

MansfieldNOW

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a grey jacket over a white turtleneck and white pants, stands in a living room. She is holding a large animal skull with long, curved antlers. The room has a brown sofa, a patterned rug, and several framed pictures on the wall, including a portrait of a man and a painting of a dog.

M A G A Z I N E

JANUARY 2011

The Wild Volunteer

Trich Zaitoon dedicated her life to volunteering amongst dangerous animals.

Making
the Goal

Also Inside

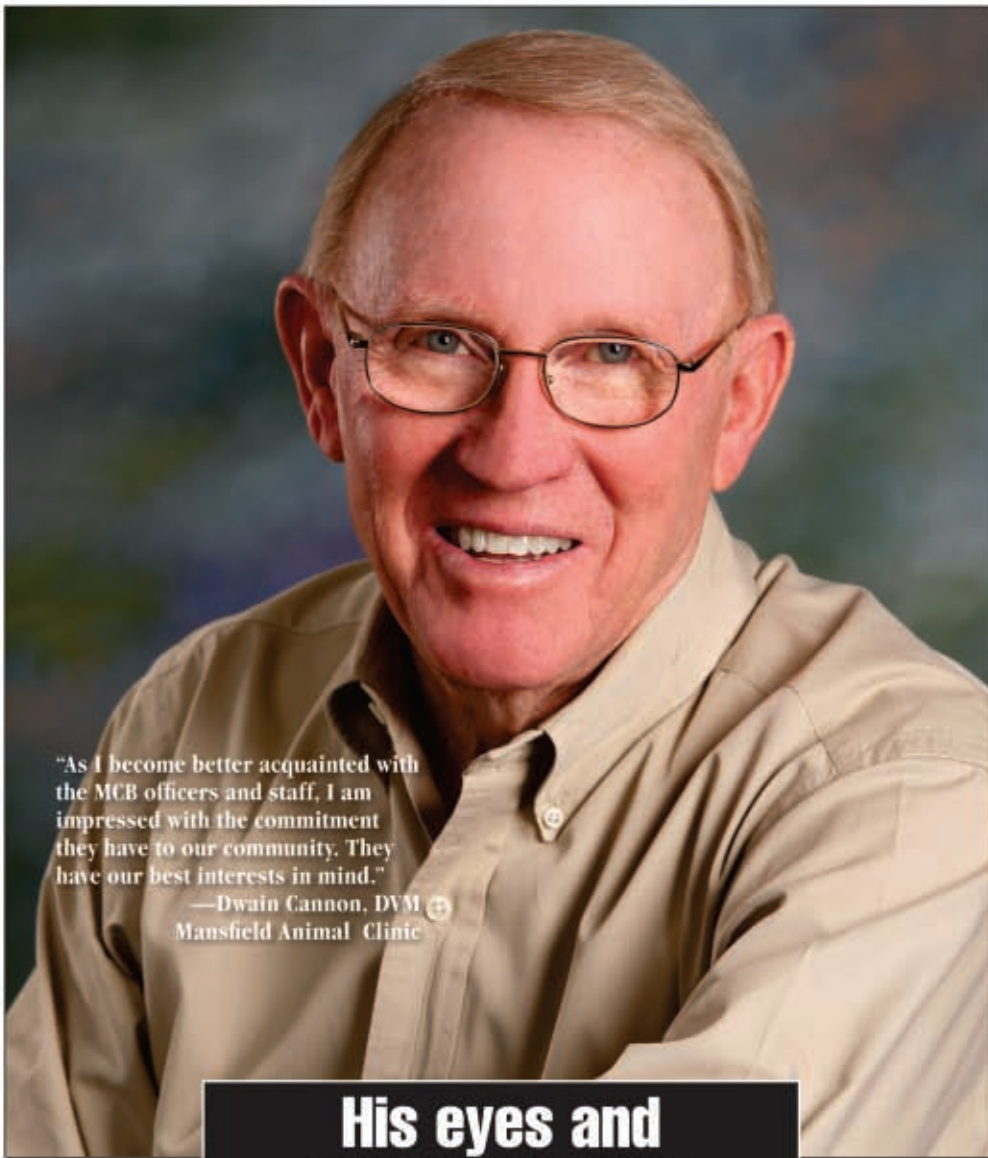
Going After It

Tips From Tessa

In the Kitchen With
Lisa Amoriello and
Adair Smith

What a
Wonderful
World

At Home With
Ramon & Connie
Bermudez



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—Dwain Cannon, DVM
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On The Cover



Trich Zaitoon, volunteer extraordinaire and llama lover, is also a great wife, mom and thespian.

Photo by Opaque Visuals.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Howdy, Y'all!

As you enjoy the articles found on the pages of our magazine, bringing more good stories about the good people in your community, I know you will find many things to be thankful for. This month, be sure to try out the recipes from Lisa Amoriello and Chef Adair Smith, culinary arts teachers at Ben Barber Career Tech, where Chef Adair and his team of students run a bistro called Savvy's. After trying the recipes in your own kitchen, you may want to take a friend to lunch at Savvy's, just to compare your results to their yummy offerings!

Also, be inspired by our story of Martina Broussard, a neat lady who grew up in Berlin, Germany, surrounded by the Wall, and now teaches sixth grade social studies at Asa E. Low Jr. Intermediate School. May you each thrive in freedom this year!

Happy New Year, Mansfield!

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A cheetah is the last thing one would expect to find lurking around while driving across the Texas countryside. For Trich Zaitoon, such a sighting is all in a typical day's work as a volunteer at Fossil Rim Wildlife Center in Glen Rose, Texas, where she comes in contact with some of the world's most dangerous animals. With her heart for volunteering and her knowledge of the animals, Trich leads park visitors on a one-of-a-kind tour all while keeping them safe. And when her day is done, Trich comes home to Mansfield.

THE *Wild* VOLUNTEER

— By *Sydni Thomas*

Over the last 28 years, Trich has witnessed Mansfield grow from a tight-knit community into a large city with the heart of a small town. She has volunteered in the community and across Texas for over 25 years through education and community events. Whether it is talking with our students at career day or leading groups across Fossil Rim, Trich's purpose is the same: to educate and to instill self-confidence in each person, so they can find their passion and follow it. It all started with a love for animals she wanted to share with others.

Growing up, Trich wanted to work with animals as a marine biologist or a veterinarian. Afraid that math and chemistry courses would get the best of her, Trich followed a career in technical illustrating instead. Years later, when a friend at the Highway Department told Trich about the Fort Worth Zoo docent program, she knew it was time to finally follow her passion. Trich volunteered as docent at the zoo for 15 years. To serve as a docent volunteers must commit to extensive training. As zoo guides they have to be prepared to answer any questions a guest may have. "To be a docent you are always going through education classes," Trich said. "It takes a lot of dedication. When I first started I would push my son in his stroller around the zoo reciting the tour. He picked up on it and would recite it to guests."

In the 1970s, businessman Tom Mantzel purchased what is now the Fossil Rim Wildlife Center. He had a vision to create a place of conservation and preservation for endangered species. Trich met Tom during her time at the zoo. He invited the docents out to Fossil Rim hoping they would share in his vision and become a part of it. "We came together to find a way to make it an educational experience for visitors," Trich explained. "In the beginning, we worked in trailers and out of the back of pickups."



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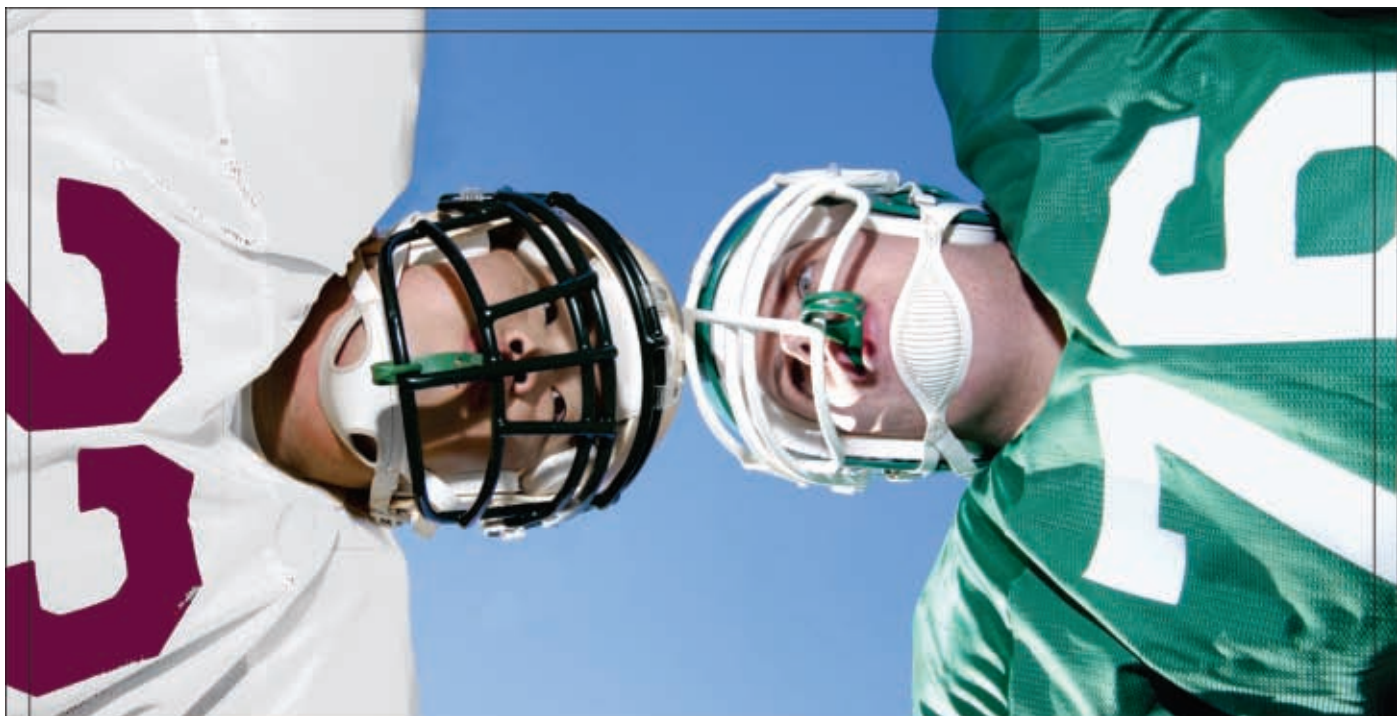
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Trich has volunteered for over 25 years as a docent at Fossil Rim Wildlife Center. She has seen it grow from zebras to over 60 different species of animals, and turn from privately owned to a nonprofit park accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). It was the first non-traditional zoo to ever be accredited by the AZA. "It does my heart and soul good to be at Fossil Rim," Trich admitted. "Most tours are self-guided, but I lead the all-day tours about twice a week. It is like a real safari. A lot of times people will come all the way out here before their safari trips to get an idea of what it's like. It's a wonderful experience."

While Fossil Rim is like a safari, Trich's dream was to go on an actual African safari. For their 25th wedding anniversary, Trich gifted herself and her husband with the trip of a lifetime. Since then she has been to Africa five times and now organizes and leads the trip. Each year, Trich takes up to 10 people with her, aged from 20-80 years.

They have seen Victoria Falls, come face-to-face with some of Africa's wildest animals and escaped a close encounter with overly curious elephants. On her last trip, the group witnessed a lioness kill. They were teaching their cubs how to hunt. The group, horrified by the sight, could not take their eyes off of it. "It's hard to describe the experience," Trich said. "Everything in Africa can be described as 'Oh, wow!' These are wild animals and dangerous, but I trust our guides with my life. Even my husband and son have come on a safari with me."

Trich and her husband, Al, have two sons, Brett and Brady (now grown). Once they started their family, Trich stopped working in the traditional workplace to rear the boys. She used her love and passion for animals to educate Brett and Brady about life, death and responsibility by starting a llama farm. Now that the children are grown, they have stopped selling and showing llamas. "I was hoping it would turn one of them into a vet, but it didn't," Trich said. "Raising the llamas was a lot of responsibility and work for my kids. Now that we aren't showing or selling I have gone back and bought a lot of the llamas we sold. If someone couldn't take care of them, or I didn't like the environment they were in, I just gave them their money back. The ones I have left are here to live out their lives in



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comfort. I've trained them and take them up to the school to educate students. They know not to spit on anyone."

Trich passes on her spirit of volunteering by involving high school students in the annual fall festival. She plans and orchestrates the hayride each year with their help. "All along the hayride are little scenes, like *High School Musical* and *Tarzan*, that we have built, and the



students act out little parts," Trich said. "A lot of them have never acted, and it isn't their thing, but by the time the second or third trailer comes through, they are really getting into it. These kids work so hard, and I am so proud of what they do each year."

In Trich's spare time, she enjoys acting. Over 20 years ago, she acted in her first play, *Steel Magnolias*, and has not been able to stop. She even has her own agent. Trich has been in commercials, the television show *Walker, Texas Ranger* and various stage performances across the Metroplex. "I was very shy growing up," Trich said. "In high school, I'd make it to the door of the theater and never went in. While in college, I decided I was missing out and got involved in theater. I love the stage. Every time I get the role, it is a surprise to me."

Trich's enthusiasm for life brightens everything and everyone she meets. "If I hadn't let math and chemistry stop me, who knows what my life would be like now," Trich said. "It is important to me that I teach these kids to not let their lack of self-confidence stop them from following their passion. Look for your passion and follow it." **NOW**

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What a Wonderful World

— By Carolyn Wills



Martina Broussard speaks passionately about teaching contemporary world cultures to her sixth-grade students at Mansfield's Asa E. Low Jr. Intermediate School — so passionately that, at times, English sounds like her native language. Gradually, though, and particularly with words like “south” and “north” with no “th” sounds, the truth that German is her native language wins out. “Our first days in the classroom include talking about my accent,” she said. “It is one of the ways my social studies students begin to learn about ‘being different,’ and how being different is neither worse nor better, but simply different. In no time, they are defending the accent,” she said. “Well, there is the occasional giggle at the way I pronounce some students’ names, and sometimes, even with practice, we have to settle on a nickname.”




Martina is in her fourth year of teaching. "I wanted to teach world cultures," she explained, "but it turned out that my first two years were spent teaching Texas history. While I loved the school and the kids, part of me felt like I wasn't giving them everything I could. When Asa E. Low Jr. Intermediate School opened, I was fortunate to start teaching contemporary world culture. I love this curriculum and sixth grade."

The story of how Martina grew up in West Berlin, East Germany, to ultimately become a sixth-grade world studies teacher in Mansfield, Texas, is as interesting as it is inspiring. She was reared an only child in West Berlin amid the inconveniences of a city surrounded by East Germany and the presence of an infamous wall, which stood from 1961 through 1989. Her mother was a postal service clerk and, until he died when she was 12 years old, her dad was a retired shoemaker. Her mother eventually remarried, and Martina knew her stepfather as the only survivor of a Jewish family annihilated in the Holocaust. "My generation is the second generation after World War II," she explained. "Growing up, we had no national pride because of the horrible things our country had done." As a young girl, she was committed to doing her part to prevent anything like the Holocaust from happening again.

Martina worked for the Berlin government in the social welfare department, Political Asylum Division. Although she had never planned to leave Germany, when she was presented the opportunity to move to Dallas, Texas, she accepted. Her ability to speak German eventually led to a 10-year career with Lufthansa German Airlines. "I left the airlines to take a sales position with a German bridge manufacturer in Fort Worth," she said. Five years later, following a lot of travel, she made the life-changing decision to go to college. "My daughter, Maureen, and son, Marko, were in their early teens; my traveling was hard on our family, and I knew if I didn't go to college, I probably never would. That's when I left my job and enrolled at Mountain View Community College in Dallas."

As a college student, Martina was directed toward an internship at an



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elementary school. “I loved it,” she said, “and that’s when I realized ‘this is it,’ and I knew I wanted to become a teacher.” She finished her basics and enrolled at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth to graduate *cum laude* with a Bachelor of Science in Education with a major in social studies for middle grades, fourth through eighth. “I was the only 40-plus graduating senior among a lot of early 20 year olds!”

All that led to Martina now standing in her own classroom teaching contemporary world cultures appears to have come from an undeniable destiny. “I am a life long learner,” she said, “and absorb anything I can. There’s an old saying that says, ‘Prejudice is a great



timesaver that enables one to form opinions without getting the facts.’ I believe the word ‘ignorance’ applies to that also.”

She points to a large poster on a far wall in her classroom showing the United States as the only country on earth, and the headline saying “We are not alone.” The poster is from the “My Wonderful World” campaign led by the National Geographic Society with a mission to expand geographic learning.

“Too many students have no understanding about the rest of the world,” she said, “about geography or cultures. In the sixth grade, I get to introduce kids to the rest of the world. The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) curriculum for contemporary world cultures is organized into study



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Tessa Pierce is a Certified Public Accountant with over 14 years of experience in accounting and finance. She has worked for small and large publicly-held companies, as an auditor at Deloitte & Touche and as a VP of a multi-billion dollar private investment fund doing both capital management and financial reporting. Tessa has a BBA in accounting from the University of Oklahoma and an MBA in finance from Dallas Baptist University.

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Serving as the Builders Club advisor, Martina has also made it possible for Asa Low to provide students with an important extracurricular activity. Sponsored by the Kiwanis International Organization, which serves children throughout the world, the Builders Club is open to sixth- through eighth-grade students who have demonstrated excellent conduct and good grades. It is a precursor to the Key Club in high school. “We chartered our Builders Club last year. It is student-run, and I am proud to be the advisor. The kids come to me with a proposal for projects, and then, also present their proposal to Principal Short. Our Builders Club is in charge of the school’s lost and found and recycling programs, and the kids do projects to raise funds for good causes. They participated in the Trick or Treat for UNICEF program and raised close to \$300. They also participate in the March of Dimes March for Babies campaign, a 5K walk every April. The kids do the work themselves, and it is a great program for building leadership skills.”

Currently, Martina lives in Midlothian with her husband, a math teacher at Ennis High School, five cats inherited from various family members and two dogs. She is the proud grandmother of 3-year-old Jayden and 1-year-olds Jayse and Serenity. Each summer she makes a trip to Germany to visit her 84-year-old mother.

“Parents and guardians entrust me with their children, and I believe in keeping everyone in the loop — not only to talk about concerns, but also to brag about achievements. Communicating with other teachers is also very important. I love what I do. I learn something new about the world every day because the kids teach me!” **NOW**

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The House That Patience Built

— By Melissa Rawlins

At Home With Ramon and Connie Bermudez



Friends and family approaching the Bermudez family home drive across an unfinished chunk of driveway with a smile in their hearts, knowing that bump in the road will eventually be smoothed out. “We will do the concrete work together,” Ramon Bermudez said. “It will be another family project that we won’t contract out.” With such a philosophy, Ramon and his wife, Connie, have built a lovely 3,000-square-foot home where they rear their four children with love.

Four years ago, the whirlwind building process complete, the family began to relax. Now Ramon Jr. watches sports on the big screen TV in his downstairs bedroom, when he is not doing yard work or studying for his business degree at The University of Texas at Arlington. His sister, Natalie, comes home from her

sophomore classes at Mansfield High School and enjoys reading teen romance books, working on her computer or watching TV. When their younger brother, Marcos, is not learning with other fifth-graders at Mary Orr Intermediate School, he is at home helping his mom and dad by playing with the youngest child in the family, 2-year-old Diego. "He's the one that brings the life into the house," Marcos said. "When I am trying to rest, Diego gets out his little scooter and chases me around! When I get tired I start to lie down on the couch, he pulls me up and makes me chase him again! But I actually enjoy it."

Diego knows not to ask the girls to go outside with him, since Connie and Natalie are both indoor divas. But his daddy, Ramon, enjoys the outdoors and takes care of Diego all day. Ramon also coaches his sons' soccer teams. After 14 months of unemployment, Ramon is holding out for a good living wage in his chosen profession as an RV technician and patternmaker. "After we came to this recession, they no longer order so much," said Ramon, who is using his time wisely, going to school to learn air conditioning and electrical repair. "This gives me two more options."

"We just gotta keep up and never give up," said Connie, who cleans houses three times per week and volunteers at her church and at The Salvation Army on the other three days. "There are a lot of Hispanic people that don't know any



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English, so I'm translating and helping them. I enjoy doing that, and the good thing is I have Ramon who supports me on that. It makes me feel like I can serve somebody. It really means a lot for me as a person."

She and Ramon have worked together to serve their children, too. "I always tell my kids, 'There will be a time when y'all will go to college or get married or

whatever; but you'll never forget your parents never gave up.' I want them to understand that life is not easy," Connie said.

Her husband agrees: "We sit down with the kids, and I tell them, 'You know, when I came here to the U.S., I did not even speak English. I'm still learning, but I can communicate with the people now. Guys, you have everything in your hands

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because you live here. You are American citizens. I had to study hard to become a citizen. Just keep working, and believe in yourself, and you'll be able to have whatever you want." While Ramon waits for the right job, he enjoys sitting on his hand-renovated bench, listening to the birds, playing with Diego and cooking outside. "I open the grill and start cooking, and they love it. The kids bring me what they like — hotdogs, burgers, chicken legs — and ask me to cook."

The children go indoors to ask Connie to bake her signature muffins or prepare their favorite gelatina with fruit. "She makes one with two layers, with the kind of Jell-O with pineapples on the inside, then a layer of milk Jell-O with real fruit inside," raved Natalie, who watched her parents patiently collecting all the kitchen appliances over the first 10 years of her life.



"Our money is together; when we have \$200 extra each month, we split it," explained Connie, who married Ramon 23 years ago. They moved to Mansfield in 1989. They lived in a home not two miles from their current residence, and they dreamed and saved, purchasing supplies that were on sale and stashing them in closets and under the beds. "Of my half of our extra money, I would go buy, like, a light fixture, or some paint at Lowe's. Of his half, he would save all of it and say, 'Okay, I have the money for the stove or the microwave.' Over the years we collected each piece of this house: the hard wood, the shingles for the roof, the tiles."

One day, the time was right to buy their own land. Before they started building, the grass was six feet tall. Ramon Jr. and his father spent every afternoon cleaning up the lot, after they got a man to demolish the existing house. "Sometimes, when we talk about it with others, they might not believe us, but it really happened that way! Our money we



were making paid our bills, housing, gas and food. Any extra went for the new house. There were times when I felt we were going nowhere. She was like, 'It's okay, let's keep going.'

"I'd say, 'Let's sell it.'"

"She would say, 'No, let's keep going.' There were times she was saying, 'I'm tired; I just want to quit.'"

"That's when I come and say, 'No baby, let's keep going.'"

"Thank God, there were times when it was tough, but we finished and now, when I see it, I feel good," Connie said, smiling through her tears. "Now, I say, 'If God gave me so much — time, patience, family — I think I can give a little more.' Over the years, I have learned sometimes it doesn't work the way you think it's going to work. But in the end, it works just great."

In 2004, when the men they hired started building, Ramon used his truck and his back to move the materials — including the tons of Victoriano tile, which they brought from Mexico and had installed throughout every floor of their home. "It's not porcelain. It's the cheapest you can get," Connie laughed. "I just clean it with normal products. It doesn't get worn out. Always shines, no matter what."

"We've been here almost five years and still find random things inside the grass, like rocks or little toys or beer cans that still pop up when we cut the yard," said Ramon Jr., who enjoys exploring the land around the home built through patient teamwork. At the end of the day, everyone comes together, hugging and blessing each other good night. With a great big smile, Connie summed it up: "Our home is peaceful!" **NOW**



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Making the Goal

— By Sydni Thomas

While attending Southwest Texas State University, now Texas State University, Tracie took a break from soccer — with the exception of intramural teams. “I had one or two opportunities to play in college, but at the time I was burned out from playing for so long,” Tracie added.

Once she graduated, she moved to Dallas and started working for the United States Department of Education, Office of Inspector General. Tracie now telecommutes as an auditor with the department.



Every Sunday, Tracie Smith finds her way back to the game she has loved almost all of her life — soccer. She takes the field as a teammate, coach, wife and mother. Tracie has been playing soccer off-and-on for the past 27 years. When she was 7, she begged her parents to put her on a team in Ponca City, Oklahoma. She and her twin sister, Stacie, played together on the same teams through high school. “I played goalie for select soccer all the way through high school,” Tracie said. “I was on what they called a gold-level team back then. I played for my high school team at the same time.”



After being away from soccer for a while, Tracie decided it was time to get back on a team in 2000. She joined the Texas Rampage, an 18-and-over North Texas Women's Soccer Association (NTWSA) team. Games are every Sunday afternoon. Everyone on the team works full-time, so they do not hold practices. For Tracie it serves as a break from her busy schedule. "I've been with the team since 2000," Tracie said. "There are over 13 divisions. It's a large group of teams. Soccer is my one time to be away. My son would like to come to every game, but he is still young and it would be hard. The husbands of everyone on the team come to one game, and they've met their quota for the season. It's just a time for moms to get away for a couple of hours a week. Red, my husband, is great and stays home with Jaden so I can do this."

After her Sunday afternoon game with the Texas Rampage, Tracie heads back to Mansfield to play for The Blizzards, a Mansfield 30-and-over, co-ed team. "I've been with the Mansfield team for two or three years now," Tracie said. "There are other teams I have been part of over the years, but with a child now I don't have enough time for all of the teams. I will keep playing on a team for as long as my body will allow me."

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Even though Tracie played goalie for over a decade, she plays positions in the field now. From time to time, she will step in for her N'TWSA team, but she will not play goalie on her co-ed team. "The only way I know how to play the goalie position is 110 percent," Tracie said. "It would require me to dive head first into feet and jump into men, some of which are 200 pounds and 6 feet tall. I choose not to do this because I know I would end up getting hurt. Playing in the field gives me a great workout and keeps me fit."

Jaden asked to start playing when he was 3 years old, and Tracie could not have been more excited. Her son started in a YMCA league and has since moved up to a Mansfield youth league.

As Jaden gets older, Tracie wants him to find the sport he loves. He has already tried baseball and wants to play football. If Jaden decides soccer is the sport he wants to play Tracie will let him get involved with select teams. "He played baseball for a while, but he chose to get back into soccer on his own," Tracie said. "Jaden is athletic. He's all boy and loves other sports. I think he's too little for football right now though."

Using her experience and knowledge of soccer, Tracie stepped in to coach her son's team. Tracie knows it will be harder to be the coach as he gets older, but she will stay involved as long as she can. "Jaden has always seen me play, and I wanted to see him involved in something," Tracie said. "When he was 3, we decided to go ahead and put him in it. It doesn't take much skill for them to have a good time at that age. I wanted him to learn the correct way to play from the beginning."

Coaching gives Tracie a chance to spend time with her son. During her first year as the coach, Jaden had a tough time with her being the coach and giving attention to other players. She almost did not coach this season, but when Jaden begged and promised he would listen, Tracie signed up again. Now he is one of the strongest players on the team and is picking up the skills of the game. "Every dad knows about football, basketball and baseball," Tracie said. "Ask them about soccer and they think it is just a bunch of kids running on the field trying to kick a ball. It is that, but there is more to



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it than that. I try to teach the kids the fundamentals of the game so they have the basics if they choose to play the sport in years to come."

Even to coach a youth league team, soccer coaches must be licensed. Tracie has the basic license right now, but hopes to increase it when she gets some spare time to take the courses. "Right now, we are practicing at least two times a week for Jaden's team," Tracie said. "I don't have a lot of time to get past the basic licensing. I'm the only female coach in his age group. It's an opportunity that won't last forever. As he gets older and possibly joins select teams, there will be male coaches who are better for the job."

Coaching her son's team was not Tracie's first experience with coaching. In 2000, a friend's daughter started playing, and they needed a coach. She had wanted to find a way to coach others. "They didn't have anyone that knew anything about soccer," Tracie explained. "I coached them for a couple of seasons. I guess I always knew when I had kids that I would coach them. If I could find a way to coach other people, too, I would."

The Smith family is an active family. They enjoy spending time at the park, sailing on the lake and just being together. "Soccer is my second passion," Tracie said. "My family is my first." **NOW**

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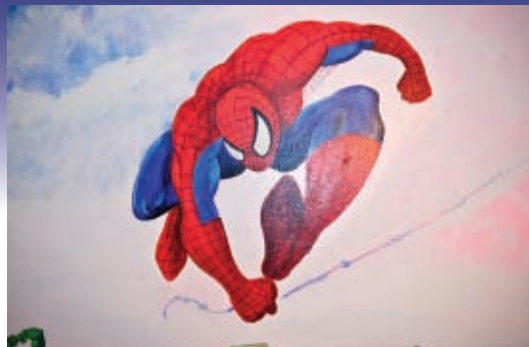
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Going After It!

— By Melissa Rawlins

Art historians laud muralists for bringing art into the public sphere. Modern muralist, John Stephenson, transports public experiences into the privacy of homes, businesses and churches in Mansfield and the Metroplex. Scenes of well-known heroes — from football players to Walt Disney characters to people straight out of Bible history — grace walls belonging to John's friends, clients and even his own family.

"Normally I paint the background first, but in the youngest kids' rooms, I painted the super hero characters first, so they could enjoy looking at them and then afterwards, a day or two later, I painted the background," John said. Asia, his 16-year-old daughter; Samuel, his 13-year-old son; Hanha, his 6-year-old daughter; Joshua, his 2-year-old son; and their mama, Sarah, have enjoyed watching John experiment and personalize each room of his house.

John is a true Renaissance man. Self-taught in a lot of areas, learning hands-on as often as possible, John's parents and grandparents encouraged him from the young age of 8 and told him his art was really good. As he progressed through school, he won numerous awards. After high school and two years of community college, he pursued

an art career more seriously, attending Ringling College of Art and Design in Sarasota, Florida, to learn more drawing techniques, computer graphics, photography and oil painting.

Continually busy, John is forever trying his hand at art in a variety of mediums: pencil, pastels, watercolor, pen and ink, charcoal, acrylic or oil painting on a small scale, while at the same time running a house painting business. "I taught myself to play guitar because I enjoy hearing this form of art so why not try it? If you're passionate about something, you go after it," said John, who hopes to inspire people through his art. "We're all made in God's image, and my image of Him is as the ultimate Creator; we too have this desire to create. I like to create! When I see a beautiful mural or some extraordinary painting, I say to myself, *I'd like to try that!*"

Some of John's walls are textured, painted and glazed, and his living room walls have impressions of leaves. "I wanted it to look like fossils, not a painted stencil, rather to have an imprint of something beautiful in nature," said John. His family room had dark wood paneling and now has hand-troweled Venetian plaster texture, painted earth-toned brown with a copper and bronze metallic glaze. "My latest interest is working with more transparent colors in my painting to achieve a stained or washed look. What inspired me was going to the Cotton Bowl and seeing large murals that aren't really painted, but look stained."

Depending on the size of the murals John paints on people's walls, he sometimes requires the help of his mother-in-law, another local artist and one or two helpers. "I'll oversee everything, talk to people about what they envision," John said. "We work together, and then I'll finalize it on paper. I then lay out the background on the wall, and if needed, I will instruct my helpers to paint inside the lines." Occasionally, he will rent a scissor lift, a mechanical scaffolding machine that lifts John and his helpers closer to the ceiling, so they do not have to get on a ladder. "Safety is extremely important when working in tall spaces. Being on a ladder, going up and down carrying paint is time consuming and dangerous," said John, who will



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rarely be found lying on his back to paint. "I'm really glad that I don't have to lie on my back, because it's hard enough to keep your hands above you all the time. If I'm gonna be up high and detailing with lots of colors, I want to be standing on the scaffolding. If I need to spend a lot of time for detail, I sit. Comfort is an important issue so that you don't portray an image of frustration, but rather of happiness."

Caring for his helpers' comfort and health, John makes use of his experience with various products to plan his projects. "I prefer latex paint, general house paint and tubes of acrylic. House paint is good for doing backgrounds, and you get really good coverage for large areas. The fine little tubes are for detailing and mixing of colors," John said. "What differentiates mural artists as opposed to canvas painters is the extensive knowledge of products, what can be done, how quickly. I know what medium to use, inside or outside. I know what products last, which are good, which will not harm you. Knowing that, you can protect people who are around you while you work. Breathing in too many fumes is hazardous to everyone's health — painters and homeowner."

The families who commission John will often sneak a peek and give input on the progress of the work. On one occasion, a creative moment happened while decorating the ceiling around a skylight. John recalled, "I had a little pearlescent paint when airbrushing clouds on the sky, and didn't realize that the sun shining into the room would make the sky glow!" From that heavenly beginning, he painted a dove descending.

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Then, he depicted stones on archways leading out of the couple's dining room into the hall, where he inset the phrase, "Great is Thy Faithfulness."

In another collaboration, a couple handed John five photos and asked him to memorialize on their son's bedroom wall the 2006 Rose Bowl football game, during which Vince Young became Most Valuable Player while The University of Texas at Austin (UT) beat the University of Southern California. "The 60-inch-wide UT Longhorn emblem in the corner was my idea, and I painted the helmet hanging from the horn," John said. Now that mass media moment is forever the special possession of one young boy in Mansfield.

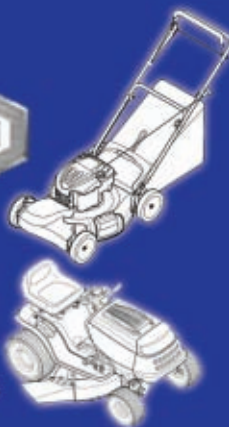
One of John's recent clients did go public, when she commissioned the artist to paint scenes of a few cowgirls. A lady out of Weatherford Googled him and asked him to translate vintage Dr Pepper art into a hand-painted landscape that wrapped around her travel trailer. "I painted one cowgirl with red hair, like the client, and to me she resembled Lucille Ball sitting at a campfire next to a little motto: 'God Bless Cowgirls!' Initially she just wanted two cowgirls; the mural grew from there, and was fun to do." John's wife, Sarah, said the whole neighborhood had fun watching John, who spent several weeks out in front of their home painting the four-sided mural with aerosol oil paints, so it would be weather resistant. There goes John, trying something new again, bringing art into the public sphere. **NOW**

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From left:

Tessa Gatlin Pierce enjoys her technical and challenging accounting profession and seeks to protect people.

Tips From Tessa

Tessa Gatlin Pierce uses her accounting skills and corporate experience to meet the real needs of businesses and individuals. — *By Melissa Rawlins*

Tessa Gatlin Pierce, Certified Public Accountant (CPA), shines brightly in this town she has called her home base for 18 years. Making contributions wherever she can — whether helping businesses and individuals in her accounting firm, sitting on the board for the Mansfield Community Theatre, worshipping and serving with First United Methodist Church in Mansfield or teaching a class at Texas Christian University — Tessa connects with people! “I think it’s fun to help people become successful,” Tessa said.

A professional CPA, Tessa dedicates herself to preventing surprises. To make sure her clients are well served, she maintains a network of other trusted professionals, so she can make appropriate recommendations when her clients have a need for any other specializations. In her CPA firm, Tessa focuses on corporate accounting and consulting services, litigation support and tax preparation for both individuals and businesses of all sizes.

“I have 15-plus years of professional accounting experience from which to assist corporate clients with their accounting and

consulting needs,” Tessa said. “My contract accounting services allow companies, both small and large, to have access to the technical accounting experience required to effectively manage their financial and accounting processes without having the expense of hiring a full-time controller.”

Tessa spent 10 years working in Big 5 firms and at a private investment fund, where she did financial reporting and coordinated transaction settlements with Wall Street firms. That experience has given Tessa a breadth of knowledge, which can also support a variety of work in the area of litigation support services.

Tessa offered a few timely tips for businesses planning their returns. “Tax filing deadlines for calendar year businesses are: March 15, 2011, for corporations; April 18, 2011, for sole proprietorships and partnerships; and May 16, 2011, for exempt organizations. For 2010 only, the self-employed health insurance expense is deductible for income and self-employment tax purposes,” said Tessa. “Form 1099s are due to recipients by January 31, 2011 and to the IRS by February 28, 2011 (if

paper-filed) or March 31, 2011 (if electronically filed). And there are new 1099 rules for 2011: Recipients of rental income are required to issue Form 1099s for rental service providers, like painters and gardeners,” Tessa said. “Finally, a hint for 2011: get a completed W-9 before you pay someone for the first time, to make your 1099 reporting faster and easier at year-end.”

As individuals approach tax season, Tessa provided advice for people preparing to file their 2010 taxes by deadline, which this year is April 18, 2011. “First, if you have proceeds from the sale of any stocks during the year, you’ll



“I have 15-plus years of professional accounting experience from which to assist corporate clients with their accounting and consulting needs.”

need to provide your tax preparer with the basis. Your broker should be able to provide that information if you don’t have the records,” Tessa said. “Secondly, the first-time homebuyer credit was extended to April 30, 2010. First-time homebuyers and homebuyers who were long-time residents of a previous home may be eligible for the credit. Finally, medical benefits (and deductions) for children under 27 are permitted starting in 2010 even if the child is not a dependent.”

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Physicians from left to right:
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L.D. Whitehead poses with his daughter Chloe.



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— By *Angel Biasatti*

When it comes to your heart, knowing the warning signs before you have a heart attack could save your life. Symptoms such as chest pain or discomfort in the chest, shortness of breath, or fatigue are the classic symptoms of a heart attack. However, you may experience discomfort in the neck, jaw, arm or back, and women often exhibit vague symptoms such as abdominal pain, indigestion or heartburn. Call 9-1-1 immediately if there's a chance you could be having a heart attack or if you're experiencing symptoms for more than five minutes.

Women, take your health to heart! It's not only a man's disease. While medical advances have improved survival rates, heart disease claims more women's lives than any other medical condition. One of the most important things to know about heart disease is if it is detected early, it can often be successfully treated. You can do that by getting regular checkups by your physician and knowing your blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose numbers.

It is important to stay fit and take care of yourself and your heart. Defend yourself against heart disease by avoiding tobacco, exercising and eating healthy. Smoking doubles your risk of developing heart disease; regular exercise will help lower your risk of heart disease. Eat healthfully — at least five servings a day of fruits and vegetables along with whole grains, will also lower your risk. While it may seem overwhelming at first to live a heart-healthy life, small improvements can make a big difference.

Don't take good health for granted. See your physician and discuss your risks and learn how to keep your heart healthy. Prevention is our best defense against heart disease. **NOW**



Angel Biasatti

*Director Community Relations and Marketing
Methodist Mansfield Medical Center*



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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.

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Get the Credit Rating You Want

— By *Tim Bordelon*

Customers often ask why lenders need to review their credit report before approving them for a home or car loan or a credit card. Credit reports contain a lot of valuable information about your previous financial behavior and help lenders predict whether you'll pay off any new debt. Therefore, it's important that you maintain a good credit report.

If you're just starting out, there are several ways to establish a good credit history. You could apply for a credit card or obtain an installment loan. It's smart to start out using credit cards and installment loans for small items — this gives you time to gain experience with working monthly payments into your budget. Just as credit cards and loans can help build your credit history, so too can your everyday actions. Always be sure to pay your bills

on time, including rent, electric, gas, water and TV bills.

If you are interested in learning more about your credit report, Equifax, Experian and TransUnion are the three major credit reporting agencies. You can contact one of these companies to obtain a copy of your credit report or visit www.annualcreditreport.com for one free copy of your credit report from the three major agencies per year. Please use caution, some of the other credit agencies offer free annual reports after you commit to a service membership.

Unfortunately, there are times when we may find ourselves with an unfavorable credit rating. If you've found yourself in this position, there are steps you can take to improve your credit report: begin paying your bills on time; avoid taking on any new debt; and work with your current creditors to repay your debts. If you are very late on your payments, consider calling a credit counseling agency instead of claiming bankruptcy. Credit counseling can assist you in reducing your debt without as much damage to your credit report. By addressing your problems early, many creditors will be willing to work with you provided you show a sincere interest in repaying your debts.

Whether you're just now beginning to establish credit for yourself or you're trying to improve your credit rating, taking smart steps now will enable you to enjoy greater opportunities later; when it comes time for you to apply for a loan on a new home or that car you've been eyeing, you'll be confident that your credit report won't be stopping you from the things you enjoy. **NOW**

Tim Bordelon is a State Farm agent based in Mansfield.

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January 6-10

Playful Painting Program: 10:00 a.m. for preschoolers; 11:00 a.m. for mommies and me; 1:00-3:00 p.m. for community painting studio; 4:30-5:30 p.m. and 6:30-7:30 p.m. for young artists and teens. Mansfield Activities Center, 106 South Wisteria Street, Mansfield. Jill Nonnemacher, artist and psychotherapist in Mansfield, teaches expressive arts workshops for children of all ages. For more information, contact Jill Nonnemacher at (817) 600-8745 or Jill Canoles, Mansfield Activities Center Recreational Coordinator, at (817) 453-5420, ext. 2224.

January 8

Elvis 76th Birthday Celebration Tribute Show: 7:00-9:30 p.m., Farr Best Theater, 107 N. Main Street, Mansfield, TX 76063. Doors open at 6:15 p.m. Come join us in celebrating Elvis' birthday with a tribute to him by performer David Allen. General admission seating: \$12 if purchased in advance or \$15 at the door. Reserve tickets are available for \$20. For more information, call (817) 453-1700.

January 11-13

Chisholm Challenge: 6:30-8:00 p.m., John Justin Arena in Will Rogers Memorial Center, 3400 Burnett Tandy Drive, Fort Worth. During the Fort Worth Stock Show's Chisholm Challenge, the public can watch the fun of competition

between riders from All Star Equestrian Foundation and all Texas equine therapy centers. Therapeutic horseback riding helps people dealing with physical, mental or emotional challenges by improving the rider's physical, cognitive and emotional skills, using the horse to help the rider focus on skill development. In therapeutic riding, the rider learns to control the movement of the horse. Come watch the awesome results! For more information, go to www.allstarfoundation.org or call (817) 477-1437.

January 20-23

Zombie Prom: Thursday-Saturday performances: 7:00 p.m. Sunday matinee: 2:00 p.m., Legacy High School Performing Arts Center, 1263 N. Main St. # A, Mansfield. The musical will be performed by students of Legacy High School Theatre. Visit <http://www.mansfieldlegacytheatre.com/> for more information.

January 23-26

The Meaning of Life Investigation: Introductory Luncheon on Sunday, January 23 at 12:30 p.m. Workshop on Wednesday, January 26 at 7:00 p.m. New Day United Methodist Church, 1475 Heritage Pkwy., #309, Mansfield. Explore questions like: Is there more to life than this? Why should Christianity be of any interest to me? Is there any evidence that it is true? Does the Christian faith have any relevance to my life

today? Investigators will begin with an informal time to get acquainted (with dessert), followed by a DVD presentation. Conversation about how the DVD applies to our lives will round out the evening. If you like the experience, come back each Wednesday night to explore other questions of life. For Introductory Luncheon reservations, call (817) 368-8252. To learn more, call (817) 225-2277, e-mail worleyd54@hotmail.com or go to www.ndumc.com.

January 25

Board Meeting for Mansfield Independent School District: 7:00-9:00 p.m., 605 E. Broad Street, Mansfield. Call Julie Moye at (817) 299-6382 for more information.

January 30

25-Year Celebration Service for Mansfield Bible Church: 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Mansfield Bible Church, 2351 Country Club Drive in Mansfield. The community is invited to come and celebrate 25 years of ministry in Mansfield with a special celebration service on Sunday. Following this service will be a fellowship lunch in the gym. There is no charge for this event. For more information, visit www.mansfieldbible.org or call (817) 473-8980.

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

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In The Kitchen With *Lisa Amoriello and Adair Smith* — By Adam Walker

Chef Lisa Amoriello, a CIA-trained chef, and Chef Adair Smith, who has 18 years experience in the restaurant business, teach the culinary arts for Mansfield Independent School District. They count their success as chefs and teachers by their impact on their students. “We have a third-year student, who has gone from being disruptive and, at times, dangerous in the kitchen, to being our executive chef, a model student, who now has a job working in the restaurant business,” Chef Adair explained. “When you can turn a student’s life around from bad to great ... you just can’t get that from any other career.”

Chef Amoriello agreed, “We could be cooking in high-end kitchens, but we get so much satisfaction from seeing students learning and growing with each other.” **NOW**

CAMPFIRE CHEESECAKE

Yield: 1 9-inch cake

GRAHAM CRACKER CRUST:

1 1/2 cups graham cracker crumbs

3 Tbsp. sugar

6 Tbsp. unsalted butter, melted

FILLING:

9 oz. dark chocolate, chopped

1 lb. cream cheese, at room temperature

3/4 cup sugar

Pinch salt

3/4 cup heavy cream

3 large (or 4 small) eggs

TOPPING:

12 large marshmallows

3 egg whites

3 Tbsp. water

1 tsp. cream of tartar

Pinch salt

1 cup sugar

1/2 tsp. vanilla

1. Preheat oven to 350 F. Combine cracker crumbs and sugar in medium bowl. (If using whole graham crackers, you will need nine total and will need to process until fine in the food processor.) Add melted butter and stir until mixture is evenly moistened. Press crust into a 9-inch diameter spring form pan. Bake until crust is set, about 12-15 minutes. Remove from the oven to cool. Reduce oven temperature to 325 F.

2. Melt chocolate over double boiler, stirring constantly. Do not allow water to boil; keep at a simmer. Once

chocolate is smooth, remove from double boiler and cool it to lukewarm, stirring occasionally.

3. Combine the cream cheese, sugar and salt in food processor; blend until smooth. With motor running, add heavy cream through the feed tube; process just until blended. With motor running, add melted chocolate, then eggs one at a time, blending and scraping down sides after each addition. Once batter is smooth, turn off processor; pour batter into the cooled crust.

4. Bake about 1 hour, until cake is slightly puffed along the outer edge and barely set in the center (center will look shiny and move slightly when pan is gently shaken). Once cake is done, transfer pan to a cooling rack and run a small sharp knife around the edge to loosen. Chill immediately, uncovered, for 8 hours or overnight.

5. Tear marshmallows in half and set aside. In a large metal bowl, whisk egg whites, water, cream of tartar and salt until frothy, soft peaks form.

6. Whisk in sugar. Set bowl over double boiler and whisk constantly until sugar dissolves and mixture thickens significantly, about 3 minutes.

7. Remove bowl from heat and stir in cut marshmallows. Allow to stand until marshmallows soften, about 3 minutes. Return mixture to double boiler and beat until stiff, shiny peaks form, about 4 minutes.

8. Beat in vanilla and continue to whisk until mixture is thick. Scrape topping

onto the chilled cheesecake. Using an offset metal spatula, spread topping to the edges of the cake, swirling decoratively. Using a crème brûlée torch, lightly brown the topping. Do not burn. Chill cake until cold again. When ready to serve, remove pan sides and cut.

FRONTIER CHICKEN SALAD

12 chicken breasts

1/4 cup vegetable oil

2 Tbsp. kosher salt

1 Tbsp. pepper, to taste

2 1/2 cups mayonnaise

1 red bell pepper, diced

1 cup of celery, diced

2 cups red seedless grapes

1 cup green onion, diced

2 cups toasted almonds

1/2 tsp. cayenne pepper

1 tsp. curry powder

1 tsp. paprika

1. Mix chicken breast with a little oil, salt and pepper in a large bowl. Place on a full sheet tray lined with parchment paper and cook for 12 minutes or just until done. Cool completely, then tear chicken into bite-sized pieces.

2. Combine all ingredients and mix well. Serve on a fresh croissant or by itself.

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

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