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Union Pacific is the
engine that could.

Photo by Amy Ramirez.

Contents

January 2011 • Volume 8, Issue 1



8 Where Railroads
and Cotton
Fields Meet
For 33 years, Pete Watson
has stayed one step ahead
of the wheels.

16 Filled With
Memories
At Home With Andy
and Jina Armstrong.



20 Coincidences and
Contentment

Donna Monreal loves teaching
at the same elementary school
she once attended.



28 BusinessNOW

32 HealthNOW

33 OutdoorsNOW

34 FinanceNOW

36 CookingNOW

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Happy New Year, Ennis!

I find it hard to believe that another year has come and gone; so much happened in 2010. My youngest son got married and bought a new home. My oldest son matured tremendously while looking for a job in a recessed economy.

Me, I had a really blessed year. Not only did I get reacquainted with old friends, I made so many new ones along the way. Taking on the Ennis market meant more responsibility, but it was all worth it because of you, the readers, who make my job at NOW Magazines the best job imaginable. You welcomed me and made me feel like an extended member of your family. There is no better time to say thank you than the beginning of a brand new year.

I am always looking for cooks and artists, so if you have a lead, please feel free to contact me. I would love to talk to you!

Sandra Strong
EnnisNOW Editor
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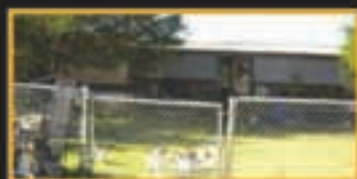
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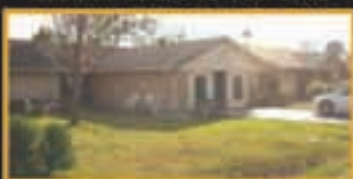
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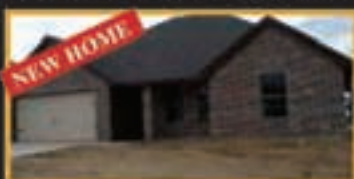
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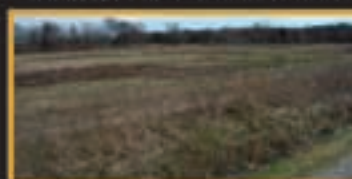
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Where Railroads and Cotton Fields Meet

— By Sandra Strong



Pete Watson will soon be retiring from the railroad. He has already surpassed the 30 years of service eligibility rule, but he is having trouble deciding exactly when to say goodbye to the rails and hello to a much different kind of life. His new one will be filled with busy days on the family farm, relaxed competitions at the local golf course and more quality time with his family, especially his grandson, Jackson. "I will be 60 on February 3, but I'll have 33 years of service in May," he stated. "In all those years, I never missed a day's pay, and I've never had a disciplinary action taken against me. The times I was furloughed, I may have been off long enough to draw two week's worth of unemployment pay before getting called back to service."



A lifetime of working on the railroad is not an easy task regardless of the position one holds, just ask any railroader. The first thing they are likely to mention is the long hours, with the dangers and adverse conditions coming in a close second and third. For Pete, the journey started many years ago. "I went to see Mr. Merritt, the division engineer at the time," Pete said, also sure to mention he was but a young man right out of high school. "I asked him about a job."

Mr. Merritt pointed to the tracks beyond his office windows. He told Pete, "If you go to work here, that's what you'll be doing."



Pete took one look out the window and decided the railroad life was not for him, at least not at that time. “Guys over 6 feet tall and weighing in at about 250 pounds were swinging picks and shovels and handling railroad ties with ease,” he admitted. “I decided to go back to the convenience store where I had worked since the age of 14.”

Eight years after marrying Rhonda, his wife of 41 years, Pete took another journey to the railroad yard in Ennis. This time at age 27, he did not travel alone. “I rode down with Steve Hunt, a guy who worked for us at the store. I had no intention of applying for a job that

day,” Pete said, “but Steve encouraged me to fill out an application anyway.” On that fateful day in April, when he was hired on the spot alongside Steve, Pete not only fooled Mr. Merritt, but he also started down a career path in the Maintenance of Way department he will always fondly remember. “In the first 12-15 years, I was predominately on the road,” he explained. “I haven’t traveled as much since the merger between Southern Pacific and Union Pacific railroads in July of 1996.”

Pete not only worked long hours away from home in those early years as a track laborer before being promoted

to his current position as track foreman in April of 1981, he also dealt with the harsh elements of nature. “All track work used to be done manually. We didn’t have trucks that ran on the rails in those early days,” he remembered. The downtime was greater, the weather was much hotter and colder, and the mosquitoes could take “a bite” out of the biggest men. “We either froze to near death or burned up to the point of heat exhaustion in the motor cars of old. High rail pickup trucks and gang rail trucks didn’t come along until late 1984, early ’85,” Pete stated. Although many laborers lost their jobs during this time of technological

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Happy New Year!

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advancement, “the technology definitely made life on the railroad sweeter,” Pete added.

Staying ahead of the wheel is Pete’s mantra. Keeping the track in working order regardless of the conditions has always been the goal of those in the Maintenance of Way department. What began in 1871 when the Houston and Texas Central Railroad purchased 647 acres of land in the county for \$5 per acre to merge the railroad with the vast cotton crop has continued throughout the years with dedicated workers just



like Pete. “I think what we do in this department is the most critical railroad job,” Pete said without hesitation. “They [train engineers] don’t know how to run them [the trains] on the dirt yet. Our job is to keep the rail running; staying one step ahead of the wheel at all times.”

In most instances, any job pertaining to track work is relentless and unforgiving. So many things can bring trouble to the tracks, causing adverse effects on rail travel, as well as the number of hours Pete and his crew must work away from home on a day-to-day basis. “Gosh, the elements of nature can wreak havoc on the tracks,” Pete said. “Snow and freezing temperatures can cause malfunctions in track switches. Excessive summer heat causes thermal misalignment of the track. Too much rain causes washouts that remove the sub-grade ballasts.” The list goes on and on. Fallen trees can put an engine window out or cause a derailment. A single grain of sand left behind during the manufacturing process can grow like the rings on a tree trunk, also causing a derailment.

In days gone by, Pete remembered being called out for emergency track repairs on a regular basis when a train “would feel it” or a worker “would see it.” These same rules apply today, but

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with a couple notable additions. “Signal employees and train crews find most of the problematic tracks these days,” Pete admitted, “but the internal and ultrasonic testing finds many initial defects before they have time to grow and cause costly derailments. We may have the same number of defects, but with all the technology, we are finding them much sooner.”

Broken rails equate to slower speeds from one destination point to the next.



Pete standing in front of a “track tamper,” one of the machines he uses on the tracks.

This means a loss in revenue. Many times, how large the loss is may depend on the split second decisions Pete makes on a daily basis. “Communication is paramount,” he stated. “Sometimes a train delay I’ve requested means standing around doing nothing. Other times it means a lot of hard work in a short period of time. You can never be too careful working on the railroad.”

Pete’s job has come with a great deal of responsibility, warranting a career-long commitment to hard work, a stringent rule book and a great deal of time spent away from family. Even though he may have walked away from such an undertaking as a teenager, Pete is so glad he gave the railroad a second chance. “I’ve always taken my job seriously,” Pete confessed. “It’s been a good place to work.” **NOW**

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Filled With *Memories*

— By Virginia Riddle

At Home With Andy and Jina Armstrong



Over the portal framing the front gathering room and the dining room of Andy and Jina Armstrong's 100-year-old, prairie-style home this couple has stenciled a welcome: "May this house bring peace and joy to all that enter its doors." Jina named their home "The Meeting House" since it is the "go to" house for church and family events, as well as the hangout for their children and their children's friends. "It's been a great house to raise kids in," she said. The home is reflective of Andy and Jina's many creative talents and the love they share for each other and their family and friends.

Married since 1983, Andy and Jina were high school sweethearts. They were only 17 and 13 years old respectively, when they met. They grew up four blocks from each other in the Temple-McCanless Historic District, the same area in which they have resided for the past 18 years. As they recounted their journey, they held



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hands while Andy pronounced with a grin, "We are still high school sweethearts."

The home was in need of extensive restoration when they first looked at it. "I was pregnant with Claire, but I knew when I walked in that I wanted this house," Jina recalled. "My most memorable moment in the house was bringing our baby Claire home." Both daughter, Claire, 18, a student at Navarro College, and son, Wade, 21, a student at Dallas Baptist University, are following in Andy's footsteps in higher education. "We decided to be the best parents for our kids," Jina noted. "Andy has provided much more than I could have ever imagined as a father to our kids."

The home remodel began the day



after they moved in. "It's been a labor of love. I don't want to think about the time and money I've spent on it," Andy said. Jina has designed and handcrafted the window coverings and other fabric decor. Andy's mother, an artist, painted a picture of the home. Andy and Jina have included many family antiques and memorabilia. "We love to turn old things into something functional. We're kind of eclectic," Jina explained. "We keep things in the family; they are important to us. Claire and Wade have grown up helping out. Our kids have been through so much remodeling," Jina added.

Even though the front porch is inviting, with its rocking chairs, the back door entry through the kitchen is used more often by everyone. "Everyone comes in the back door and stays right there," Jina laughed. Ginger, the family's dog, is always there to greet each one. "Everyone loves Ginger," Jina said. The couple completely rebuilt the kitchen two years ago. "We love it. My mom and dad have 11 grandkids; everyone can fill their plates and stay right there," she added. Their home is where their very large



extended families gather for the holidays, and the family enjoys hosting youth, church and football game parties. "We do lots of entertaining," Jina said.

"The kitchen is definitely the heart of the house," Andy added.

The hardwood floors in the dining and gathering rooms have been refinished by the couple, who also stenciled designs in the floors. A framed recipe for "the best chocolate pie you'll ever put into your mouth" from Jina's grandmother decorates the wall, alongside a collectible Armstrong sign. "We collect anything Armstrong," Jina said. The couple also has collected Hull and Roseville pottery for about 30 years. "The colors are what draw me to them," Jina revealed.

"We are always looking for the next piece," Andy chimed in, once again completing a thought they both shared.



The setting sun shines through stained glass window inserts the couple found to be a perfect fit in the gathering room windows. "It's so pretty every evening," Jina said. Her collection of antique cameras and a little child's suit that has been handed down through generations since the Civil War join a pump organ from Jina's family in this room. "So many of our family pictures have been made in front of the organ through the years," recalled Jina, a medical assistant who is also a photographer.

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A family media den and an added bath taken from a space originally part of the back porch complete the downstairs. The hallway and stairwell work perfectly as the wall of fame, where many black and white family photos are displayed.

The family retires upstairs to bedrooms that continue the family-oriented theme. Claire's room includes a chalkboard wall on which family and friends have been writing for years. Wade's room features a bear skin from a bear shot by Jina's father. A collection of quilts created by Jina's great-grandmother and grandmother graces the guest bedroom. An antique

pillar and screen from a "girls' trip" to Jefferson stand in the master bedroom. "A man tied it down on the Suburban for us. We looked like a pack of Gypsies bringing it back here," Jina laughed. They converted a former nursery area into a luxurious master bath and laundry room. The couple enjoys relaxing while drinking coffee on their private balcony which overlooks the garden area.

Guests forget they are in the center of town while in the garden area, which features the soothing sounds of water flowing into a koi pond built by Andy and Wade. Only the chimes sounding from nearby churches remind guests of their location. "We just walk to our church, Baylor Baptist Church," Claire said, pointing one block down the street.

The adjoining garage is Andy's workshop and much more. "He certainly has the ultimate man place," Jina remarked. Andy's design of the Ennis High School official maroon "E" decorates the floor, and he has incorporated his love of music with a collection of old album covers. His collection of antique toy truck piggy banks lines shelves. Under the carport

sits a 1963 Volkswagen, which has been totally restored to a beautiful, prize winning luster. "My passion is making old stuff look new again," he reflected.

The family that works together also plays together. They often take their four-wheelers camping, and Andy uses vacations from Suez Energy to go with



the family on church mission trips. Last year, they took a trip to New York City. "Claire is in theatre and loves it. I wanted us to go on a trip together before we all went our separate ways," Jina remembered. Their labors of love will continue, as all roads for their children will still begin and end at their historic home filled with love. **NOW**

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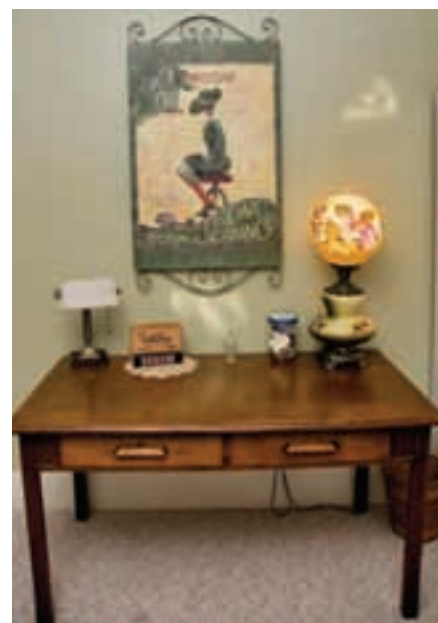
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Their home is where their very large extended families gather for the holidays, and the family enjoys hosting youth, church and football game parties.

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Coincidences and Contentment

— By Aleta Penfold

Her mother said it best, “I took my daughter to the first grade at Austin Elementary School, and she’s still there!” Indeed, Ennis teacher, Donna Monreal, attended the elementary school as a little girl and now has been teaching at that same school for 30 years. It even gets better. Donna smiled, “I attended elementary school here at Stephen F. Austin, and later went on to college at Stephen F. Austin State University.



I graduated in August of 1981, married in August of 1981 and started teaching in August of 1981! Mr. Selzer was the principal when I was in elementary school, and then he interviewed me for my first teaching job and hired me!" she laughed, "I just loved him.

"I started dating Pete in the 10th grade, where we both attended Ennis High School," she continued. "He was my first real boyfriend, and we dated until we married." Pete Monreal is employed at a glass company in Corsicana, and has worked there for, you guessed it, 30 years.

Donna enjoyed talking about all of the coincidences in her life, but was quick to thank God for them. "I am just so thankful to God for so many things. I knew I wanted to teach since the first grade," she remembered. "My teacher was Miss Roderrick, and she was such a good teacher."

As visitors enter her room, they immediately see Donna's love of teaching, although an eager first-grader may not appreciate it. The walls have room for nothing else. "Remember, I've been collecting this stuff for 30 years now," she laughed.



Bordering the room is the timeless alphabet on the walls and homemade curtains on the windows. Displayed quite prominently is a big poster of Mrs. Monreal's Rules and Consequences. Fun clocks to help teach time are all about, as well as charts of numbers, simple math problems and calendars. Some of those items have been crafted by Donna's friends who enjoy helping. Of course,

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Gary Hayden

children's artwork and special assignments are proudly displayed everywhere.

While there are plenty of student desks, 19 in all, the teacher's desk seems to be missing in action, but Donna spends very little time sitting behind her desk anyway. "I spend all my time with the kids," she added. Donna explained her favorite work area is the reading station, consisting of a curved-type table with tiny little chairs around the outer side. Then, there are the books, lots of books — way-too-many-to-count books, books everywhere. "My major thing is reading. I just love to teach reading!" she explained passionately, emphasizing the word "reading" each time. "I tell my kids, if you can read, you can make it through life ... period!"

"It's amazing to watch these little kids, who may start out knowing just a word or two and then by the end of the first grade they can read! I mean, they are only 6 years old! It's just something else," she gushed, "I never get tired of it."

While reading is her favorite thing to teach, the students are Donna's favorite part of being an educator. "I just love my students. I have a very close family, and my kids are like family to me," Donna said, tearing up a bit. "Every kid is as important to me as the next. It doesn't matter their background, they are treated equally. Kids come to school with different levels of abilities, that's just the way it is, but they all want to know they're special. They're each special in my class!"

Donna shared how so many children come to school with problems from home needing to know school is a safe haven. She strives to help her students get a good, positive feeling about school and themselves. She encourages her students to try to accomplish things, and even if they do not succeed at first, to keep trying. Eventually they will get it.

She also emphasized she could not do all she does for her students if it were not for all the help she gets. "I've always had one or more amazing parent volunteers from each class. I could never keep up with all the extra activities if it weren't for my parents," she explained. "This school is so special because the staff helps each other out. We're like a family here, too. Also, Austin Elementary tries hard to keep its technology upgraded. Of course, I've never taught at any other school, so I'm pretty sure it's special, but then again,



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I guess I could be wrong?" she joked.

Donna's whole family has also played a huge part in her teaching success. Her parents, Helen and Bill Brasher, have been helping from the beginning. Her mom has helped in the classroom, baking cupcakes and reading to the children. Her dad has been available to fix things in the classroom and even restored three children's rocking chairs for the room. One of the chairs is Donna's from childhood, another belonged to Donna's two grown sons when they were little and her dad found the other one at a neighbor's home and repaired himself. He just thought the classroom could use another child's rocking chair. Even Grandma Helen White, who is 92, has helped by attending on Grandparents' Day. What about her two grown sons — Cole and Kellen? They attended Austin Elementary school too, naturally!

"God has blessed me with a job that I just love, and I pray for my kids every night. It's the last thing I do before I go to sleep."

Pete has also been a familiar face in the classroom. Pete, who is 6 feet 4 inches tall, once entered the room, and a child said, "Miss Monreal, he sho' is long!" Pete helps pick out Christmas gifts for the kids and helps get the classroom ready for a new school year. However, Pete has mostly been there for Donna over the years by just listening to her talk about "her kids."

"In the evening, Pete is such a help to me because I can relax and share my day with him. We may just talk about the kids and laugh about the funny things they do and say, or maybe I need to discuss a particular problem I'm having with a child. The hard part of this job is leaving the problems at school," she confessed. "I value Pete's input, and he has given me great advice over the years. I simply could not have done it without him," she admitted, "He loves my kids, too!"

Another thing Donna admits she could not do without is prayer. "God has blessed me with a job that I just love, and I pray for my kids every night. It's the last thing I do before I go to sleep." Prayer prepares her for the next school day. **NOW**

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MEDICAL CARPENTRY

Orthopaedic sports medicine is a perfect fit for Dr. Gregory Todd Moore.

— *By Sandra Strong*

When putting it in a nutshell, orthopaedic sports medicine is the care of any muscular skeletal problem. These may include torn ligaments, sprains, strains and broken bones. To be a physician who specializes in orthopaedic sports medicine, you must be prepared for years of education and hands-on experience, just ask Dr. Gregory Todd Moore. "Before opening my office in Ennis," Dr. Moore said, "I spent four years in medical school, completed five years of residency and then took an extra year." He devoted that extra year of fellowship training to his specialization — sports medicine. Once the fellowship at Texas Tech University was complete, Dr. Moore relocated to Ellis County, making Ennis his home.

Throughout his years of training, Dr. Moore learned what he

feels is paramount in a successful doctor/patient relationship. "Listening is the key," he stated. "The patient will give me all the information I need to make a diagnosis before I ask a question, as long as I listen. And it's equally important to give them a chance to ask questions and listen, too."

When asked, "Why orthopaedic sports medicine?" Dr. Moore wasted no time in forming his answer. "I've always been interested in medicine," he said. "I played sports in college, and my granddad was a carpenter. Orthopaedics is medical carpentry." These three, when added together, made orthopaedic sports medicine a perfect fit for Dr. Moore.

When first opening his practice, Dr. Moore expected his largest patient base to be senior-aged individuals. He expected

Business **NOW**

hip fractures and knee- and hip-replacement surgeries. Although he treats his fair share of seniors, the larger numbers of patients are children, teens and young adults. Normal "kid accidents" and trampolines have been the cause of many appointments for broken wrists and legs. Dr. Moore has always found it difficult to see a child in pain, but since the birth of his daughter, Mia, now age 3, he seems to have an even bigger heart for his younger patients. "I don't like to see a child hurting. I want to fix what's broken," he admitted. "I've learned children are so resilient. They heal quickly and remarkably well."

Dr. Moore also believes in preventative medicine. He firmly believes keeping his patients informed is the blueprint to good muscular/skeletal health. "The biggest problem I've faced on the medical side of the practice has been in the healing process," Dr. Moore explained. "Patients with fractures and breaks, who are also heavy smokers and/or do not take care of their diabetes properly take longer to heal." Dr. Moore's recommendations for these patients are strong, straightforward and to the point. "Stop smoking! Keep your diabetes under control. Check your blood sugar on a regular basis. Eat the correct diet, and be sure to get the proper amount of exercise."



By far, his greatest joy comes from Mia. "Nothing I've done, no achievement in life, compares to being a dad," he quietly added. "Everything I never knew I was missing has been fulfilled with Mia. I love what I do for a living, but Mia is the best part of my days." **NOW**

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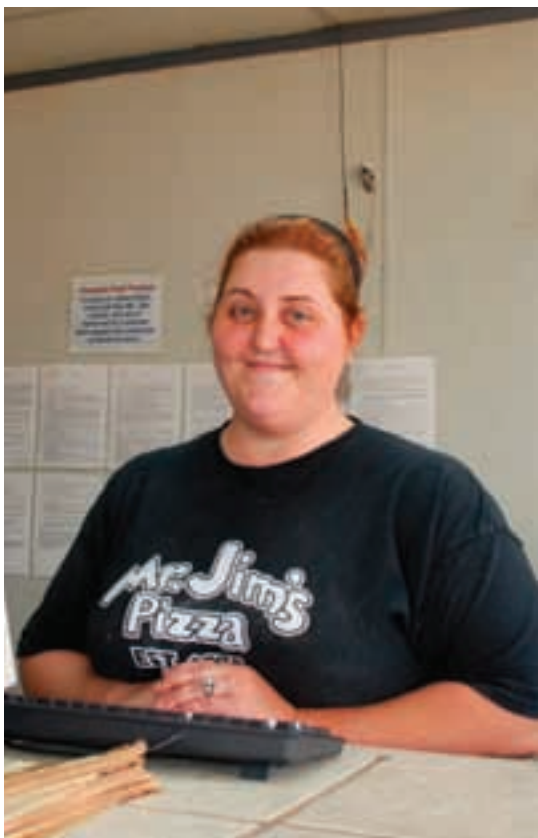
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Ear Infections and How to Avoid Them

— By *Amanda Fox*

Ear infections, also referred to as otitis externa, are infections of the ear canal, which is the tube-like opening in the ear that carries sound from the outside of the body to the ear drum. Otitis externa occurs most commonly during the summer, when the temperature is hot and people tend to spend more time in the water. Excess moisture in the ear can break down the skin in the ear canal and allow bacteria and fungus to penetrate the skin and cause an infection.

Water in the ears is the most common cause of otitis externa, but it is not the only cause. Anything that causes a break in the skin of the ear canal can lead to an infection. Some other common causes include scratching the ear canal with foreign objects such as paperclips or bobby pins and using Q-tips to clean the ears. These activities can irritate the skin in the ear canal and increase the risk of developing otitis externa.

Symptoms of otitis externa include pain, swelling and drainage from the ear.

A person with otitis externa may feel pain in the throat, as well as the ear, and might find it difficult to chew because the mandible joint is located very close to the ear canal. Drainage may start out clear and then turn yellow or greenish in color. Hearing may be affected if the ear canal swells and pus and debris block sound from passing through the ear properly.

Treatment of otitis externa varies depending on the severity of the infection. If the infection is caught early enough, a doctor may simply prescribe eardrops to treat the infection. The drops usually consist of an antibiotic to treat the infection and a steroid to reduce the swelling and inflammation. In some cases, the swelling of the ear canal makes it difficult for the drops to go into the ear. If this happens, the doctor may need to place a small piece of expandable cotton called a wick in the ear canal. The wick helps carry the drops down into the ear so that they are able to reach the source of the infection. The doctor

may also need to look in the ear with a microscope and remove any accumulated pus and debris using a suction device. In really bad infections, it may be necessary to make a small incision in the ear canal to drain pus that is trapped in the ear canal skin. While the infection is being treated, it is best to keep water out of the ear completely by using a small piece of cotton while in the shower.

In summary, otitis externa usually happens when the skin in the ear canal becomes irritated. The best way to prevent otitis externa is to keep water out of the ears and to avoid using foreign objects like Q-tips to scratch the ears. Otitis externa should be treated by a doctor as soon as symptoms such as pain, swelling or drainage from the ear first appear. **NOW**

*Amanda Fox
Clinical Supervisor
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A New Start in January

— By *Nancy Fenton*

Tired of the same old gardens? Try your hand at different looking beds. They are called theme gardens and can be as large or small as you want, but they all need planning.

This month, let's talk about an herb garden. Some herbs do well in North Texas and others do not. Do your homework to find out which ones do well in our heat. The growing medium is very important, and most herbs need lots of well-drained soil. Sand or our alkaline clay with copious additions of compost and expanded shale will make a reasonable foundation for an herb bed. Planting as soon as the soil warms up in a very sunny area is preferable, but later is acceptable.

As for specific herbs that will winter over, fennel is a good one. It is used in fish dishes. Lavender is used to flavor cookies, and due to its pleasant smell, it is also used to freshen drawers.

Myrtle is used in meat dishes or as a substitute for bay. Curly parsley may be used as a substitute for parsley. Rosemary is great on chicken or in seasoned butter. Thyme is used to intensify any flavor or as salt. All these are cold hardy and can survive our cold spells without damage.

French tarragon, sweet marjoram, Mexican mint marigold and rose geranium are all great tasting as well as great looking. With a littler cover and care, they will survive the year. If you are short on space, you can try containers. Just remember to repot often!

Remember that the herbs may be small when you get them, but they will be much larger when grown with full sun. It will help to plan accordingly. All theme gardens will have several common characteristics: They will all need the right soil, sun and water for the plants you are planting. Mature size should also be taken into account. Next month, we will talk about rose gardens for North Central Texas. **NOW**

Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener.

Health Care Reform Basics for 2011: Employer-sponsored Group Medical Plans

— By Gary Hayden

The following summary gives you the basics of what you should know for 2011 regarding the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) and Employer-sponsored Group Medical Plans. Some of these changes went into effect in 2010; more updates and changes are on the table for the next several years. Further updates on PPACA are available at www.healthcare.gov. For specific information regarding employee benefits under your employer-sponsored group medical plan, contact your insurance agent or carrier.

• Your Dependents

If your employer-sponsored group medical plan includes dependent coverage, dependents up to age 26, are eligible for coverage — provided they meet the usual eligibility requirements.

A dependent whose coverage or benefits ended because they reached a prior age limit, must be given written notice that coverage is available and informed of their 30-day enrollment or re-enrollment opportunity.

• Preexisting Conditions

Children under age 19 cannot be denied coverage because of a preexisting condition. (Prohibition of preexisting condition exclusions for adults, as applied to medical plans, takes effect in 2014.)

• Lifetime and Annual Limits

Effective on or after September 23, 2010, there will be no lifetime or annual dollar limits on “essential services.” However, other non-dollar limits on essential benefits, such as the number of allowable visits may apply. “Grandfathered Plans” may not receive this benefit until the next scheduled renewal date. Check with your insurance carrier for specific details.

• Mental Health Coverage

Beginning July 1, 2010, mental health and substance abuse treatment claims will be covered at the same benefit level as medical claims. Certain types of mental health and substance abuse treatment may require prenotification and authorization.

• Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs)

Effective January 1, 2011, you will no longer be able to use your health care flexible spending account (FSA) to pay for over-the-counter (OTC) medications without a prescription from your doctor. While insulin continues to be a covered medication, the final definition of other OTC medications, subject to this new law, has yet to be fully defined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Resources.

• Health Savings Accounts (HSAs)

Effective January 1, 2011, you will no longer be able to use your health care flexible spending account (HSA) dollars to pay for OTC medications without a prescription from your doctor. You will be able to use HSA dollars for prescription medicines, including insulin, if those are eligible expenses under your employer-sponsored group medical plan. Check with your insurance carrier for specific pharmacy benefits. If you have prescriptions for OTC medicines and pay for them with your HSA dollars, you must keep copies of your prescription and receipts for the purchase with your tax records.

Beginning January 1, 2011, if your HSA is used to pay for items or services that are not qualified medical expenses, the IRS penalty will increase from 10 percent to 20 percent of the HSA dollars used. **NOW**

Gary Hayden
Hayden Financial Partners

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Calendar

JANUARY 2011

January 14

EISD Student Holiday/Teacher Work Day

Unity in the Community Event: 8th Annual A King Celebration. Call the Chamber at (972) 878-2625 for more information.

January 15

Business After Hours: 5:15 p.m., Brookdale Sterling House Assisted Living.

Annual Health Fair and Community Festival: 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. For more information, call (214) 475-0042.

January 17

MLK Day/EISD Holiday

January 20

Ennis High School Powder BUFF volleyball game: 6:00 p.m., Ennis High School Ensign Gym. This event is a fundraiser sponsored by the parents of the Class of 2012.

January 26

Business After Hours: 5:15 p.m., Judge Fite Century 21, 1905 W. Ennis Avenue.

January 27

Ennis High School Texas Violent Gang Task

Force meeting: 8:00 a.m. – noon, Ennis High School Lecture Hall.

January 29

Ennis High School Student Council
Mr. EHS Pageant: 7:00 p.m., Ennis High School EHS Auditorium. This is a Student Council-sponsored senior male scholarship and talent pageant.

Weekends in February

The Dixie Swim Club. Ennis Public Theatre, 2705 N. Kaufman Street. Shows on February 4, 5, 11, 12, 18, 19, 25, 26, 27. Call (972) 878-7529 for ticket prices and curtain times.

February 12

Ennis Czech Music Festival: Sokol Hall, call (972) 878-4748 for more information.

February 15

Master Gardener Photo Contest Entry
Deadline: Contest is currently underway. Entry categories include "single specimen" and "in the garden." Think about vegetables, summer gardens and fall and winter when taking pictures. There is no cost and individuals may enter as many as five photos. Prizes will be awarded. Enter online at www.ecmga.com.

First and Third Tuesdays

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

Thursdays

Chess for Kids: 6:00-7:30 p.m., Ennis Public Library, 501 W. Ennis Avenue, Ennis. Elementary age and above. No sign up required.

First and Third Thursdays

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

Third Saturdays

Covenant Treasures Institute College Level Classes: 8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Refiner's Fire Ministries International, 1611 W. Ennis Avenue, Ennis. Call (972) 765-3530 for more information.

Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your event details to sskoda.nowmag@sbcglobal.net.

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In The Kitchen With *Don Walker*

— By Adam Walker

Don Walker was born and reared in Forrester, but has lived in Ennis for years. He is a retired educator of 45 years, who has also worked in the cattle business since his grandfather gave him his first calf at age 5. He acknowledges his mother's and aunt's influences on his cooking style. "I enjoy plain, simple, down-home country cooking," Don explained. "I was raised during the Depression, so I also try to cook as economically as possible." But he also likes to cook with organic ingredients. "I like backyard garden- or farm-grown vegetables in season." With his background in ranching he is also very particular about his meats. Mexican friends and employees and time living in Ireland have added breadth to Don's cooking. **NOW**

SOPAPILLA CHEESECAKE

- 2 cans crescent rolls
- 2 8-oz. pkgs. cream cheese
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 stick butter
- 1 tsp. cinnamon

1. Press 1 can of the crescent rolls into the bottom of a 9x13-inch pan, pinching the edges together.
2. Mix cream cheese, 1 1/4 cups of the sugar and vanilla until smooth.
3. Once mixed, spread cream cheese mixture over the crescent rolls.
4. Take second can of crescent rolls and roll them out over top of the cream cheese mixture.
5. Melt butter and pour over top of crescent rolls.
6. Mix together remaining sugar and cinnamon and sprinkle over cheese cake.
7. Bake at 350 F until golden brown on top, about 30 minutes.

WAKE-UP CASSEROLE

- 8 frozen hash brown patties
- 4 cups shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 lb. fully cooked ham, cubed
- 7 eggs
- 1 cup milk

- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. ground mustard

1. Place hash brown patties in a single layer in a greased 9x13-inch dish.
2. Sprinkle with cheese and ham.
3. In a bowl, beat together eggs, milk, salt and mustard. Pour over ham.
4. Cover and bake at 350 F for 1 hour.
5. Uncover and bake 15 minutes more or until edges are golden brown and a knife inserted near the center comes out clean.

OVEN-FRIED GREEN TOMATOES

- Vegetable oil spray
- 2 large green tomatoes
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1/2 cup yellow cornmeal
- Paprika, to taste
- 1/2 tsp. salt

1. Preheat oven to 425 F.
2. Line baking sheet with foil and spray with vegetable spray.
3. Remove a thin slice from top and bottom of each tomato. Then slice into 4 1/2-inch slices.
4. Pour olive oil into a shallow bowl. Dip tomato slices into oil, then into cornmeal.
5. Place slices on baking sheet. Sprinkle lightly with paprika and salt.

6. Bake 10 minutes. Turn slices. Bake 8 minutes more or until tender.
7. Remove from oven. Let stand 3-4 minutes.

MEAT AND POTATO PIE

- 2 lbs. ground beef
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1/2 green pepper, chopped
- 1 1/3 cups water
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 can diced tomatoes
- 2 Tbsp. cornstarch
- 3 potatoes, sliced
- A little olive oil
- 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese

1. Brown beef, onions and peppers. Drain and return to skillet.
2. Add 1 cup of water, bay leaves and tomatoes. Simmer 15 minutes.
3. Remove bay leaves. Add remaining water and cornstarch.
4. In another skillet, brown potatoes in oil until tender. Drain. Place in baking dish and top with beef mixture.
5. Top with cheese.
6. Brown in oven at 375 F for 10 minutes.

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

Winter Adventure

Ahh ... January! Time to grab the skis and head for the slopes! This is a great time to go skiing, and if you are looking for a winter adventure, Red River, New Mexico, just might be the place for you.

The town has two ski areas — the Red River Ski Area and Enchanted Forest Cross Country Ski & Snowshoe Area. The Red River Ski Area has 57 trails, a 1,600-foot vertical drop and is known for its skiing and snowboarding. The Enchanted Forest is New Mexico's largest full-service cross country ski area, with over 30 km of XC (cross country) trails, 18 km of snowshoe trails and 5 km of trails that are pet-friendly.

But Red River is not only about some of the best skiing, snowboarding, cross country skiing and snowshoeing in New Mexico. While checking out the beautiful scenery, you will find a variety of fun-filled activities for every age group. Children enjoy tubing at the ski area. Adventurists enjoy heading out for an evening snowmobile tour at the Red River Ski Area. There are 17 different restaurants from which to choose.

Main Street provides shoppers with great boutiques and fantastic shopping all located in one convenient place, and Red River has five live music venues offering a wide variety of entertainment.

After years of hard work and determination, the historic Red River Community House has finally been winterized so it can offer free family fun all year long. While the Community House has always been known for its extensive list of summer activities for families, winter guests can now expect guided snowshoe tours, line dancing, square dancing, CHILL programs for teens and young

adults and weekly international student fellowships.

Red River is the only ski area in New Mexico that has weekly fireworks and torchlight parades. This fantastic display of lights has become a "must see" for visitors throughout the winter season. Every Saturday, a group of gutsy skiers and snowboarders gathers at

the base of the Platinum Chair to entertain the crowd with a rail jam starting at 5:30 p.m. Stick around until 7:00

While the Community House has always been known for its extensive list of summer activities for families, winter guests can now expect guided snowshoe tours, line dancing, square dancing, CHILL programs for teens and young adults and weekly international student fellowships.

p.m. for the torchlight parade and fireworks display. This incredible show is best viewed from the deck of the Lift House Bar & Grill, where live music traditionally starts around 6:00 p.m.

Throughout the month of January, Red River offers bargain days where

you can enjoy uncrowded slopes and discounted multiple day lift tickets. The discount is valid on lift ticket purchases of three days or more. January also brings College Days specials. Students with a valid ID will receive \$35 lift tickets and \$15 rentals. College rival races, live

music and group lodging discounts are available as well. For more information, visit www.RedRiver.org or e-mail info@redriver.org.

Photos by Jeff Caven, courtesy of the Town of Red River.



NEWEST ACTIVE MEMBER OF ENNIS REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER



MATTHEW BRANCH, M.D.

DR. MATTHEW BRANCH completed his medical school and general surgery internship at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. He then graduated from one of the most prestigious ear, nose and throat residencies in the country, the University of Pittsburgh.

He specializes in ear, nose and throat with head and neck surgeries for adult and pediatric patients. This includes: ears and hearing, sinus and allergy, throat and mouth, face and neck, as well as sleep disorders in adults.

Dr. Branch is originally from Burleson, Texas, so once he completed his specialty training, he and his family moved to Corsicana to recapture the small-town community he had known all of his life. Additionally, Dr. Branch is Board Certified by the American Board of Otolaryngology. He is an active member of the American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, the American Medical Association and the Texas Medical Association.

He started seeing patients every Friday morning in his office at the ERM Medical Office Building on the ERM campus on July 2, 2010. He is now accepting new patients.

DR. MATTHEW BRANCH
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