

Southwest

Cedar Hill | DeSoto | Duncanville
MAGAZINE

JANUARY 2015

NOW

Exploration Education

Nancy McGee finds
water to be the
perfect learning tool

Living Our Design Dream

At Home With
Steve and Sarah Puckett

Creating Stories to Inspire
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EAGLE EXPRESS



Choose to BE in DeSoto ISD!



Judge for a Day participant Destiny Brannon and Municipal Judge Scott Kurth.

Nine new magnet academies

"We offer now, or will in the next year or so, every major program of choice for students today!" stated Superintendent David Harris. "We know students learn at their optimum when they are engaged in what they are passionate about. We are building capacity for every student to succeed in the field of their dreams – and giving them the resources to succeed in college and the workplace." The magnet elementary and middle school academies, which will open over the next two years, will be the foundation for DeSoto High School programs including Collegiate Magnet, Early College High School and IB.

District students may apply to transfer to a magnet program. Students outside the district must complete the selective enrollment application in Student Support Services before applying to a magnet program.

Grades 6-8

- West Middle School International Male Leadership Academy (2015-16)
- East Middle School Medical Magnet Academy (2015-16)
- McCowan Middle School Fine Arts Academy (2015-16)

Grades PreK-5

- Woodridge Fine Arts Magnet Academy (opened 2014)
- Amber Terrace Discovery & Design Magnet Academy (2015-16)
- Northside Business & Law Magnet Academy (2015-16)
- Ruby Young Medical & Environmental Sciences Magnet Academy (2015-16)
- Cockrell Hill Linguistics Magnet Academy (2015-16)
- The Meadows STEAM Magnet Academy (2015-16)
- Frank D. Moates Digital Arts & Technology Magnet Academy (2016-17)

INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

Program Application Windows (www.desotoisd.org):

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| • K-8 Elementary/Middle Magnets | Dec. 11-Jan. 9 |
| • Collegiate Magnet Program | Jan. 26-Feb. 13 |
| • Early College High School | February 13-20 |
| • iSTEAM3D Middle School | March 30-April 21 |

Calendar

Dec. 22-Jan. 2- Winter Break (teacher prep Jan. 5; students return Jan. 6)

January - School Board Recognition Month

Monday, January 12, 6:30 p.m. - Board Meeting, Board Room

Monday, January 19 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday

Saturday, January 24, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. - Fine Arts Showcase, DHS

Saturday, January 31 - 8th Grade EXPO, DHS Multipurpose Center

Monday, February 9 - President's Day Student Holiday; Staff Development Day

NEWS TO KNOW

Coffee & Conversations

Join Supt. David Harris for candid conversations about your campus and DeSoto ISD - each event starts at 7:30 a.m.

- Tuesday, January 20 - The Meadows Elementary
- Tuesday, February 17 - East Middle School
- Tuesday, March 17 - Ruby Young Elementary

Ladies accepted into prestigious orthopedic program

Four DHS STEM and Health Science Technology students were accepted into the Perry Initiative Outreach Program on Saturday, November 22, 2014. The Perry Initiative inspires young women to be leaders in Orthopedic Surgery and Engineering by partnering with medical centers, universities and high schools nationwide. Felicia Johnson, Bre'ohnna Turner, Dareis Trabue and Shelbi Gibson were selected out of 1,000 applicants in Texas.

Holiday Art Contest Winner

The DeSoto ISD recently held the annual holiday art contest among district students. Cards are sent to partners, other ISDs and elected officials.

Grand Prize Winner

- Gabriela Hidrogo, Woodridge Fine Arts Magnet Academy

Gabriana received a framed version of her artwork and a \$50 gift certificate for art supplies courtesy of the DeSoto Arts Commission.

Congratulations Gabriela and all the finalists.

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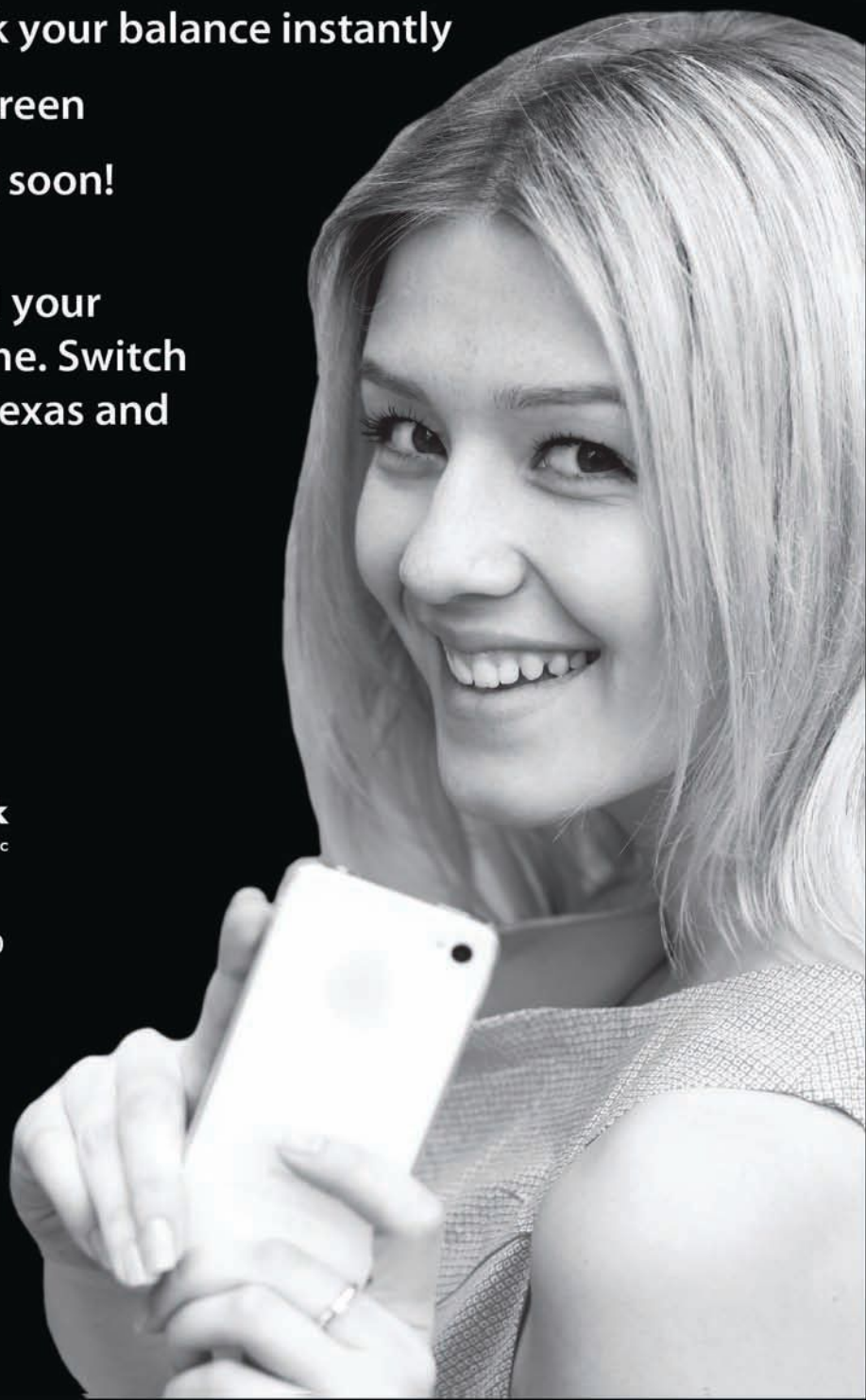
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ON THE COVER



Filmmaker, scuba diver and undersea explorer, Nancy McGee, brings the ocean back to the classroom.

Photo by Amy Ramirez.

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Editor's Note

Happy New Year, Southwest Friends!

Since we live in such a multicultural community, allow me to also wish you: Feliz año nuevo (Spanish). Godt Nytt År (Norwegian). Ein glückliches neues Jahr (German for my father). Blwyddyn Newydd Dda (Welsh). Bonn année (French). Sun nien fail lok (Cantonese for my daughter-in-law). Voorspoedige nuwe jaar (Afrikaans). Shana Tova (Hebrew for my daughter). Barka da sabuwar shekara (Nigerian).

Words and languages have always fascinated me. I even thought of pursuing linguistics as a career. Life has a way of derailing such plans. So, even though linguistics never became the main focus of my life, words have. I often think perhaps too many words have marked my life. The Book of Ecclesiastes admonishes: "Do not be rash with your mouth, and let not your heart utter anything hastily before God ... let your words be few."

So, for this New Year: make your unhasty, few words count.

Beverly

Beverly Shay
SouthwestNOW Editor
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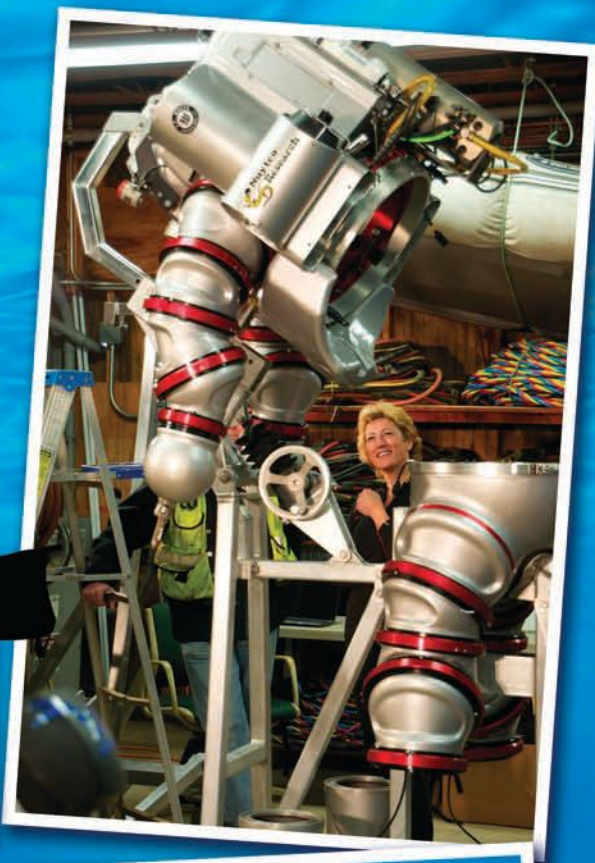
Explo Edu

— By Beverly Shay

She's an avid educator. She's an underwater explorer and filmmaker. She's been to seven continents and swims with sharks and leopard seals. And she lives in Duncanville. You wouldn't think a girl from Calgary, Alberta, Canada, would find herself at home in the depths of just about any sea, but Nancy McGee has led a life of sea adventures to nearly rival the likes of Jacques Cousteau.

"Athletics was a prevalent part of childhood. I remember walking to the Y for swimming lessons as a young child in Calgary," Nancy said. Swimming and diving have always been a part of her life. Nancy graduated from Duncanville

ration cation



High School in 1980, and graduated from Austin College in '83 with a degree in history and PE. In '84, she finished her master's degree in education. "I was determined to get the best teaching certification I could," Nancy remarked, "and was delighted to graduate in three years. The year I spent on my master's involved half a year as a graduate assistant and half a year teaching history, geography and economics full time for grades eight through 12."

Nancy's formal teaching career began with Garland ISD for three years. She has spent the last 20 years with Grand Prairie ISD. Initially a swimming coach and math teacher, she moved on to teach world geography and economics, as well as becoming head diving coach. Next, Nancy advanced into the administrative side of education. "I worked as an at-risk coordinator, assistant principal, the English Language Arts facilitator, and now, I am the director of STEM (science, technology, engineering and math)," Nancy said. "With STEM, students use inquiry-based learning





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Through her lens, children are seeing the depths of the ocean right at their fingertips.

to solve real-world problems. Two elementary schools are dedicated to STEM and another to environmental science. The programs are also streamed through middle schools and high schools."

With the move into administration, Nancy gave up coaching. "I loved coaching," she said. "Swimmers are usually highly intelligent, intrinsically motivated kids but need a place where they fit in. Using team building and a family-style approach, I could encourage and 'raise' them to be the adults I wanted to see them become. Giving up coaching was hard. But now, I have the time to work with more schools and students to connect classroom learning with the real world," Nancy added. "Really, I am doing everything I have always wanted to do!"

Nancy gained her diving certification at 16. When she had graduated from college and began teaching, she lived one block from a dive shop. After becoming a dive master, she became a scuba instructor. "Scuba lessons include watermanship,

theories and skills about physics and physiology of diving and rescue. Once students gained experience and skill, they wanted to go on diving trips, which I arranged," Nancy recalled. Before long, Nancy started her own business, teaching scuba and taking clients on bigger and bigger trips to places such as Cozumel,



Belize, Australia, the Galápagos Islands and Micronesia. "I was learning so much culture, history and art," Nancy stated. "I delighted in bringing all this knowledge back to my students. Operating my own business gave authenticity to teaching economics. My travels brought geography to life. My hobby enhanced my teaching, and I was more fulfilled."

Nancy loves the three-dimensional quality of swimming, which she describes as "the closest thing to flying. I was always looking for a way to stay in the water longer. I became so fascinated with underwater animals — just everything from the macro life of 1/8-inch tall seahorses to whales and elephants," Nancy shared, growing more animated. "I loved swimming with an elephant. Although huge, he was amazingly graceful in the water. For 30 years, I dreamed of filming an elephant swimming over my head." Her brother, Bill McGee, is her favorite dive partner.

Nancy wanted to charter a boat for a scuba trip to the Red Sea. The only boat

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she could charter came with an amazing and influential guest host, who would change the course of Nancy's life — none other than Stan Waterman, who has won five Emmys for his underwater filming and cinematography! Stan, a pioneer in underwater filming and the scuba industry, has made films, such as *The Deep* and *Blue Water, White Death*. "After that trip, I corresponded with Stan, became his business manager for 10 years and even taught him how to edit his films, once I learned how myself," Nancy smiled, awed all over again. "I began filming alongside Stan!"

Soon Nancy's footage appeared in Stan's films. When his health began to fail, Nancy stepped in for him at an International Scuba Diving Hall of Fame event in the Cayman Islands where he was to emcee. Nancy spoke and delivered a eulogy. "That event launched me into speaking at more dive and film shows," Nancy said. "Stan, known as the poet laureate of the sea, truly mentored me. Now I was bringing even more back to my students using the films Stan and I produced!"

When the Andaman Islands, owned by India, were opened to tourism, Nancy was one of the first to dive there. "I chartered a boat from Thailand to film the elephant swimming from island to island. This is the only place an elephant swims through the ocean to a destination. I didn't know how Rajan, the bull elephant, would react to me. No one could tell me the signs of an



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aggressive elephant,” Nancy recalled. “Sometimes he ignored me. Other times, he lunged. But mostly he seemed to be having fun, splashing and swimming with his built-in snorkel.”

Nancy was inducted into the Women Divers Hall of Fame in 2008. In 2013, she was astounded and pleased to be awarded a fellowship in The Explorers Club. “What an honor to be included with the likes of Ernest Shackleton and John Glenn,” Nancy remarked. But topping the list of her achievements, in Nancy’s mind, was the opportunity to be the first woman pilot of the Exosuit, a metal diving suit that is essentially a wearable submarine rated for a depth of 1,000 feet, designed by brilliant Canadian engineer, Phil Nuytten. “I can dive silently and be among underwater creatures at depths far greater than I can attain on scuba. I can dive deeper and spend eight hours without needing time to decompress. For me, it’s not about being the first woman pilot, it’s simply amazing to do this at all,” Nancy shared regarding her Exosuit training sponsored by Hublot.

As with everything Nancy has done, she shares the experience in the classroom. “I have the children research the animals and conservation issues I will be filming. When I bring back the footage, they can see what they’ve studied,” Nancy said. Through her lens, children are seeing the depths of the ocean right at their fingertips. **NOW**

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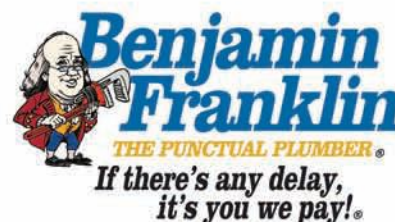
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CREATING STORIES TO INSPIRE

— By Beverly Shay

Although she had not received any formal training as a writer, Danielle Wedgeworth wanted to write stories to reach out to people. “I have a lot of thoughts, which I have tried to convey verbally, but because of my strong opinions mixed with those of others, conversations always seem to become debates,” Danielle shared. So, she figured she could get her message across better by incorporating it into a novel. Writers often conclude it’s easier to communicate in print, because there are no interruptions.

“I decided to write a political thriller in a current setting, which would explore themes of freedom and self-reliance. I also wanted to create an emotional impact,” Danielle explained. “So I used real news stories, fictional characters and changed the places and settings, while retaining the events that have gripped me personally. I created a family of three sisters, each overcoming personal problems, but also dealing with real-world difficulties — like all of us do.”

Danielle admits she used “different aspects from different people” to develop her fictional characters. Danielle, who is a project manager for Hewlett-Packard and has done IT project management for three companies, was actually an art major in college. “My stories evolve somewhat like a painting. Initially, I block things out, using broad strokes to layer in details,” she remarked. As a story develops, interaction between characters



and current events often inspire the background details, adding realism to the novel. "Point of view is very important. I want it to be tangible," Danielle stated. Her experiences as an Army officer also influenced her writing.

One of the challenges is keeping knowledge true to the character's capacity. "I wanted to portray the big picture by giving various characters' perspectives. In *Phoenix Republic*, three sisters see the world through their own situations. "The youngest sister has



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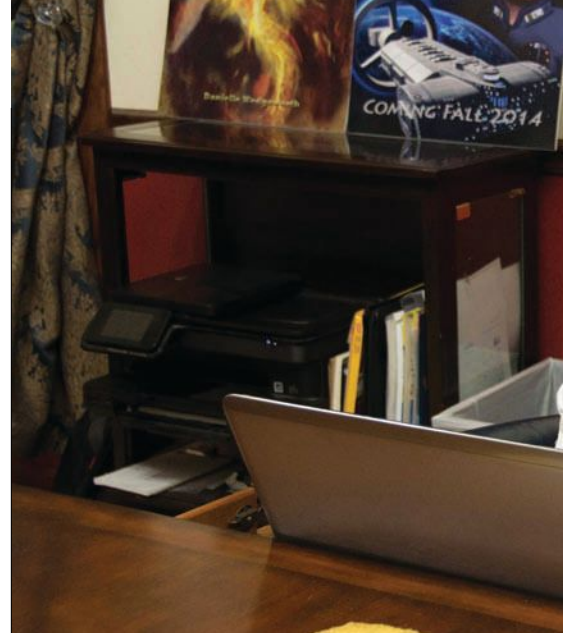
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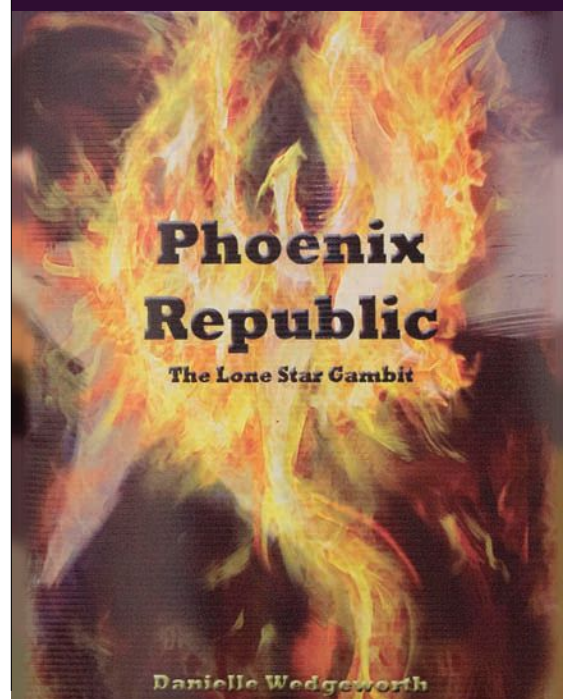


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marriage and financial issues, so her view is rather economical. The oldest sister, like me, is a project manager, only she works for an airline that is laying people off. She's also gay, so she sees life through a completely different grid. The middle sister is a prodigy, a Wall-Street type, who works in a world full of greed and ends up letting go of morals to achieve success. Thus, when they speak of the same events they all have a unique take," Danielle added.

Danielle uses multiple spreadsheets to track her characters and her plot. "I started with a general idea and a mental sketch of where I wanted the book to go," Danielle recalled. She also spoke with police officers and political leaders as part of her research. "I even found





pictures online of what I wanted my characters to look like. The photos go under the character tab. I created a timeline with bullets and then began to block out the story. Frequently I conduct what I call 'nerd patrol' — reverting back to my timeline and character sketches to make sure all is happening as authentically as it should." Somewhere toward the end of the writing process, the characters themselves seemed to take over the writing. "Several of the characters actually surprised me. One in particular was overcoming his flaws so well, that rather than killing him off, as I had originally planned, he became somewhat of a hero!"

One of her characters started out "too plastic" — too preconceived and

Sovereign's Journey

Danielle E Wedgeworth



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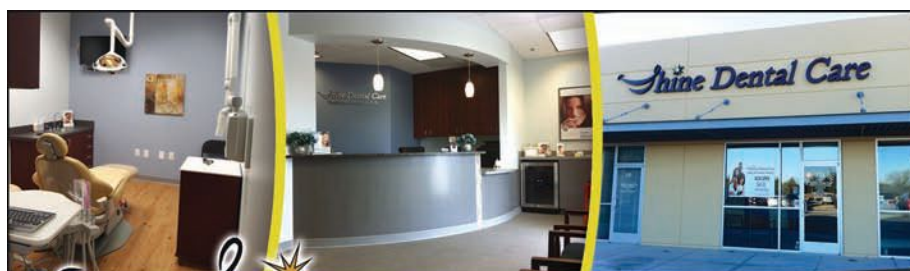
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superficial. “But once I developed her, her dialogue improved,” Danielle remarked. “I have also learned that sometimes good bad guys make better good guys.” While she strives to write something each day, there are times when she doesn’t feel like writing. She had to give herself permission to believe success sometimes takes the form of simply thinking about the characters. “I learned I don’t have to be at the keyboard to be working. When I am simply thinking, I can figure out which character will tell which part of the story or whether this scene calls for reflection or excitement. I am always asking myself, ‘Whose viewpoint will best convey the element I am working on?’” Danielle then added, “I’m not sure if I am a good writer, but I am a good storyteller.”

For Danielle, who owns a home in Cedar Hill, it was a no-brainer to set her first novel in Texas, with one of the sisters living in Cedar Hill. Danielle’s home was originally a typical Craftsman bungalow from the 1920s. The family story is it was built, in part, from wood salvaged from a school that burned down. Danielle remodeled it herself “from the studs out” in 2003, adding two more floors. “It’s good to write about a setting you are familiar with,” she stated. “It lends authenticity to your writing.”

When it came time to publish her book, which came out in November 2013, she offered it to one publisher, but they didn’t take it. “I had decided not to acquire an agent and chose to put the book out there myself. She worked with a program called Create Space to format

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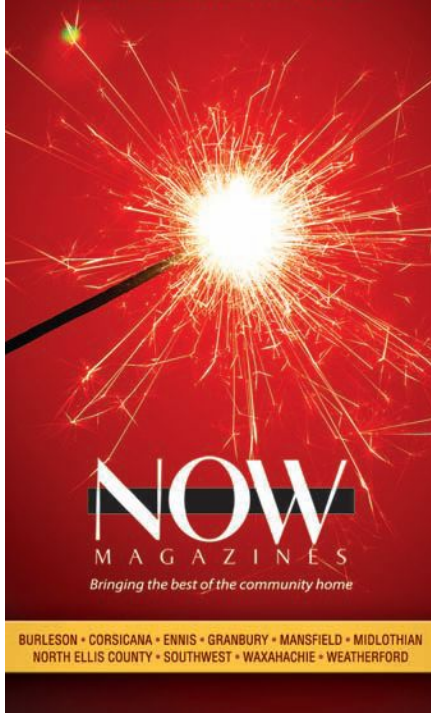
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a paperback book. “I used an integrator for formatting the interior. I created my own artwork for the cover,” Danielle explained. Once her files were complete, she sent them to Kindle. Her book is available as an e-book or can be ordered by print on demand with Amazon. “It really was a lot of work,” she said of the seven-month writing process. But editing was even a harder, more time-consuming process. She uses Beta readers to gain feedback and an objective edit.

Danielle is nearly finished with her second book, *Sovereign's Journey*. Branching out, she is writing a sci-fi thriller, which will most likely become a trilogy. “Both my books are about self-discovery and self-development,” Danielle admitted. One thing she is discovering is marketing yourself can be a challenge. “I have done a few book signings. I try to tweet each day and blog at least once a month. I find it curious and interesting to see who decides to follow me.” Although Danielle’s career field involves managing in-user-computing desktops and laptops, vetting programs, servers and databases globally, she still remarked, “I am more interested in the cultural impact of technology than in technology itself.

“One exciting result of writing and getting what I want to communicate out is I have learned to be more socially adept,” Danielle stated. “I have become more accepting and less dogmatic. And I am learning to see the difference perspective plays in how others relate to the same event or situation.”

Danielle’s advice to aspiring writers is, “Be willing to do it. You just have to jump in and begin to write. Hang onto any snippet of affirmation and follow your ideas all the way to the end of the story.” **NOW**



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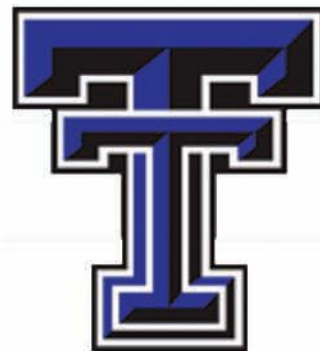
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— By Angel Morris

Steve and Sarah Puckett both grew up in Oak Cliff, and have always lived south of the Trinity River — 30 years in Duncanville, where their son and daughter both graduated from Duncanville High School. “We loved our home. Rather than move after several years, Steve and his father completed an extensive interior and exterior renovation,” Sarah recalled.



At Home With
Steve and Sarah Puckett



"I don't make changes easily, and living through that was even harder than the movies make it out to be!"



In the midst of their own renovation, Steve, his brother and father bought a house in Cedar Hill to fix and flip. They gutted, enlarged and updated that house — putting their own redo on hold. Sarah's role in these projects was that of the gofer and interior-designer-on-a-limited-budget.

"After becoming empty nesters, we desired a move. We again found it difficult to move north — even though our grown kids had," Sarah admitted. Their son, Scott, married Amanda, and they have two sons — Barrett and Bennett — and live in Wylie. Their





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daughter, Stacy, lives and works in North Dallas. Still, Steve and Sarah found that church, friends and work commutes made it hard to move too many ZIP codes away. Sarah has worked over 30 years for the Trammell Crow Family at Crow Holdings as asset manager for some of their real estate holdings.

"The process of trying to find our next, and probably last, home evolved into Steve wanting to build. I protested that frightful endeavor," Sarah noted. "We looked at many existing homes, but

all of them needed much work, which Steve wanted to do himself — I thought, *Yeah ... right!*"

In search of large lots, hills and trees, the Pucketts roamed all over Cedar Hill. Enticed by a 1-plus-acre lot on the city's west side, Steve was convinced he should build what they wanted — and act as his own general contractor. "Even with nearly 40 years in sales of doors, frames and hardware for office interiors across the U.S., selling Sarah on building this house was tough," Steve admitted.

Perhaps, though, it was not as tough as winning Sarah over as his bride. "We met in 1966 during a sock hop at W.H. Adamson High School in Oak Cliff. I was a senior, and I pursued Sarah, a young sophomore. That was the start of our long courtship," Steve recalled.

"I was like Priscilla Presley," Sarah joked, "Steve raised me. Actually, we did

our parents a favor and raised each other!"

The couple married in 1971 on Steve's weekend leave from the U.S. Army. "The only time we moved away was during Steve's service — living at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, before he was sent to Vietnam. We spent the remainder of his service in Junction City, Kansas, at Ft. Riley, which for Steve was a hunter's paradise," Sarah noted.

Now they both enjoy paradise in their Cedar Hill home. "We built our version of a Texas Hill Country home. Our goal was a wide-open floor plan, minimal halls, lots of windows, rustic beams, Austin Stone and warm wood finishes," Steve noted. "When we entertained, we wanted everyone to freely join in with those in the kitchen or family room or even on the outdoor porch."

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Cedar Hill Collegiate High School (CHCHS) is a nationally recognized Early College High School within the Cedar Hill Independent School District. CHCHS opened in 2008 and earned an Exemplary rating from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for four consecutive years. In 2014, Collegiate High School earned six out of six Distinctions from TEA, was named to the Best Schools list by U.S. News and World Report, and was ranked as the 6th best Early College High School in the Nation by Newsweek.

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Collegiate Elementary Prep School (PreK - 5th) and Academy Middle School (opening with 6th grade) will begin accepting applications in early 2015 for the upcoming school year. Cedar Hill Collegiate High School accepts applications for incoming freshman from November to March of each year. For more information, visit www.chisd.net/innovation.



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the design is immediately apparent with high ceilings, tall doors and expansive windows. Both the massive main room fireplace and outdoor fireplace are



visible upon entry, as well. “Steve is the consummate fire starter and always keeps the home fires burning in the two stone fireplaces,” Sarah noted.

Steve also does the yard work — from mowing, landscaping and planting to maintenance. “It is his therapy and his workout regimen, which is also never ending,” Sarah explained. “He designed the dry river bed in the front of the house that not only provides a dramatic look, but also a critical route for water drainage when it rains.”

With the extreme slope of the lot, prep for the homesite required significant engineering. “As hard as it was, we had many wonderful, God-sent experiences throughout the building process — from the free landfill from the retail development in the area, to having great contractors just show up at the property,” Steve said.

The lot further emphasizes the home’s exterior beauty, featuring Hill Country limestone. “We love the wide use of Austin stone for both the exterior, as well as throughout the interior of the house. We even went to the quarry near Salado for the stone. We used reclaimed wood for the ceilings, floors and wood beams,” Steve explained.

Further rustic touches include screening in the back porch “just like the old homes, so we are able to open up the house during cooler days in the spring and fall,” Steve said. “That is our favorite place. We love bird watching, and it’s also where we just talk,” Sarah added. “We



commune well with most all the wildlife, except for the annoying armadillos!" Steve remarked.

While Steve looks forward to adding a water feature out back, Sarah focuses on the home's interior. Her design focal point is a manzanita branch placed on the mantel, and she has incorporated *fois bois* design influence in furnishings and accents. "It's comfortable and very livable — for the two of us or a party of 60!" Sarah said. "Steve deserves most of the credit for the care and upkeep, but I also feel great pride in having helped build this home."

"People still stop and ask who the builder was, and it is gratifying to tell them we did it," Steve admitted. Steve also noted they are most proud of their children and grandsons, with son Scott having played football at DHS, receiving a scholarship to the University of Miami and being part of the team that won its



last national championship in 2001 at the Rose Bowl. Stacy, who was the DHS mascot her senior year and graduated from Stephen F. Austin State University, always lifts her parents with her own joyous spirit. "And grandparenting is such a joy. Two hunting buddies — we are blessed," Steve boasted.

Today, the Pucketts are pleased to have settled into their home, which is welcoming to friends and family and designed by their own hands. "Steve's years of carpentry and building," Sarah said, "and my passion for design and shopping made us a formidable home-building team. There's nothing more to say other than, we simply love our home!" **NOW**



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HEALTH FOR FITNESS

— By Melissa Rawlins

We all know the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. The flip side is: The manner in which we treat others depends upon how we treat ourselves. Are we compassionate to our own selves? Do we understand our fitness to do the work at hand depends on our level of health? Being fit requires you strive for great health.

In this world we live in, there are too many outside sources of stress and contamination to think we can stay healthy without exerting proactive effort to prevent health issues. The choices we make turn us into the person we are. From food and entertainment to work and romance, we should be mindful to promote purity. Just as a vehicle needs a clean engine to prevent heavy exhaust fumes, our bodies need good food, regular exercise and peaceful relationships to prevent future breakdowns. Maintaining a well-functioning mind and body are not two separate agendas. Start this year off with a trip to your family doctor or chiropractor. Ask for an annual physical and



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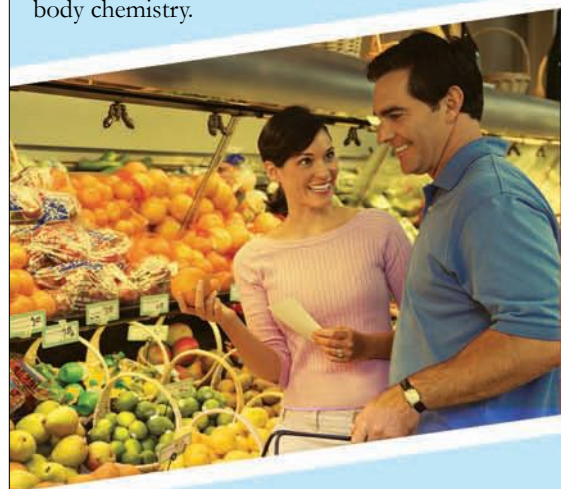
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confer with them on areas where you can improve. Then, whether you find yourself in your home or out on the town, you can balance mental and physical goals for great health.

Think about your dining experiences. At home, you have absolute control over what's in your refrigerator and what ends up on your plate or in your glass. Installing water filters will help ensure you are drinking fresh, pure water. Shopping for groceries certainly takes time, but every moment spent reading labels is well worth it to ensure you're purchasing nutritional additions to your body chemistry.



Wine bars, draught houses and coffeehouses are great places to meet a friend while sipping stimulating drinks that are beneficial, in moderation, as sources of vitamins and anti-oxidants. Enjoying mutually beneficial friendships



is just as vital to our health as well-balanced meals. A variety of restaurants promote whole-food menus along with more traditional selections. Many of these meeting places also present a calm environment, and studies show quiet music soothes the nerves. This is the best way to digest a good meal.

Certainly, there are times you need to prompt your adrenal glands to pump up the volume, and that occurs during workouts. If you need



a private coach, personal trainers will travel to your home or office on your schedule. If you need a coach and don't mind sweating publicly, a myriad of solutions are available. Local boot camps run year-round, and these male and female coaches love to teach you how to love yourself!

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If you join a local gym or fitness center, you'll feel like a kid in a candy store with all the exercise choices offered. If you are not into high-energy kick-boxing or Zumba, nor meditative yoga or tai chi, consider combining your exercise session with fun. The YMCA, many senior centers and even nightclubs offer dancing to tunes that are less jarring to the system, like ballroom, swing or country western.



Hobbies best enjoyed in the daytime, like boating, fishing, raising livestock or gardening, can keep the mind and body fresh. By tending a garden, you'll bond with your family while providing affordable, healthy vegetable side dishes for your table. Local feed stores and gardening supply centers have all the supplies necessary, and your county's agricultural extension agent can provide guidance on how to get started.

Sounds like work? You're blessed if you have work that makes you really happy. Keep in mind, any hobby giving you joy still requires work — but think of it as soul-feeding work. When you feel satisfied, to the point of brimming over, then sharing your knowledge with others is a great way to maintain your mental health. Throughout your communities are charitable organizations in need of your volunteer services.

When your work is over, patting yourself on the back is not optional. For many people, healthy social networks fulfill this need. For others, an ideal method is a weekly massage. Research proves touch therapy generates highly

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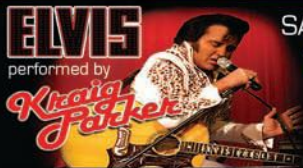
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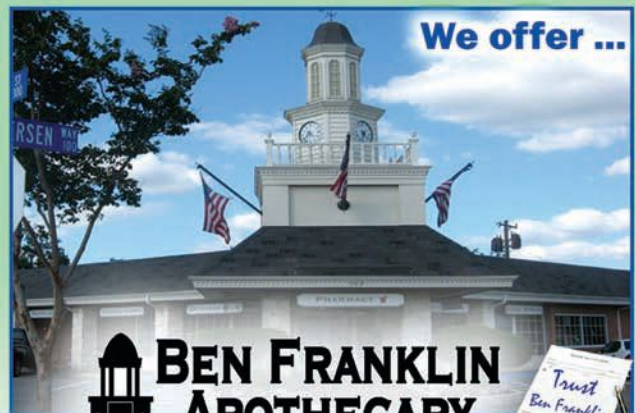
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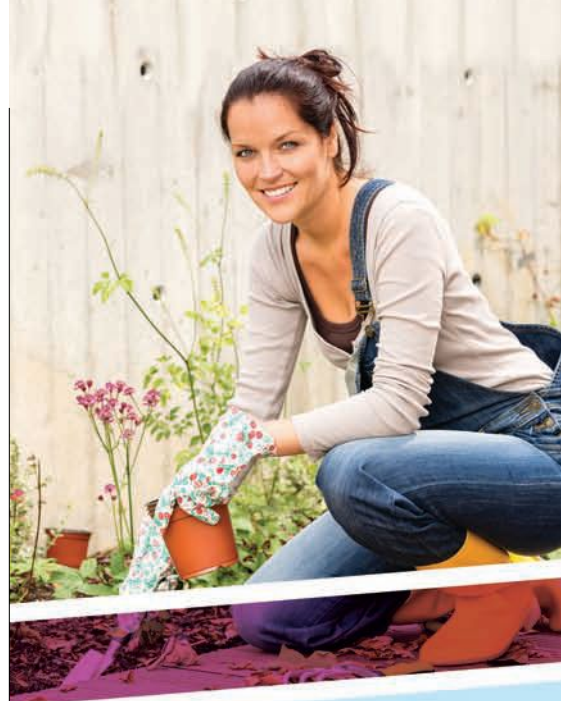
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This month, make a list of ways you would like to increase in strength, joy, energy, compassion, flexibility and availability. Throughout the year, rate your progress on a simple poor-to-excellent scale. Twelve months from now, review your success with trusted coaches, counselors and friends. You can keep up your good work. You can enjoy total health and be fit for bringing even your wildest dreams to life. Loving your neighbor starts with loving yourself. You can do it! **NOW**

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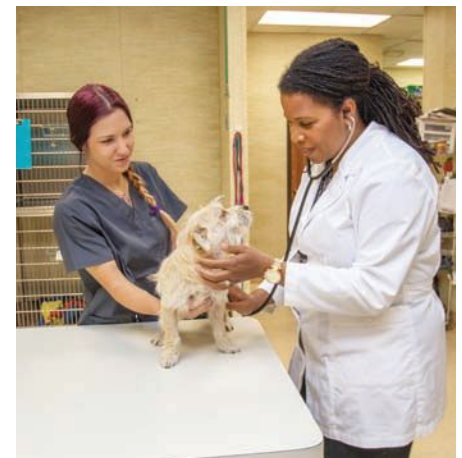
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The practice is owned by Dr. Harry Moore, and his wife, Sammie, serves as practice manager. “We have two wonderful associates: Drs. Gregg Pippin and Maya Barfield, as well as an excellent support staff with well over 100 years’ combined experience,” Sammie said. “We are all passionate about pets.” Every employee is courteous, friendly, interested and knowledgeable.

“Our main goal is preventive medicine, so people can enjoy quality time with their pets for as long as possible,” Sammie added. “Catching health issues early can often keep them from becoming life-ending. Dental care for animals is crucial, as are regular checkups, vaccinations, parasite prevention and proper nutrition.” With four exam rooms, a surgery suite, treatment area, an in-house lab, pharmacy and X-ray room, along with kennels for hospitalized patients and an isolation area for patients with contagious diseases, this is a one-stop health care station for pets and their people. Willow Brook also carries quality pet products and Hills Prescription diet food for animals with special nutritional needs.

Dr. Pippin, a veterinarian with 20 years of experience, finds Willow Brook to be an exceptionally nice place. “I grew up with

bunches of dogs and even more cats, so one of my favorite parts of treating animals is the chance to play with and love on them," he confided. "This facility makes a priority of high-quality, up-to-date, modern standards for treatment. We use the safest, most modern anesthesia with multiple machines monitoring vitals during surgery. And we stay very current with 17 hours of continuing education per year."

Dr. Barfield knew she would become a veterinarian from age 7. "I've always had empathy for animals and a passion for science," Dr. Barfield admitted. "Initially, I planned to be involved in research, but after one year of practice, I found working with both people and their pets was a good fit." Even after four years of working with a pharmaceutical company and taking time aside to have four children, she couldn't stay away from the animals. "I am proud of the high standard of care and the high quality of medicine practiced here," she said firmly. "Everyone is so caring. We treat animals from their birth through the end of their lives with the goal of longevity and vibrancy of life. All of us are animal lovers."

"We are all passionate about pets."

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The Cedar Mountains Chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas in Duncanville hosted a meeting for several chapters in the district.



Trinity Christian School Tigers of Cedar Hill meet in a prayer huddle and then defeat Temple Christian School of FT. Worth to advance to the state finals. TCS is 12 - 1 on the season with a perfect record in district play.



Board members of the Lecture Luncheon Club meet to prepare for the many fine programs scheduled for 2015.



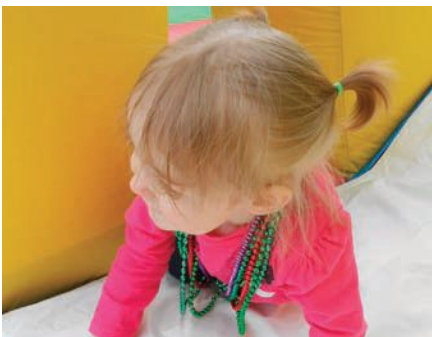
Career and technical education students from DeSoto High School shadow Solar Turbines employees while working at Solar's DeSoto Overhaul Facility.



1st Sgt. Jasmine Cruz and Maj. Ashanti Thomas present the veterans with a rose as a token of their appreciation during a DeSoto High School Veterans Day assembly.



Dr. Tarron Richardson, DeSoto city manager and reindeer, Carolyn Campbell, join Grand Marshall Rebecca Lopez of WEEA to kick off the Christmas season in DeSoto.



Skylar Walker enjoys a day of bouncy house fun at a local festival.



Duncanville First Methodist School students celebrate Camo Day in honor of family and friends who are veterans.



The first Heart of Duncanville 5K, held during Ben Franklin Apothecary's 50th anniversary celebration, raised money for Duncanville ISD Education Foundation.



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What Do Declining Oil Prices Mean for the Economy and Your Investments?

Are weak oil prices a sign of a slowing U.S. and global economy? Are there investment opportunities in the energy sector?

Generally, falling oil prices are good for the economy. This is because lower oil prices lead to lower gasoline prices putting more money into the hands of consumers. This extra income allows the consumer to purchase more consumer-related goods which helps consumer-related stocks. Of course, with falling oil prices, there are also losers. The main losers are oil-related companies.

Why are oil prices falling? If prices are falling because of a weak U.S. and global economy, it would be bad for stocks by affecting their earnings here and abroad. However, if prices are falling because supply is exceeding demand, it would be good news. The lower oil prices would reduce costs to many industries, increasing their profits and their stock prices.

If oil prices are falling due to a slowing global economy, you would expect the stock market to also be falling. The

rising stock market indicates that oil prices are falling because supply is greater than demand.

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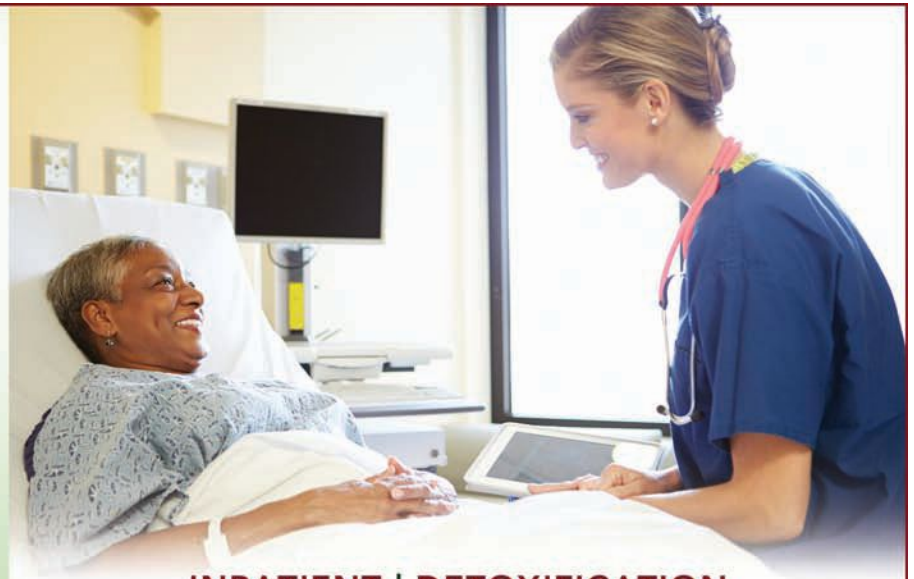
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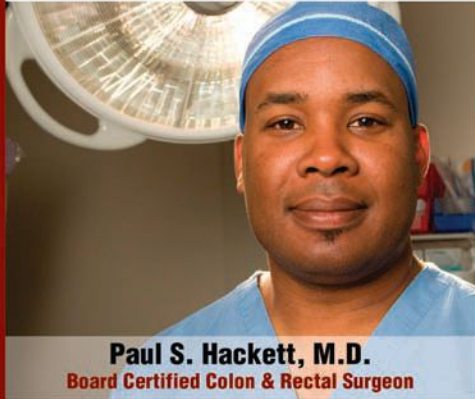
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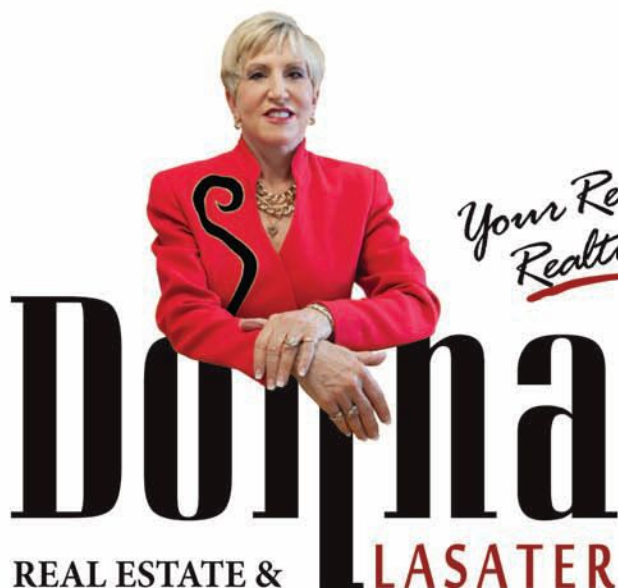
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Through January 25

Exhibit of Cedar Hill history displayed at Old Red Dallas County Courthouse, 100 Houston St.: 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. daily.

Throughout January

DS library classes: 10:00 a.m.-noon:

Jan. 7, 8: beginning computer basics;

Jan. 14, 15: intermediate computer basics; **Jan. 21, 22:** Internet I; **Jan. 28, 29:** resume writing/ job search. Individual tutoring: Tues.: 2:00-3:00 p.m., 3:00-4:00 p.m.; Thurs.: 1:00-2:00 p.m., 2:00-3:00 p.m. Registration required: (972) 230-9661.

January 2 — 31

CH library fines waived with return of item and one nonperishable food item.

January 7, 14, 21, 28

Teacher-led homework assistance for children in grades 3 – 6: 4:30-5:30 p.m., CH library. Space is limited. Weekly registration required: (972) 291-7323 ext. 1312.

January 7 — April 15

Divorce Care Support Group: Wed.,

6:30- 8:15 p.m., First Baptist Church, CH. Child care available. (972) 291-5698.

January 13

The Healthcare Marketplace: An Informative and Educated Approach: Noon-4:00 p.m., DS library. LaShandra Hooks and Angel Bogans from US Health Advisors will address health care insurance. No registration needed.

January 13, 20

DeSoto High School culinary arts will serve dinner (reservation only): 5:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. Reservation: (972) 230-0726 or email tiffany.hubbard@desotoisd.org.

January 16

Senior Dance, featuring Final Showdown: 7:00-9:30 p.m., Hopkins Senior Center, 206 James Collins. Blvd, Duncanville. Cost: \$5. (972) 298-0667.

January 20

Coffee and Conversation with Supt. David Harris: 7:30 a.m., The Meadows Elementary School.

January 25

Lecture Luncheon: 11:00 a.m., DeSoto

Clarion Hotel. Speaker: *The Dallas Morning News* arts writer, Ms. Joy Tipping, will speak on current events shaping Dallas. For information and invitation: (817) 417-0476.

January 26

Southwest Dallas County Parkinson's Group: 6:30-8:00 p.m., 1302 S. Clark Rd., DV. Speaker: Dr. Gupta, movement disorder specialist. (972) 298-4556.

January 29

Amelia Bedelia Birthday Party (children 6-11): 4:30 p.m., DS library. Registration required: (972) 230-9666.

January 31

AAUW Southwest Dallas County branch presentation by Terry Wade Ottley of Gabby's Sanctuary Ark, a no-kill shelter and animal rescue: 10:00 a.m., International Museum of Cultures, 411 Highway 67, Duncanville. (972) 709-1957.

Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your current event details to beverly.shay@nowmagazines.com.



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In the Kitchen With Cindi Garrett

— *By Beverly Shay*

A homeschooling mom of four, who loves reading, hiking and time with family and friends, Cindi Garrett loves to cook. “People connect over food, and we especially value family meal times,” Cindi remarked. Although seldom making a recipe the same way twice, for some 30 years she has collected recipes from friends, family, cookbooks, the Internet and “everywhere!” Her daughter, Alyssa, compiled her recipes into a cookbook for Mother’s Day a few years back — Cindi’s prized possession.

“I still own *My First Cookbook*, from which I made dinner in elementary school to help out my mom, who as a single parent worked several jobs. My favorite was Tasty Tuna,” said Cindi, whose food motto is: “It’s all good!” **NOW**

Texas Tortilla Soup

1/2 cup oil
1 large purple onion, chopped
4 cloves garlic, minced
4 large carrots, thinly sliced
8 ribs celery, thinly sliced
2 lbs. raw chicken, chopped
1 Tbsp. lemon pepper
1 tsp. each: ground cumin, salt and chili powder
1/2 cup flour
6 cups chicken broth
2 14.5-oz. cans diced tomatoes
2-4 Tbsp. pure lemon juice
Tortilla chips

Toppings, to taste:
Fresh tomatoes, diced
Sour cream
Avocado, diced
Shredded cheese

1. Place first 6 ingredients in a large stock pot. Add more oil, if needed, to cover

vegetables. Sauté over medium-low heat for 10-15 minutes. Combine spices and flour in a separate bowl and add to vegetables. Stir well; add broth and tomatoes. Simmer for 1 hour.

2. Remove from heat; add lemon juice. Serve over tortilla chips. Add toppings as desired.

Lemon Parmesan Chicken

My daughter, Alyssa, created this dish.

6-8 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
1 1/4 cups butter, melted (divided use)
1/4 cup plus 1 Tbsp. lemon juice (divided use)
2 cups dry breadcrumbs (plain or Italian)
2 Tbsp. lemon pepper
Fresh Parmesan, to taste

1. Preheat oven to 375 F Wash chicken and pat dry.

2. In a separate bowl, combine 1 cup butter and 1/4 cup lemon juice.

3. In a shallow bowl, combine breadcrumbs

and lemon pepper.

4. Place each chicken piece in butter mixture and then in breadcrumb mixture. Place on baking sheet with edges. Bake for 30 minutes.

5. Combine remaining butter and lemon juice; pour over chicken pieces. Top each chicken piece with grated Parmesan. Bake for 10 more minutes.

Ham and Cheddar Quiche

1 pie crust, unbaked
10-oz. frozen spinach
6 eggs
2/3 cups milk (or half-and-half)
Dash nutmeg
1/2 tsp. each: salt and pepper
2 cups ham, diced
1 1/2 cups grated cheddar cheese
2-3 Tbsp. fresh Parmesan cheese, shredded

1. Preheat oven to 350 F Place pie crust in a 9-inch pie pan and prick with fork.

2. Cook and drain spinach. Pat dry.

3. Whisk eggs, milk, nutmeg, salt and pepper.

4. Layer spinach, ham and cheddar cheese in pie crust. Pour in egg mixture. Top with Parmesan.

5. Bake for 50 minutes, or until knife comes out clean. Let set for 10 minutes before serving.

Perfect Cornbread

1/4 cup butter
1 cup flour
1 cup cornmeal
1/4 cup sugar
4 tsp. baking powder
3/4 tsp. salt
2 eggs
1 cup milk

1. Preheat oven to 425 F Place butter in a cast-iron skillet or 9x13-inch baking dish; place in oven to melt butter.

2. Combine dry ingredients in one bowl. Combine eggs and milk in another bowl. Combine dry and wet ingredients with melted butter. Mix thoroughly and pour into baking dish.

3. Bake for 20 minutes, or until knife comes out clean. (I like to pour additional melted butter over cornbread as soon as it comes out of the oven.)

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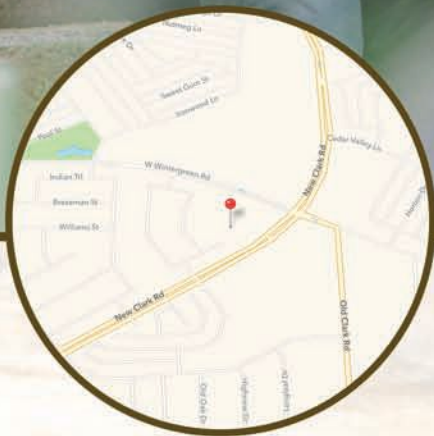
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