in the neighborhood, so everyone knows where the builder lives," he smiled.

As the builder, Kenny is proud to live in a home that exhibits

his professional standards. Adhering to established building criteria is what got Kenny into business for himself. He got his first introduction into home building from his father, who was a custom builder. "I grew up in the industry picking up trash, mowing lawns, whatever my dad thought I needed to do, and learned the business from the ground up." In 2004, Kenny decided to branch out on his own and started Kenton Homes. "I was building in DeSoto and met the building inspector there, who later became a building official," he explained. "This guy was intense. He could find a needle in a haystack. He went through two of my homes and could not find anything wrong. So, he called in two other inspectors, and they couldn't find anything wrong. He couldn't believe it. When he decided to

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build a home of his own, he came to me. I built his house, and that was the start of it.”

As with most successful businesses, Kenny does not accomplish his great work alone. He owns a flooring business, named Christian Bros., with Greg Albrecht, who puts all the flooring in the homes. They both give high praise to Donna Schmalian, whom Kenny calls the backbone — or the executive personal assistant.



With the type of homes Kenny is building in MidTowne, he not only focuses on the neighborhood's atmosphere, but he also incorporates an old-time feeling inside the homes, with cased windows and glass transoms. “They have that old-time home design, but better. The homes have automatic personality before I put a stick of furniture in them,” Kenny said.

Greg agreed with Kenny and stated, “This is an area where you won't see too many wood fences. We have six feet wide sidewalks where neighbors can go for walks. You can see your neighbors and talk to them. It's not like a community where everybody goes in the garage and that's it.”

Kenny specializes in building any type of home but enjoys homes that are challenging. “Building these houses instead of the standard kitchen, formal living, formal dining — just a standard house which we built for so long with the stone and the brick — makes it fun again. It was the same old thing. But with these homes, I have houses you can go into that have stained glass transoms, medallions in the steps coming in and many things that add so much flavor.” For Kenny, a long career of building homes is new and fun again. **NOW**

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Supplement for Color

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

Are you feeling weak, fatigued, dizzy, looking pale and perhaps craving substances that are not food such as chalk, clay or paper? You may have iron deficiency anemia, a condition characterized by not having enough red blood cells (RBC). Mild cases of anemia often go untreated because the symptoms are not distressing enough to send someone to the doctor for diagnosis. However, as the anemia becomes more pronounced, obviously the symptoms become more alarming. Your red blood cells are the vehicle for oxygen transport. If you do not have enough RBC, your body is not receiving the proper amount of oxygen, which can make you feel very fatigued, as well as cause other problems. Other symptoms of iron deficiency are headaches, inflamed or painful tongue, fast heartbeat and pale skin.

If you are not aware or paying attention to your health, you can be at risk for iron deficiency. A slow bleed over a period of time from conditions such as peptic ulcers, polyps, hemorrhoids or colon cancer can cause anemia. Women who have heavy menstrual periods can be at risk. Pregnant females must take precautions against becoming iron deficient, since they must provide iron not only for their body but also for their growing baby. Diets lacking in iron-enriching foods will also contribute to this condition. Usually, this deficiency can be corrected by taking iron supplements. Just

as Vitamin D is important for the absorption of calcium, Vitamin C aids in the absorption of iron. However, check with your physician before drinking a big glass of orange juice with your iron supplement to make sure other conditions are not a factor.

If you suspect your iron levels are low, get a diagnosis instead of treating yourself. Too much iron in your body can damage your liver and cause complications. In addition, trying to self-medicate without knowing the reason for the problem, could delay appropriate treatment for a more serious condition. If your health care provider determines you have iron deficiency anemia, the next logical step is to discover why and treat the disorder. Treatment may be as simple as taking iron supplements and eating an iron-rich diet. If the anemia is from a more serious condition such as ulcers or cancer, the physician will follow the protocol necessary for treatment.

In most cases, you can prevent iron deficiency anemia by eating a healthy diet that includes iron-rich foods such as eggs, dark leafy vegetables, red meat and iron-fortified cereals. As the saying goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. **NOW**

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

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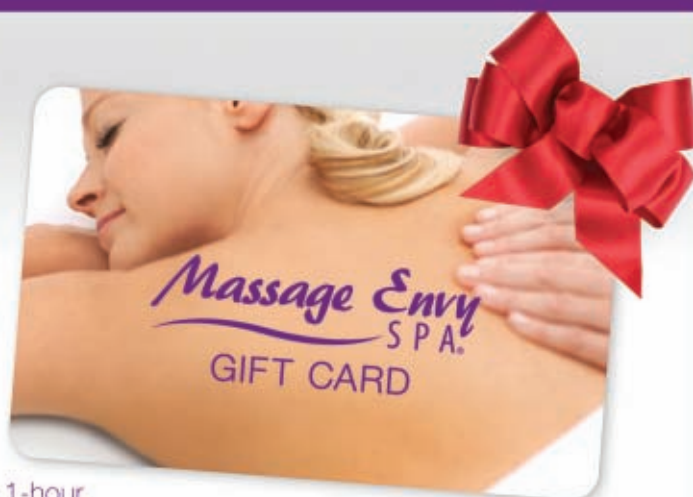
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November 5

Fall City Clean-up Day: 9:00-11:00 a.m., Public Works Service Center, 1050 N. Hwy. 67. Allied Waste will have dumpsters available for trash. Fort Worth Environmental Collection Center Crud Cruiser will be on hand for household chemical waste. Document shredding also available. Voucher needed for chemical waste. Call (972) 775-7614 or e-mail heather.king@midlothian.tx.us.

November 5, 19

The Midlothian Area Historical Society will have the Larkin Newton Log Cabin open for visitors: 10:00 a.m.-noon, Heritage Park, 234 N. 8th Street. Several new items are now on display

inside the cabin. midlothiantxhistory.org.

November 6

Daylight Saving Time ends.

November 11

Veterans Day

November 12

Midlothian Lions Pancake Breakfast including a silent auction: 7:00-11:00 a.m., Midlothian Civic Center. Advanced tickets: \$2; tickets at the door: \$3; children \$1. Call (972) 723-3108.

November 15

Midlothian Conference Center will host an Open House: 4:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. Come out and help us kick off the holiday season with food and libations, music and more. Please visit www.midlothiancenter.com.

November 24

Happy Thanksgiving Day!

November 30

Registration deadline for Downtown Midlothian Christmas Holiday Light Up Parade on December 5. There must be lights on your parade unit/float. Participants are encouraged to use the theme, "Santa's Workshop," to decorate.

Visit www.southernstarchristmas.org or www.MidlothianChamber.org.

Ongoing:

Mondays

Celebrate Recovery: 7:00-9:00 p.m., Lighthouse Coffee Bar, 1404 N. 9th Street. This is a Christ-centered support group for those recovering from hurts, habits and hang-ups.

Tuesdays

Midlothian Rotary Club meetings: noon at Midlothian Civic Center, 224 South 11th St. Call (972) 775-7118.

Second Tuesdays

American Business Women's Association Midlothian Chapter (ABWA) meetings: 9:30 p.m.-8:00 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center. Fourth Annual Midlothian Market Place. Booths set up by local businesses to present their products. To reserve a booth go to abwainfo@yahoo.com. \$25 fee.

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In The Kitchen With Cynthia Seskes

— *By Betty Tryon*

It would be hard to find a more idyllic setting than the Ohio farm where Cynthia Seskes spent many days with her grandmother. “It was a storybook setting with a cabin, Jack-in-the-pulpits, lily of the valley and daffodils in the woods, a pond for ice skating, an apple orchard, cherry trees, grape arbor, pumpkin patch, rose garden, iris bed, pine tree grove for Christmas trees, hydrangeas planted by the porch, and a couple of horses,” she shared.

Just as her grandmother inspired her, Cynthia inspires her children, Hanna and Jonathan, to enjoy “rustic cooking and fresh ingredients.” Cynthia sees cooking as a creative outlet, plus, “I like to feel that I am providing my family with healthy options to dining out or fast food.” **NOW**

Sautéed Chicken in Mustard-cream Sauce

- 4 (6-oz.) boneless, skinless chicken breasts**
- 1/4 tsp. salt**
- 1/4 tsp. pepper**
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil**
- 1/4 cup dry white wine or chicken broth**
- 1/2 cup heavy cream**
- 2 Tbsp. Dijon mustard**
- 1 tsp. dried tarragon**

- 1.** Sprinkle chicken breasts with salt and pepper.
- 2.** In a large skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add chicken; sauté 10

to 12 minutes until cooked through. Turn once. Transfer to plate and keep warm.

- 3.** Pour wine into hot skillet. Cook, stirring constantly until reduced by half (about 1 minute). Whisk in cream, mustard and tarragon, until thickened (about 2 minutes).
- 4.** Pour any accumulated chicken juices into sauce. Drizzle over chicken.

Chili Blanco

- 3 lb. chicken breasts**
- 1 1/2 tsp. white pepper**
- 1 tsp. garlic powder**
- 3 Tbsp. vegetable oil**
- 1 small onion, diced**
- 2 15-oz. cans Great Northern**

- beans (rinsed)**
- 1 10 3/4-oz. can cream of chicken soup**
- 2 14-oz. cans clear chicken broth**
- 3 Tbsp. jalapeño pepper juice**
- 1/4 cup fresh cilantro**
- 1 tsp. salt**
- Monterrey Jack cheese (optional)**
- Chips (optional)**

- 1.** Boil 3-lbs. chicken breasts (1 1/2 lbs. is enough, if boneless). Cut into chunks.
- 2.** Add the remaining ingredients, except cheese and chips and cook until hot.
- 3.** Sprinkle with Monterrey Jack cheese and serve over chips, if desired.

Grandma Bee's Apple Pie

- 2 cups and 2 Tbsp. flour**
- 1 tsp. salt**
- 2/3 cup plus 2 Tbsp. shortening or butter**
- 5-6 Tbsp. cold water**
- 6 cups paired apples**
- 3/4 cup sugar**
- 1/2 tsp. cinnamon**
- 1 Tbsp. lemon juice**
- Egg whites (optional)**


- 1.** Sift together 2 cups flour and salt
- 2.** Cut in 2/3 cup shortening (or butter) with pastry blender until particles are the size of small peas.
- 3.** Add 5 to 6 Tbsp. cold water until dough is moist enough to hold together.
- 4.** Roll out half of dough on well-floured board; fit into 9-inch pie pan.
- 5.** Combine apples, sugar, cinnamon, lemon juice and 2 Tbsp. flour.
- 6.** Turn into pastry-lined pan and dot with 2 Tbsp. butter.
- 7.** Roll out remaining dough for top crust.
- 8.** Cut gashes in top crust to allow steam to escape.
- 9.** Moisten edges of lower crust and place top crust over filling.
- 10.** Trim edges, seal and flute. For glossy finish, brush egg white on crust and sprinkle with sugar.
- 11.** Bake at 450 F for 10 minutes, then at 350 F for 40 to 50 minutes.

To view recipes from current and previous issues, visit www.nowmagazines.com.



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For a physician referral or for more information about sleep services, call **1.800.4BAYLOR** or visit us online at BaylorHealth.com/WaxahachieSleep.

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