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JANUARY 2012

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Natalie Wright

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Publisher, Connie Poirier

General Manager, Rick Hensley

EDITORIAL

Managing Editor, Becky Walker
Waxahachie Editor, Sandra Strong
Editorial Assistant, Beverly Shay
Writers, Randy Bigham . Mary Boyd
Mike Boyd . Nancy Fenton
Rick Herron . Janice C. Johnson
Zachary R. Urquhart
Editors/Proofreaders, Pat Anthony
Angel Morris . Pamela Parisi

GRAPHICS AND DESIGN

Creative Director, Chris McCalla
Artists, Julie Carpenter . Martha Macias
Connie VanderBeek . Allee Brand
Marshall Hinsley . Arlene Honza
Brande Morgan

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography Director, Jill Rose
Photographers, Natalie Busch

ADVERTISING

Advertising Representatives,
Carolyn Mixon . Bryan Frye
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Reese and Davis Wright
have fun in their backyard.

Photo by Natalie Busch.

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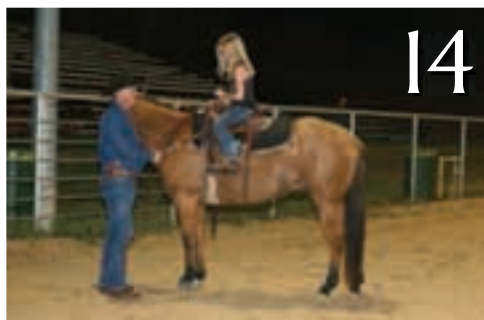
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Editor's Note

Happy New Year!

Golly, I can't believe it's already 2012. Where did 2011 go in such a hurry? Looking back, my "year in review" is filled with so many happy memories. First and foremost is the family's new arrival, my grandson, Easton Rider McIntosh. He's handsome like his daddy, easy going like his mommy and the apple of "Granny Strong's" eye. Moving my parents to Waxahachie has been wonderful for me, too. I had to reach a certain age myself before I was able to appreciate the wisdom I now find in my parents. That wisdom alone is priceless.

Moving my in-laws to Florida and saying goodbye to Anni, our 14-year-old Havanese, were difficult, to say the least. But I've found it takes the difficult added with the happy to bring the perfect balance of spice to this life, and we all need perfect balance.

Sandra

Sandra Strong
WaxahachieNOW Editor
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From East *to* West

— By Sandra Strong

Being a concerned citizen is the main qualification needed for the Adopt-a-Block program. The idea for adopting a block originated with Jim Kauffman, a resident who is centrally located in Waxahachie. For the program to find success, he knew it had to reach from east to west. He didn't reinvent the wheel; he raised awareness.

Educating those who were interested was half the battle. Jim accomplished this by enlisting others to pay it forward, so to speak. "I'm the secretary for the Interdenominational Ministerial Action Team," said Brenda Sexton, a lifelong resident of the east side. "He came to one of our meetings."

This meeting ignited a fire in Brenda that no longer stopped with just the area bordering her home. "I had already been taking care of a large portion of Dunlap, because I didn't want to sit on my porch and see trash," Brenda said. "I thought Adopt-a-Block was a great idea, so I began asking others on my street for some help."

The west side of town was also in the early stages of making a difference. "Jim approached me and wanted me to help speak out to other groups about the program," Susie Sambell said. "I asked, 'Why me? What makes me special to promote this?'"

Susie soon found out that being a caring citizen was the only

real role anyone needed in order to implement the Adopt-a-Block mentality into their own immediate neighborhoods. "We all have choices. The city can't possibly pick up all the trash, so it's up to us to help," she stated. "The beauty of the program is that it doesn't take a lot of training to pick up trash, it just takes a little time and a lot of caring."

Brenda and Susie didn't waste any time educating those in their realm of influence. After Brenda successfully got other homeowners on her street involved, she decided it was time to branch out. She moved on to Wyatt, Ross, Griffin and Graham streets. "Once the initial cleanup was complete, it's been easy to keep these areas litter-free," Brenda said, explaining that she continues to use her own street, Dunlap, as the example to follow. "In the beginning, people were getting upset. They'd get the area cleaned up, but the mess seemed to quickly return. I told them that Rome wasn't built in a day, so we couldn't get discouraged."

Susie emphasized keeping Waxahachie clean would be much easier if people would be responsible for their trash. "If we really want to get at the root of the problem," she explained, "we need to reduce, reuse and recycle." After doing some research on the Don't Mess With Texas Web site, Susie learned that trash coming from a moving vehicle is a large source of littering. Concerned citizens can write down the date, time and place of the offense, as well as the license plate number and model of the vehicle and send it to the Don't Mess With Texas Web site.



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“Violators will receive a letter and a Don’t Mess With Texas litter bag. Littering is against the law. The first offense can be a fine up to \$500,” Susie added. “Repeat offenders can pay up to \$2,000 and spend up to 180 days in jail.” When hauling trash in a pickup truck, the bed must



have proper covering. And it’s considered illegal dumping if the trash thrown out weighs more than five pounds, which means an even stiffer fine.

Before the program could be implemented, a new city ordinance had to be addressed pertaining to outside storage within Waxahachie city limits. Both women agree that Jim was instrumental in seeing the ordinance come to fruition. “Jim basically wrote it,” Susie said. “The city needed to be on board with the big stuff before picking up the little stuff would make a difference.”

“It’s up to us as concerned citizens to call the city when we see the ordinance is being broken or ignored,” Brenda said.



"People need to look outward," Susie added. "We need to take ownership of our city. It's important to educate the community, so they understand the block really belongs to those who live on it."

When people see the ordinance being ignored or broken, Brenda and Susie encourage them to call the City Health Department, "which they can do anonymously," Susie said. "The level of need is only known when we report it."

As stated on their list of safety tips, the Adopt-a-Block program promotes responsible behavior and a cleaner, more attractive city. Everyone who participates in the program is asked to always keep this particular goal in mind when conducting cleanups. Some of the things you can do to fulfill this goal is stay on the right-of-way, making sure to face traffic, whether you are alone or with a group. Wear bright colored, protective clothing, gloves and hard soled shoes. And work in fair weather during daylight hours.

What not to do can be based on common sense. Construction or maintenance sites are off limits. If the object that needs to be picked up appears hazardous, such as firearms, explosives, propane cylinders and drug-related paraphernalia, you need to contact the City Health Department immediately. And it's so important not to distract passing drivers or other volunteers. Safety, along with education, goes hand-in-hand when actively working the program.

Brenda loves the east side of town

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just as much as Susie loves the west side. Their dedication to the program is apparent as you drive down their respective blocks and see what's missing. "The litter is missing," Brenda smiled. "Once you see how beautiful the neighborhoods can be, it's easy to get in a routine of picking the trash up whenever you see it."

"People are always walking their dogs," Susie said. "How hard would it be to pick up the trash you see instead of just walking by it?"

Caring is synonymous with effort. Brenda continues to pray that God will give her the strength, patience and understanding she needs with the



continual cleanup efforts in and around her community. She's learned firsthand what it means to give to others. "Doing and giving to others brings blessings," she explained. "I keep the vacant lot across the street from my house picked up."

The private school on the other side of the lot did a class project, and Brenda, because of her effort to keep the east side litter free, was the proud recipient. "They gave me the gift of a flower garden in my front yard," she beamed. "This is my little piece of Waxahachie, and I wouldn't trade it for any other."

*Editor's Note: For more information, visit www.waxahachie.com or call the City Health Department at (972) 937-7330 to report an ordinance offense. **NOW***



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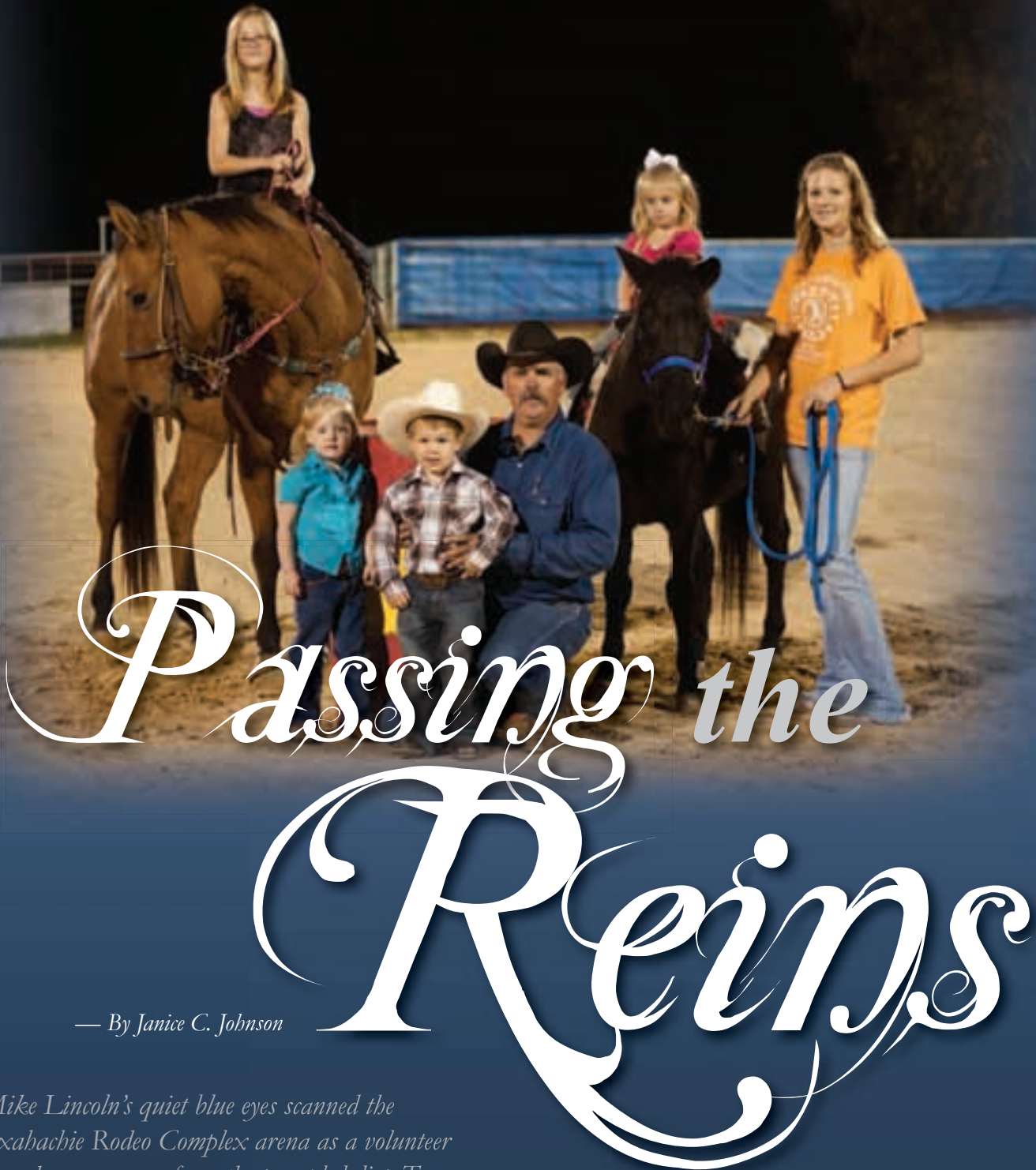
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— By Janice C. Johnson

Mike Lincoln's quiet blue eyes scanned the Waxahachie Rodeo Complex arena as a volunteer removed orange cones from the trampled dirt. Two others carried in six freestanding poles and set them up to form a line along the center. A long tape measure stretched between them, fluttering slightly in the breeze as they spaced the poles at even, regulation intervals. The next race in Ellis County Riding Club's "Playday" event would soon begin. The rodeo-style sport, suitable for all ages, builds horsemanship skills without the dangerous aspects of professional rodeo events.

"I grew up in this arena," Mike said. "We did playday since we were kids." Over time, though, the sport seemed to fade away in Waxahachie. While a few area Cowboy churches offered playday at their locations, the Rodeo Complex stood empty. Mike eventually became concerned that the idle facility might be demolished for some other use.

Rather than sit by, he applied to serve on the Rodeo Grounds Committee of the City's Park Board. Meanwhile, he and some interested friends drew up plans to form a county-wide riding club "to bring playday back to the public," he explained.

Once on the committee, Mike requested and got permission for the fledgling Ellis County Riding Club to use the arena. The




club launched last July, and according to Mike, "It's really taken off — we have members from Ellis and the surrounding counties." By September, in fact, 60 people of all ages had joined the club. Mike, the club's founder, was elected to serve as its first president. Besides playday, the club offers team roping and adult barrel racing.

Playday participants compete in age-group categories. The under-6 level, called Lead Line is meant to familiarize beginners with the races. An adult on foot leads the horse and its small rider through the course, with the child not even using the reins. Mike's little grandson, Ryder James Creed, went through the slalom-like poles course with Debbie Watson, the club's vice president, leading the way.

The Peewee category takes in children from ages 7-12, such as Maddie Hamm, age 9. Maddie, who already has six years of riding experience, said her favorite races are the poles and the traditional cloverleaf-pattern barrels.

Maddie's father had been the first in the family to take up riding, and she had wanted to try it, too. "I like being around horses — they're so sweet, and I like to do stuff with them — and be with my Dad," she said. And her single favorite thing about racing: "I like the way it feels. I like to go fast," she emphasized.



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“We’re really here for the kids. There’s no alcohol, no abusing the horses. We watch everything pretty closely.”

While playday events are safer than professional rodeo, mishaps still occur. Last spring, Maddie got thrown over her horse’s head when he stopped suddenly. She did not ride for a few months afterward, but has been competing around the area since last summer. She also has a new horse, Dusty, who is now learning the various patterns.

After Pee wee, riders, ages 13-16, graduate to Juniors level. By this time both horse and rider can usually run the race patterns fluidly. Some races become easier as the riders grow taller. One example is Golfette, which involves bending down to pick up a golf ball from a basket and dropping it into a barrel at the opposite end of the arena.

Whenever the arena becomes too churned up, the dirt must be smoothed out. Johnny Stanton, who is Mike’s



brother and the club's arena director, obliges by making a few passes in a front loader with a drag attachment. The equipment, reminiscent of a cowboy Zamboni, gets the job done in just moments.

At 17, riders advance to the Intermediate level and compete there through age 24. Katie Helms, a Red Oak High School junior, brings considerable experience and enthusiasm to the arena. Her aunt taught Katie to ride when she was 8. Later, professional rodeo cowgirl, Sherry Foster, got Katie started with playday and rodeo. Katie credits Sherry's horse, Cujo, with teaching her everything she knows about playday racing. She recalled, "Everybody was afraid of Cujo. He was mean to everyone." She paused and smiled, "except me."

Once Katie had learned the basics, Sherry took her to rodeos and provided horses for her to ride. As Katie progressed, she said, "Sherry put me on faster and faster horses. Eventually she quit competing and just let me ride for her."

Katie's ornate belt buckle speaks for her talent and skill. She won it by taking ninth place at a state-level competition. "And that was with a substitute horse," she noted.

For playday events, Katie usually enters the barrels and poles races. But she has plans to branch out and add a goat-tying race to the club's program. She is willing to both organize and lead the new event

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because "I want to do goat-tying myself, whether anyone else joins me or not."

Club members are eligible, for a small fee, to compete for points in club events. When they accumulate enough points (by placing first through sixth in each race), they qualify to compete in district meets. They may then go on to qualify for higher levels. The Ellis County, Cedar Hill and Midlothian clubs form a district, with Cedar Hill hosting the district meets. Nonmembers may participate in club races at no charge. Their races are timed, but they are not eligible for points. Many riders also make an exhibition (practice) run before the official race begins.

Club dues are only \$35 per year for a family. Part of the money goes to provide a year-end banquet, with awards for cumulative points. "We want to keep the dues low," Mike observed, "since they had to go buy a horse and all that equipment, which isn't cheap."

The playday environment is supportive and family-friendly. Parents and siblings chat with friends, watching riders from lawn chairs or the bleachers. As Mike pointed out, "We're really here for the kids. There's no alcohol, no abusing the horses. We watch everything pretty closely."

Soon the poles exhibition rounds were done, and Mike climbed to the announcer's stand to call up the riders. One of the Peewee-level girls started out of the gate, her horse walking toward the course. Partway through, the horse became distracted and stood looking over his shoulder. Mike encouraged the rider over the public-address system. "Use the reins, Hon," he said. "And give him a little kick. There you go. You're doing just fine."

Off the microphone, he confided with a grin, "Sometimes I know too much about horses. One day I love 'em. The next day I just want to sell out and buy a boat." **NOW**



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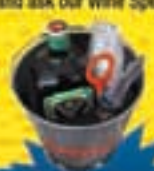
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Aloha

— By Randy Bigbam

The New Year finds a young Waxahachie family snug as a holiday bug in the house of their dreams. For David and Natalie Wright, no wintry blast can extinguish the warmth of making memories in the home they renovated for just that purpose. “We wanted a place that would fit our needs as a growing family,” said Natalie, a teacher and business entrepreneur. “Our son and daughter were just babies when we moved in. It was perfect for us, and it still is.”

At Home With
David and Natalie

Wright



The sprawling, 1960s' era brick house, located in a leafy, north-side neighborhood, has been fully renovated since the Wrights moved in two years ago. "This was one of the first homes built in this addition," David said. "It was once a cotton field owned by the Chapman family." With fashionable



architectural details, like added vintage white door facings and dark paneling replaced by neutral-painted walls, the refurbished home features interiors that are both tailored and romantic in style.

The Wrights know something about romance, having fallen in love on the island of Oahu. "I was in the Navy and stationed in Hawaii when we met," said Indiana-born David, now a credit analyst in Dallas. "You can't beat Hawaii as a beautiful locale, so it wasn't a tough assignment." Natalie was fresh from Texas Tech University, and with three fellow graduates, had moved to Hawaii to teach elementary school. "I knew within minutes she was the one," David confessed, adding teasingly that it took him intended a little longer to choose him.

"We met about two months before I was to come back to Texas," Natalie recalled. "Well, I moved home, but after that made many flights back to Hawaii!" Finally, following a nine-month deployment to the Arabian Gulf, David popped the question. The pair was married in 2004.

After living for five years in the Indian Hills section of Waxahachie, the Wrights found their current home, moving in on David's birthday in 2009, a good omen that only confirmed their feelings that the place was meant for them. "I grew up in this neighborhood," said Natalie, who teaches part time at a local church daycare while running her home-based children's clothing company. "We loved this house, and although I knew it

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would take a lot of work to update it, we thought it was just perfect for us." Natalie's parents still live two blocks away in the home where she grew up.

The other deciding factor for Natalie was that the former owners had put in a sewing room, out of which she operates her clothing company, One Shoe Girl. After what David called the easiest closing experience ever, the house was



theirs. Renovations began immediately, quickly followed by Natalie's redecorating plans. "I love a bargain," she pointed out. "The hunt for good deals on pretty things is what I love best."

David had faith in his wife's decorating abilities and stood aside to allow her full reign. "I did provide some cheap labor here and there," he laughed.

One thing not changed in the renovation was the open floor plan David and Natalie had admired when they first inspected the four-bedroom, four-bath property. "We loved the basic layout, and I could see the potential right away," Natalie said. To increase the play of light from the house's large windows and to give the effect of greater space throughout, the Wrights did knock out a wall separating the



kitchen from the den, inserting a bar and a domed entrance flanked by columns. A bright kitchen with custom cabinetry installed by the Benavides Cabinet Shop opens into the formal dining room, a bastion of elegance, blending feminine and masculine elements in the colors, furniture and decorative accents Natalie selected to enhance this haven of gastronomic cheer.

Panels of quilted black and white tapestry and crimson silk make striking curtains, their motif repeated in the place settings on the ebony dining table that seats eight. "I'm not scared to put unique colors together," Natalie admitted. "I enjoy mixing bright colors like aqua and gold, and I love red and black." The table, though a new piece, is antique-inspired, a stylish, modern take on a

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Across a sparkling marble entranceway, the formal living room with its gabled bay window carries on the dining room's



dominant black, white and crimson scheme, softened by tones of cream and ivory in upholstery and wood textures ranging from oak to cherry. "I was inspired by the big front windows," Natalie said. "They were so welcoming,



and I could just picture what the inside could look like!"

Opening off the foyer, the den is a more rustic version of the formal living room, including deep leather chairs, tan upholstery and the more durable accents necessary in a home with small children underfoot. A long corridor connects the living areas to the bedrooms. Little Reese's room is a feminine oasis of pink and white with a sweet little bed. "I really like the shabby chic look," her designing mother averred. "So that's what we did here in a tiny tot version." Vintage prints decorate the walls, a doll rests in a Victorian baby carriage and near a window perches a tea table for

little girls' use at dress-up time. Davis' room has a train theme, with model trains, conductors' caps and kerchiefs as decorations. "He's moving on to other interests, like cars and baseball, so the room may change soon," predicted his doting dad.



The master bedroom is another clever mix of the traditional and modern influences that define Natalie's design vision. Ivory and pastel fabrics, some in toile, others in countrified prints, and dark wood are used with excellent taste. The master bath has a quaint vanity ledge emulating an old-fashioned ladies' dressing table. The master bedroom overlooks a rear garden with its New Orleans-style patio, sculpted fountain and summer house. On one side, a wrought

iron gate mingles with raised plant beds at intervals and on the other side of the yard is a swing set for the kids.

A place that serves the family for indoor-outdoor fun is the sun room, decorated in Natalie's own conception of tropical style. In homage to the couple's romantic beginning in Oahu, there are Hawaiian prints and other native artwork on the walls, and the central sofa, done



to Natalie's custom specifications, is in a rust and ivory floral print with pale aqua background. "We're so happy with the place," Natalie said. "It's what we wanted. And it was meant to be. We feel like God gave us this house. It was totally God's doing." **NOW**

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— By Zachary R. Urquhart

There's a punch line to an old adage that goes, "everyone failed because no one did something that anyone could have done." Many jobs and tasks that provide help for people take years of training. Doctors go to school for almost a decade. Teachers receive specialized training. Police officers must pass rigorous tests, both mentally and physically.





Some people often skip opportunities to help others because they lack training and skills. And sometimes they simply do not see the needs around them. Wayne Baggerly and Betty Jeffcoat have seen an opportunity to lend a hand, and they have seized it. Wayne and Betty, who each deliver food for Ellis County Meals on Wheels, are two of Waxahachie's community servants.

In 2001, Wayne retired from nearly four decades of managing grocery stores. Almost immediately, he knew he had to do something. "I didn't want to stay at home," he explained. "I had heard about Meals on Wheels, so I called." Wayne took the initiative and instantly became a staple for the organization. "I started with two routes and was driving on call, which meant another day each week." Wayne has continued to love the work he does, though he has since cut back to one route each week.

Wayne spends most of his time outside Meals on Wheels with Carol his wife of 55 years. The two have a daughter and one granddaughter. Betty has been married to Billy for 60 years, and they have three children. Wayne and Betty have known each other since the mid '60s through a connection in their families. Additionally, as Betty mentions, "I knew him from the grocery store."

Betty was a buyer for a refrigeration company for 32 years and often shopped at the Safeway store where Wayne served as manager for 24 years before retiring from Minyard's following 10 years of managerial service. Along with their casual connections, Betty tells of the most important tie between Wayne and herself. "Wayne and his wife have taken care of my grandkids since they were born 29 years ago," she said.

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Betty got involved with Meals on Wheels almost immediately after retiring in 2005. "When I was working, I would always talk about volunteering someday. Well, two days after I retired, Wayne called and told me I was needed. I started right away." Betty accompanied Wayne on his route a few times, and eventually she took her own route. Betty now delivers every Monday, with the only exception being holidays on which Meals on Wheels is closed. "I don't take appointments on Mondays, those are my delivery days, and people know that."

Most of the time, a route will consist of eight to 10 houses, though both Wayne and Betty have delivered to as many as 13 houses in one route. The process is amazingly simple. They go to the office the morning of their route and pick up prepackaged food in coolers. Then, they drive to each of their houses to drop off food. Sometimes they sit and visit for a short time. Wayne sometimes takes care of little things around the house. "I don't do any major work, but if you see something that needs to be taken care of, you might stay and help," he explained. "If I see something really bad, I might report it so that someone can fix whatever the issue is."

Wayne and Betty love the work they do. They recognize they likely get more out of it than their recipients. "They really make our day every time we deliver," Betty stressed. For the most



part, the people who benefit from the food they deliver are shut-ins who don't get outside much, if at all.

Though their task is simple enough, some days are harder than others. "When it's cold or raining, these people still have to eat," Betty stated. "If school is in session, Meals on Wheels delivers."

One downside to the volunteering Wayne and Betty do is that the people they serve are often nearing the end of their lives. "There has been a time or two when I got to a house, and the wife had to tell me that her husband had passed away a few days before," Betty admitted. Even though there are challenges and difficult days, Wayne and Betty love helping those who need it. "I feel so good that I have good health and am able to help this way," she said. "You know volunteering — that's a good thing to do."

In delivering for Meals on Wheels, Wayne and Betty are not just helping anyone, as Wayne recognized. "These are the folks who built the town," he said. "We aren't just serving; we're giving back to the people who made this area what it is." Though Meals on Wheels primarily helps elderly people, the service is meant for anyone who cannot get food for themselves.

Just as Wayne recruited Betty several years ago to help with Meals on Wheels, Betty has likewise recruited new volunteers to the organization. "The receptionist at my dentist's office always

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talked about doing something like me when she retired," Betty said with a smile. "Sure enough, she retired and stepped in to volunteer."

They both try to spread the word about the organization they spend so much time serving. Betty has even enlisted her grandchildren in helping deliver food. "When I can, I bring my grandkids along," she said. "It helps remind them of the importance of doing things like this."

Wayne and Betty always try to encourage people to follow their lead, and the lead of those who have come before them by serving their community through Meals on Wheels. Wayne explained how easy it is to help. "You just call or come down to the office, and they get you started. Usually, new people start with a few fill in days until they are comfortable." Though there is a great need, Meals on Wheels is careful not to overextend their volunteers. Wayne had to cut back a few years ago, and they supported his decision. "You want to enjoy things like this, and they know that."

Their friendship has spanned six decades. After years of rearing kids, sharing meals with families and working together in their careers, they now share a bond of serving their community. Though they bring great joy and meet basic physical needs of others, both Wayne and Betty insist that their reward is much greater than anything they provide. They are examples in showing that service to others is most often the greatest service to self. By delivering food with Ellis County Meals on Wheels, Wayne and Betty take away satisfaction, and it's guaranteed. **NOW**

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— By Rick Herron



Once upon a time, not so long ago, the world was very different. Electricity hadn't been discovered, so there were no televisions, stereos, telephones, computers, iPhones, Blackberries, iPads, Kindles or cell phones. In those days of not-so-long-ago, boys and girls everywhere had fun reading rectangular-shaped objects that, when opened, transported them to different times and places, all full of wondrous people and things never before seen or heard of.

These timeless "objects" were called books, and they still don't need buttons or batteries to work. On February 3, 2012, Waxahachie's 15th annual D.E.A.R. Day (Drop Everything and Read) will remind school kids that reading books is still a great way to have fun and learn at the same time.

Waxahachie's event is an offspring of National D.E.A.R. Day, an annual event led by several education-related entities, such as the National Education Association (NEA), Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) among others. The national event is held on April 12, the birthday of popular author, Beverly Cleary.

For Partners in Education co-chairs, Teresa McNiel and Chelsi Frazier, D.E.A.R. Day is just plain fun for the volunteers and kids alike. "It's a one-day event where for two 15-minute periods, hundreds of volunteer readers take over classrooms all across the city and read to the kids as a way to encourage and promote reading," Teresa said.

Partners in Education (P.I.E.) was started to encourage and support volunteerism in the community. "It began as an arm of the Waxahachie Chamber of Commerce in an effort to provide a link between the community and education," Teresa explained. "The volunteer programs came from this, as well as the community education programs Melissa Cobb has so beautifully put together." Teresa is a longtime member of P.I.E., and Chelsi has been involved with the organization for three years.

Even though studies have shown that young people worldwide are using mobile devices starting as early as kindergarten, Teresa pointed out they are just a newer method of reading. "The way we read and learn is different now than it was even as recently as a few years ago, but the fundamental need for reading hasn't changed, just the methodologies," she said.

The logistics involved in pulling



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off something as huge and intricate as D.E.A.R. Day every year are literally mind-boggling, but Teresa and Chelsi don't hesitate to give the credit for managing such a massive undertaking to Melissa Cobb, director of Partners in Education. "Melissa is truly the spoke that makes the D.E.A.R. Day wheel turn," Teresa said.

"The amount of preparation and organization this enormous project requires could not be performed each year by a more capable person than Melissa," Chelsi added.

Looking back on what led them both to get involved with D.E.A.R. Day, Teresa and Chelsi point to a fundamental love of the Waxahachie community and its children. "I moved here 26 years ago and absolutely love this community," Teresa said. "I got involved with the schools here when our kids were enrolled, and started volunteering with the Chamber of Commerce. I read at the first D.E.A.R. Day 15 years ago this January and have loved doing it ever since."

Chelsi's story echoes Teresa's in her basic love of volunteering. "I moved here about four years ago from Stephenville, and started at my job at Citizens National Bank of Texas about the same time. I represent the bank on the P.I.E. board, and every year I'm happy to say we have about 20 employees who volunteer to read when D.E.A.R. Day comes around," Chelsi said.

Fliers announcing D.E.A.R. Day were distributed in early November to start the process of recruiting readers



to fill two 15-minute sessions at 8:45 a.m. and 10:15 a.m. The planned agenda for Waxahachie's D.E.A.R. Day has been choreographed literally down to the minute. "On February 3, over 500 volunteers will come to schools throughout Waxahachie ISD, one in each pre-K through eighth-grade classroom," Teresa explained. "An announcement will be made over the public address system at 8:45 and 10:15 a.m. to 'drop everything and read!' For 15 minutes, the volunteers will read to the classes from selected books."

D.E.A.R. Day volunteers will be comprised of individuals from local businesses, service organizations and churches, some who have read every year for the last 15 years. "Those returning volunteers will be identified by buttons they will be wearing recognizing their past efforts," Teresa said. Volunteers can pick their preferred session time and will read from books selected by the class instructor. "If you can't volunteer as a book reader, you can donate funds for the purchase of books by contacting Partners in Education," she added.

Encouraging reading should be a joint effort by several entities, Chelsi pointed out. Parents, schools and the community at large all have pivotal roles in encouraging reading. "A parent's role in encouraging their kids to learn how to read — for learning purposes and also just for the fun of it — is imperative," Chelsi said.

Additionally, the school's role is an integral part of a continuing effort to



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Both ladies pointed out that because today’s society has more distractions than ever for kids, the main goal of Waxahachie’s annual D.E.A.R. Day is even more vital than ever before. “Because there are so many more things for kids to do for entertainment, reading may not be as important to the newer generation as it was for past ones,” Teresa mused. “Young people today have so many more choices than we did, thanks to technology. It’s more important than ever to make a concerted effort to use the best parts of new technology — like electronic readers — to show kids that reading is still a fun pastime.” **NOW**

Volunteers may also stop by the WISD Administration Building at 411 N. Gibson Street for further information or contact Melissa Cobb at (972) 923-4631 or mcobb@wisd.org for their place to read.




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STILL LOVING THAT LATIN BEAT

— By Rick Herron



Tejano — or Tex Mex — are terms that describe various forms of folk and popular music originating from and enjoyed by the Mexican-American populations of central and southern Texas. When Tejano radio stations began declining across the country in the late 1990s, Tejano Internet radio started growing in popularity. Listeners simply use their computer to bring up a Web site, turn up the volume and enjoy.



That's where "Crazy" Chuy Hernandez and his Chicano Express Radio Show come in. When they "arrive," the whole room lights up like a Fourth of July sparkler on steroids.

He's not as young as he used to be. He's nearly blind now, having been born with eyesight problems. He's also a little heavier these days and moves a bit slower than he used to. None of that matters. Chuy is every bit as electric as he was when he started out in the music business as a drummer in the 1960s.

"I began my broadcast career in Corsicana working at KAND in the



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1970s, and I also worked at KUQQ in Fort Worth and KBEC," he remembered, "but my musical life started in 1963, when I was 12, as a drummer with my brother, Refugio, in a rock and roll band." Heavily influenced by the Tex Mex sounds of Little Joe and Sunny Ozuna, Chuy joined the Sun-Lites, a Tex Mex orchestra and from there, everything took off.

As a front row witness to the evolution of Tejano music, he saw how the medium went through several name changes over the years. "Back in the '30s, our music was called Regional Mexican Music. In the '50s the term Tex Mex was invented to describe



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it, and in the '60s through the '70s it was called Chicano music. The '80s saw the name change again to Tejano music, which is still the norm today," he explained.

Thinking back on how it all started, Chuy admits his career choice was not a big surprise to anyone. "My dad was a



musician, so it was in my blood. Mom, though, wanted me to be a minister and never once congratulated me on any of my career accomplishments. The funny thing is, shortly after she died, my sister gave me a box of clippings Mom had saved of my career, so I guess she was a little proud of what I became," he remembered.

Thanks to his Chicano Express Radio Show, Chuy is still a solid presence in the music world. The show is a three-hour-long format that he records three times a week, and he is online 24-7. "It's recorded nonstop, mistakes and all," he said, his huge laugh filling the room.

He points to his high school sweetheart and wife, Juanita, who he says is the real heart and soul of Chicano Express. "Chicano Express is my wife, pure and simple. When we were making the big money, she handled our finances and kept things running smoothly. I always say the awards they've given me should really go to her."

Chuy and Juanita will soon be celebrating 41 years together, an accomplishment in itself, given all the temptations in the music business. "Others warned her not to marry a musician, but she didn't listen," he laughed.

His family is a source of great pride

for Chuy. Oldest daughter, Jessica Morren, is in television; middle child, JoAnna Miranda, works for Ellis County; and the couple's son, Jesus Hernandez, is also a musician and video producer. Several photographs of his parents, two brothers, one sister and his wife also

adorn the walls of his Waxahachie home.

"We were the first Tejano music program on the Internet, back in 1999. Our format is not only Tejano, but a mixture of all genres of music," he said. "Whatever people want to hear, we will play it."

Chuy's vast musical library — over 60,000 albums — consists of 45s, eight tracks, cassettes, CDs and a few 78s. His career highlights include being a musician with The Organization Band,

The Laymen Gospel Quartet and many more. He has on occasion performed as special guest drummer with groups such



as Fandango USA, Texas Latino, Johnny Bustamante & L.A. Band and Conjunto Villarreal, to name only a few.

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Another item of sentimental value to him is a very special bottle of Coca Cola. "Selena [Quintanilla, a famous Tejano singer in the '90s], whom I met when she was just starting out, gave that to me in 1995, just prior to her death," he remembered. "I miss her very much."

He laughs as he recounts how he got the nickname Crazy. "I was working in Fort Worth back in the early '80s. Every time I'd say something stupid, everyone around me would tell me 'That's crazy, Chuy,' and eventually, it stuck." He doesn't really mind it, except on those occasions when someone calls the house and asks for Crazy.

Chuy will forever be the deeJay, broadcaster and all-around entertainer, but he confesses he still misses being on stage. But, at this season of life, promoting his favorite causes gives him the most satisfaction. "I love to help out with toy drives for underprivileged kids," he admitted. "And you can always count on me to do whatever I can to spread the word about scholarship funds because education is so important to the Hispanic community."

In fact, when he gets to talk to area school kids, he imparts what he's learned throughout the ups and downs of his fabled career. "I tell them it doesn't matter what career you decide to do, just give it your 150-percent best, stay humble and never ever brag of your accomplishments," he explained. "First and foremost, love what you do and perfect it. The riches and fame will come later, and when they do come, don't be a spoiled brat."

This "Godfather of Tejano Soul," as he was anointed by his peers in the '90s, knows exactly who should get the credit for his success. "It's the people who make you important — the listeners, the musicians, the promoters. I don't consider myself important. I'm just a normal guy who can't be without my music." **NOW**



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Staff attendants, Emily White and Karen Graham, and Dr. Linda Cosgrove look forward to helping clients; comfortable waiting area; and a client gets a customized workout.

No Sweat Workout

"Get Moving! intends to explode into the New Year." — By Sandra Strong

Traditional gyms can be intimidating for some people and impossible for others. These are the individuals that Dr. Linda Cosgrove had a desire to reach. As a local chiropractor since 1989, Dr. Cosgrove also saw a need with her patients. "They wished Waxahachie had a passive exercise facility," she said. "They told me they would work out at a nontraditional gym if we had one."

Dr. Cosgrove began to look into it. "Everything just fell into place," she admitted. "I had bought the old Tyler Refrigeration union hall because I needed the parking for my clinic. The equipment came from a lady whose business partner had become ill, and they had to close their business. The 10 machines fit the space perfectly; it's as though the room was made for the machines."

Get Moving! opened in November of 2010. It has become the "No Sweat" facility for those wanting a wide range of benefits from a low-impact workout in a relaxed, quiet atmosphere. The 10 machines offer help to improve poor circulation and mobility, while firming muscles and trimming inches. "You can lie there and let the machines do the work, or you can customize the workout by adding resistance. It is appropriate for everybody — from those who simply do not like traditional gyms to those who have arthritis, diabetes and other health conditions that make regular gyms very difficult," Dr. Cosgrove stated.

The facility is divided into two workout stations — Side A and Side B, and clients alternate sides every other session. The complete workout lasts about an hour. An attendant on staff helps clients move from one machine to the next throughout the

five-machine circuit. Once the workout is complete, clients have strengthened their core and worked the upper and lower body.

Staff attendants are Karren Graham and Emily White. When asked about clients' favorite machines, they concluded that clients like them all, but the favorites are the arm/chest, waist/tummy/hip, side-to-side table and the ever popular vibration machines.

The arm and chest machine lifts and firms the chest area. It tightens the excess in the triceps while toning the biceps and works the upper back, as well. The waist/tummy/hip machine simulates

**"I'm
confident
you'll see
results."**

walking and swimming and works the body from the waist down. The side-to-side table increases circulation and trunk flexibility. It also reduces inches in the waistline and helps eliminate love handles and muffin tops.

The vibration table seems to be everyone's favorite. It increases circulation without raising the heart rate, eliminates excess water and helps break up and eliminate cellulite. "I'm confident you'll see results," Dr. Cosgrove said. "It is a good workout in a relaxed setting."

We live in a fast-paced world where multitasking is commonplace. For those who want to make the best use of their time for the hour they spend working out, preferably twice per week, the staff encourages clients to bring their iPods or audio books. "Or they can come, lie back and relax, and let the machines do the work," Dr. Cosgrove added with a smile.

The staff's goal for the second year at Get Moving! is simple. "We want more people to know about Get Moving! Once people try it, they can hardly believe the results. We'd love to see it explode into the New Year." **NOW**

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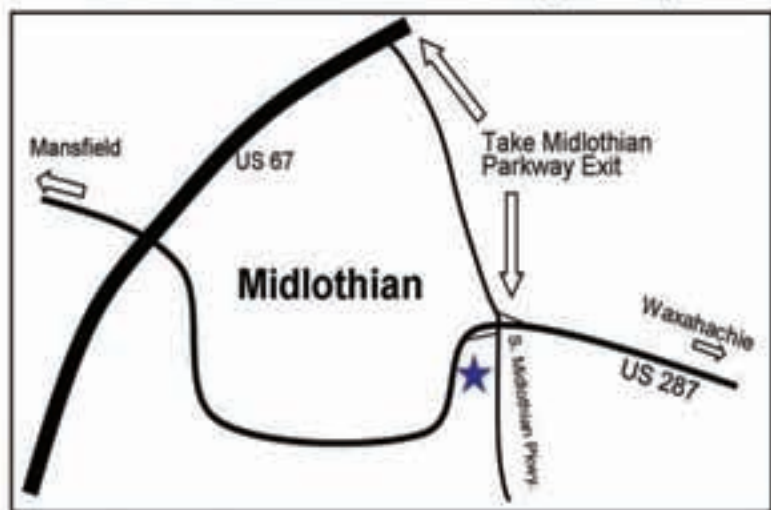
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The girls at Simplicity Spa pose for a photo at their second location on Cornell Drive.



Kevin Strong introduces Easton Rider McIntosh to Max, the family dog.



Richard Miller is hard at work mowing the grass at his warehouse.



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Ellie Abbott, birthday girl Gwen Tovin, Sharon Renshaw and Carolyn Stroud celebrate at Olive Garden.

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Pharmacists are Among the Most Trusted Health Care Professionals in the Nation

— By Mike Boyd and Mary Boyd, Rph., RphT.

Community pharmacies have always played an important role in America's health care system. They consistently offer a first line of health care. Personalized attention, convenient locations, drive through windows, and 24-hour emergency service are but a few of the benefits of using a local community pharmacy. Choosing a pharmacy that best suits your personal and family needs is important, whether it's your local retail pharmacy or a chain drug store. The State Board of Pharmacy recommends patients use the same pharmacy for all their prescription needs. This will allow the pharmacist to better serve their patients by screening for drug interactions, allergies and counseling about possible side effects. Community pharmacies are vital to ensuring that all patients have access to prescription medications and pharmacy services.

What are some important factors in choosing your pharmacy?

• **Location and convenient access** — Is the pharmacy close to home or work? What are the pharmacy hours of operation? Are prescriptions filled quickly and accurately? Some stores may have a waiting list that requires a patient to make a second trip or endure a long wait. Does the pharmacy selected have a quick after-hours drop-off for refills? Is there a drive-through window?

• **Does the pharmacy offer additional services?** — Some pharmacies offer compounded medications made specifically for individual patients, blood pressure monitoring and/or administer vaccines. Is this pharmacy able to fill prescriptions for loved ones on hospice or in assisted living facilities? If so, does the pharmacy offer delivery service to those patients? For some patients customer service may be more important than location. Does the pharmacy offer special counseling and/or seminars on health issues? Is there a Web site for the pharmacy? Can prescription refills be requested via the Internet?

• Does the pharmacy accept insurance and third-party cards? —

Pharmacies of all types and sizes usually accept most prescription cards and insurance plans. Your co-pay should remain the same regardless of the pharmacy selected. Remember, the insurance company sets the co-pay but *you* choose the pharmacy. Any questions or concerns regarding insurance plans can be easily answered by calling ahead or simply by presenting your information when filling your prescription.

• Is the pharmacist easily accessible? —

Does the pharmacist take time to answer questions concerning prescriptions? Is the pharmacist available and eager to assist patients with over-the-counter medications? Patients should have a clear understanding of how to take their medications and the label should be easily readable. A good pharmacist not only provides medications to patients but also counsels patients about possible interactions, generically equivalent drugs and helps patients through any health concerns they may have. Does the pharmacist take the time to get to know you? Is the pharmacy adequately staffed and professional?

There are many questions and concerns to consider when selecting a pharmacy. Recent research indicates that pharmacists are widely considered the most trusted health care professionals in the nation. Integrity ratings show that 73 percent of patients prefer to fill and refill prescriptions at a community pharmacy. Patients are reassured and feel safer knowing the pharmacist filling their prescriptions. After all, many of these pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and clerks live in our community and are not only our friends but are often considered family. **NOW**

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Starting Over in a New Year

— By Nancy Fenton

A new year can bring a new start even if your gardens are well-used. Soil is a big key. Just like other things, it gets worn out. Rejuvenation may be as easy as turning the top six to eight inches over and allowing a “breath of fresh air” to penetrate it or as elaborate as replacing tainted soils. Anywhere in between can help most plants take on a new life. My favorite technique is adding compost, either mushroom or regular. You can buy it in sacks or by the truck load or make your own. The key is to watch out for heat! Heat means it is still composting and may take your plants with it if it is dug into the root zone! The compost I make in the backyard is great for additional organic matter, but still a bit short on nitrogen. So, I add some molasses to it before I put it on to help get the nitrogen up. Our soils in North Central Texas will come up nitrogen-deficient nine times out of 10, so it’s a good guess if I don’t have a recent soil test to fall back on.

About the only time soil must be replaced is when there has been a chemical spill or when disease, such as the “dreaded cotton root rot,” is evident. If necessary, the top eight inches of soil can be replaced, and lots of organic matter added. This should be the very last attempt before going to containers

sunk in the ground. Working with the containers might be easier anyway, and use a good covering of mulch for the places between the containers.

Checking your tools can be a part of starting a New Year. Solid handles and sharp blades are a real must. Old handles can be lightly sanded and oiled if they are made of wood or replaced if necessary. My husband always puts a wood screw through the tool end to the new handle to keep the working end from slipping as the wood swells and shrinks. Sharpening just takes a whetstone and some time. Did you realize even shovels and hoes need sharpening? The cleaner they are kept, the sharper they will stay, but starting a new year with sharp ones is important. You never know which one you will need until you need it!

Be thinking about all those new plants you want to try in 2012. I will provide more information on new plants as the year progresses. Call the Master Gardeners at (972) 825-7175 for Texas A&M-recommended varieties. **NOW**

Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener.

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What Does Investment Landscape Look Like in 2012?

— Presented by *Tanisha Wilson*

As an investor, you know that 2011 was a somewhat “choppy” year, with the financial markets going through many ups and downs. So what can you expect in 2012?

As baseball Hall of Famer, Yogi Berra, is quoted as saying: “It’s hard to make predictions — especially about the future.” And these words are certainly applicable for anyone who would like an accurate forecast of the investment climate.

Yet we do know of some factors that may affect your portfolio in the months ahead. Here are a few of them:

• **Strong business fundamentals** — This past year, all the noise about the debt ceiling debate, the size of the U.S. deficit and the European financial situation tended to drown out some fairly good news: U.S. businesses’ balance sheets were strong for the most part, borrowing costs remained low and corporate profits were good — and corporate profitability remains a key driver of stock prices. Heading into 2012, these fundamentals continue to look positive, which may bode well for investors.

• **Europe’s debt crisis** — Greece’s economic problems made a lot of news in 2011, but they weren’t the end of the story in Europe, as major financial difficulties also face Italy, Spain, Portugal and Ireland. It’s by no means clear how these problems will be resolved, so don’t be surprised to see them lead to intermittent, if short-lived, shocks to the markets.

• **Election-year patterns** — As you’re well aware, we’re voting for president in 2012. But you might be surprised to learn that the S&P 500 index has shown negative returns in only three of the last 21 presidential election years. Coincidence? No one can say for sure — and at this point, no

one can say if this pattern of positive returns will continue during this election year. Still, it’s an interesting phenomenon.

So there you have it: the good, the bad and the quirky. Take them all together, and you still may not be able to foresee what will happen with the markets this year, but you’ll have a lot to think about. Instead of trying to predict what will happen in 2012, you may be better off following these tried-and-true investment strategies:

• **Diversify your holdings.** By spreading your money among a wide range of investments, you can reduce the effects of volatility on your portfolio. Keep in mind, though, that diversification, by itself, can’t guarantee profits or protect against loss.

• **Don’t ignore your risk tolerance.** If you worry excessively about market fluctuations, you may have too much risk in your portfolio, which means you may need to make some changes.

• **Always look at the “big picture.”** Financial markets will always fluctuate. But if you can keep your focus on your long-term objectives, and make decisions accordingly, you can avoid overreacting to short-term events.

Like other years, 2012 will bring with it periods of both turbulence and smooth sailing. But by making the right investment moves, you can still chart a course that can allow you to move ever closer to your future goals. **NOW**

Prepared by Edward Jones for use by Tanisha Wilson, Financial Advisor, Waxahachie, TX.

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January 3

Family Movie Night: 6:00-7:30 p.m., Sims Library featuring *The Dragon Warrior*. For more information contact the library at (972) 937-2671 or visit children@simslib.org.

January 7

Answering the Call screening: 10:00 a.m., ShowBiz Cinemas, 108 Broadhead Road. The documentary represents the time Chuck Norris spent visiting the troops in Iraq. Mr. Norris will personally be introducing the film and participating in a question-and-answer time following the screening. Tickets are \$25 per person or \$15 for active military personnel. Group pricing is also available with proper identification. Tickets are now available at the box office or online at www.showbizcinemas.com. Total proceeds from the box office will go to KickStart Kids. For more information, call (469) 517-0394.

January 14

Family Snowman Craft: 10:30-11:30 a.m., Sims Library. Watch the movie *The Snowman*, while crafting a snowman. For more information contact the library at (972) 937-2671 or visit children@simslib.org.

February 3

15th Annual D.E.A.R. (Drop Everything and Read)

Day: Reading times are 8:45 a.m. and 10:15 a.m., Pre-K through fifth grades, all elementary campuses; 8:45 a.m., Finley Junior High, grades six-eight; 10:15 a.m., Howard Junior High, grades six-eight. Contact the Partners in Education office at (972) 923-4631 or mcobb@wisd.org for your reading time.

February 4

Annual Mission Sale: 7:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., First United Methodist Church gym, 505 West Marvin.

Ongoing:

Third Mondays

Ellis County Aggie Moms meeting: 7:00 p.m., Waxahachie First United Methodist Church, 505 W. Marvin. For more information, visit www.elliscountyaggie moms.org.

Fourth Mondays

Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis County: 6:30-8:30 p.m., Waxahachie Bible Church, 621 Grand Avenue.

Tuesdays

Waxahachie Sunset Lions Club: 6:00 p.m., Cancun's Restaurant. Questions may be directed to Karen Butner at (214) 587-1273 or by attending a meeting.

Story Time at Sims Library: 10:00-10:40 a.m.,

children 3 and older. Program features themed book readings, songs, puppets and crafts that teach children early literacy skills in preparation for kindergarten. E-mail children@simslib.org for more information.

Fourth Tuesdays

Ellis County Technology (ECT): Networking: 6:30 p.m. Presentation: 7:00-8:30, Waxahachie La Quinta. For more information, call Wendy Merritt at (469) 256-8989.

Wednesdays

Toddler Time at Sims Library: 10:00-10:20 a.m., 2 years old and younger. Program features age-appropriate books, finger plays and songs. For more information, call (972) 937-2671.

Third Wednesdays

The Ellis County Christian Women's Connection: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Waxahachie Country Club. For more information, contact Kay at (972) 935-2054 or Margaret at (972) 937-1016 for reservations. Cost is \$13.

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

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In The Kitchen With Tina Autry

— By Sandra Strong

When Tina Autry cooks for you, it can only mean one thing – she loves you. “Cooking is a way of expressing my affection and care for someone who is special in my life,” she admitted. “Once I was married, I realized cooking was a way to show my husband that I loved and cared for him.”

Tina quickly learned all his favorite recipes, while also trying out several new ones, too. “I often like to imitate the things my family enjoys when we eat out at restaurants,” she confessed. “Imitation is a sincere form of flattery, and I’ve gotten pretty good at it.” When imitating, Tina loves using a crock pot and a pressure cooker. She’s what you’d call a good ole country cook. **NOW**

Pasta Fajoli

2 lbs. chili meat
3 tsp. olive oil
1 medium onion, chopped
1 cup carrots, slivered
1 cup celery, diced
2 15-oz. cans diced tomatoes
1 15-oz. can red kidney beans
1 15-oz. can cannelloni white kidney beans
1 large box beef stock
3 tsp. oregano
2 1/2 tsp. pepper
1 large jar or can spaghetti sauce
8 oz. dry shell pasta, or other pasta
Parmesan cheese, shredded (optional)

1. Brown the chili meat in skillet; drain. Sauté onions in large 13-qt. stock pot until translucent. Add onions, carrots, celery and tomatoes. Simmer for about 10 minutes.
2. Drain and rinse beans; add to the pot. Also add beef stock, oregano, pepper and

spaghetti sauce. Simmer until celery and carrots are tender, about 45 minutes.

3. Cook pasta and add to bowls when serving soup. Top with Parmesan cheese if desired.

Chicken and Dumplings

Chicken:

2 1/2-3 lbs. chicken, equal to whole chicken
2 cups chicken broth
1 tsp. butter
Water, enough to cover chicken
1 small onion, finely chopped
1 stalk celery, finely chopped
1 small carrot, shredded
1 tsp. poultry seasoning

Dumplings:

2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 tsp. salt
1 large egg

5 Tbsp. butter

1/2 cup whole milk

1. For chicken: Place the chicken into a large boiling pot. Add chicken broth and water. Make sure the chicken is covered with liquid. Add vegetables and seasoning. Bring to a boil; reduce heat to a simmer.

2. Throughout cooking, skim away any foam that forms in the pot. Simmer for 1 1/2 hours until chicken is done and tender. Remove chicken from the broth; allow chicken to cool before deboning.

3. Cut deboned chicken into bite-sized pieces. Set aside.

4. For dumplings: Mix flour, salt, egg, butter and milk in a stand mixer. Continue to mix until a ball forms.

5. Form your dumplings by rolling out the dough to a thickness of about 1/8 inch on a cutting board. Use a sharp knife or pizza cutter to cut your dough into bite size pieces.

6. Bring the chicken broth to a boil. Drop dumplings into boiling broth, ensuring they submerge. Add all of your dumplings to the broth. You can keep dumplings from sticking together by adding butter and dunk dumplings one final time.

7. Reduce heat to medium-low; cook for 8-10 minutes. Add chicken; simmer until chicken is heated.

Tomato Basil Bisque

4 15-oz. cans whole tomatoes
2 15-oz. cans crushed tomatoes
1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
1/2 cup onion, chopped
1/2 cup celery, chopped
1/2 cup carrots, chopped
1 tsp. crushed garlic
4 cups vegetable or chicken stock
14 fresh basil leaves, washed
1 cup heavy cream
1/4 stick sweet, unsalted butter
Salt to taste
1/4 tsp. cracked black pepper
Basil leaves (for garnish)

1. Sauté vegetables in oil in an extra heavy stock pot. Add tomatoes and stock. Simmer 30 minutes.

2. Puree, along with the basil leaves, in small batches, in blender or food processor.

3. Return to saucepan; add cream and butter, while stirring over low heat.

4. Garnish with basil leaves and serve with your favorite bread.

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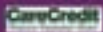
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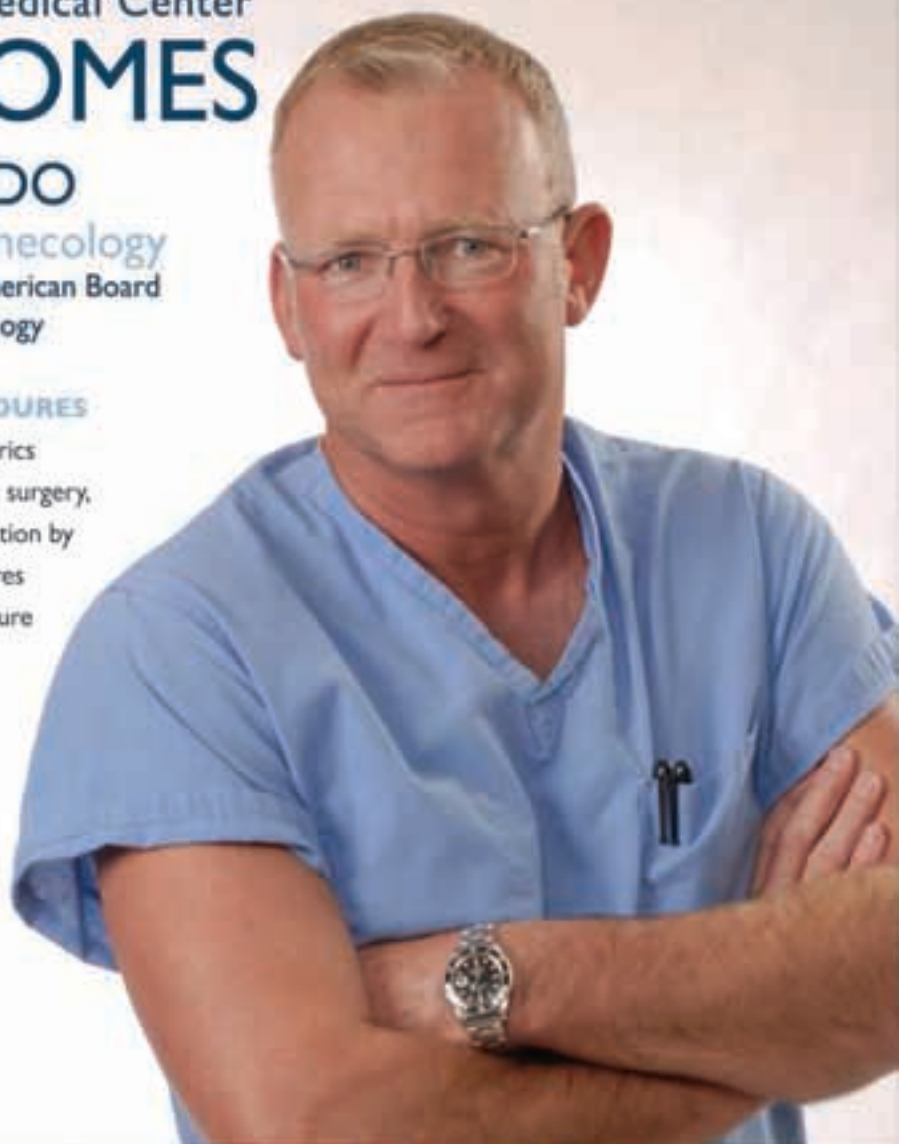
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