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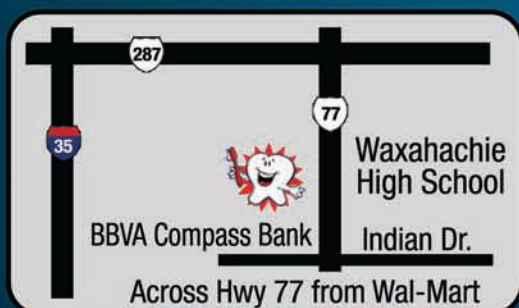
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ON THE COVER



*Abel Rose always has a smile
on his face.*

Photo by Amy Ramirez.

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Editor's Note

Happy New Year!

Many will start 2015 with better eating and exercising habits, while others will choose to take a break from their busy lifestyles. My goal for the coming year is to fall somewhere in the middle.

For me personally, it takes as much discipline to work out as it does to relax. I'll do OK if I stay committed to my workout schedule, but I wonder about relaxing. Webster's defines relaxing this way: to

become ... less tense, tight or stiff; to stop feeling nervous or worried; to spend time ... doing something enjoyable after work. I don't see myself less tense or worried, because that's what I do best. But, I already have the hang of doing enjoyable things after work. I craft, work in the yard and spend quality time with Easton and Zane. Maybe I found relaxation in my old age and just didn't realize it, that is, until I read the dictionary.

Sandra

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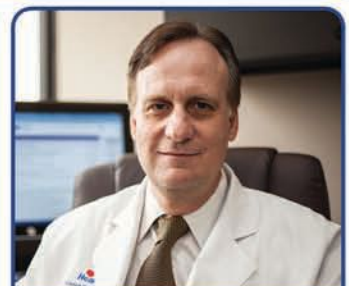
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Robert E. Ficula, D.O.

Dr. Robert E. Ficula attended Barry University of Miami Shores, Florida, where he received his Bachelor of Science degree graduating *summa cum laude*. Dr. Ficula is a graduate of Nova Southeastern University College of Osteopathic Medicine. He completed his internship and residency in internal medicine and his cardiology training fellowship at Plaza Medical Center of Fort Worth and then joined HeartPlace in 2011. He is board certified in cardiovascular disease and internal medicine. Dr. Ficula and his family live in Waxahachie and he is excited to serve the cardiac needs of the community.

Dr. Joseph Bellomo attended the University of California, where he received his undergraduate degree. He received his Doctorate in Medicine from the New York University School of Medicine. He completed his internship and residency in internal medicine and his fellowship in cardiology at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas. Dr. Bellomo is Board Certified in internal medicine and cardiovascular disease. He joined HeartPlace in 1995 and is looking forward to serving the community of Red Oak and the surrounding area.



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Abel is Able

— By Sandra Strong



Brian and Heather Rose knew early on in the pregnancy that their little boy would come into the world with a birth defect. "At 14 weeks, I had my first sonogram," Heather remembered. "They found fluid on his brain. I was sent to a specialist where I had a more detailed sonogram." Heather carried him full term, giving birth at 40 weeks. "Abel may have been born with spina bifida," Heather admitted, "but the injury has definitely not slowed him down."

Spina bifida is a congenital disorder caused by the incomplete closing of the embryonic neural tube. The disorder is commonly referred to as split spine. Abel, age 3, has had his share of hospital visits and surgeries, but they only seem to fuel his desire to compete and be like other children his age. In fact, Brian and Heather decided early on that Abel would be treated like any other child without a spinal cord injury or birth defect. They



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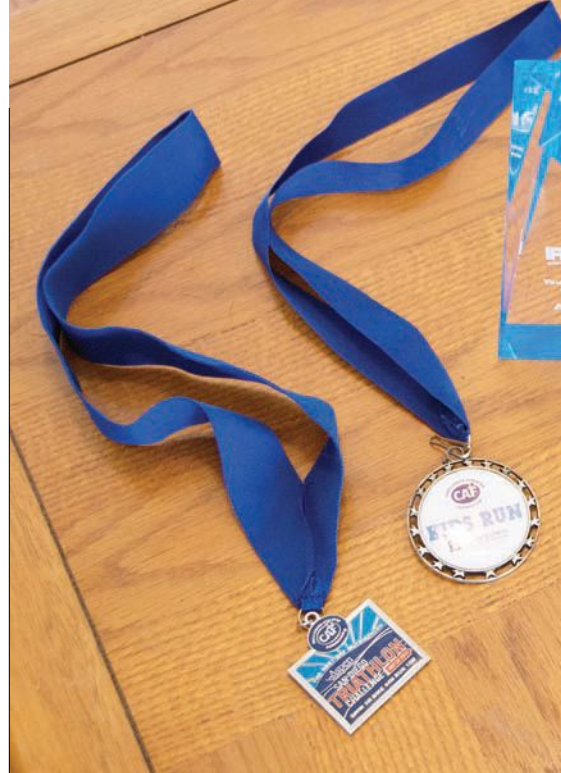
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also knew they wanted him to enjoy life to the fullest, so they've made it their goal to take advantage of each and every opportunity that comes their way.

Abel came by his name in a unique way. Although Brian has always loved anything to do with motorcycles, Heather had always shied away from them. But while she was pregnant, she became addicted to *Sons of Anarchy*, a series based on the lives of a close-knit outlaw motorcycle club living in a fictitious town in California. "There was a boy named Abel on the show who was born prematurely," Heather explained. "He, too, was going to have struggles in life, so I knew I was going to name our son Abel after him."

As a normal, rambunctious 3-year-old, Abel is definitely proving to be able-bodied when it comes to sports, and he doesn't put limits on himself. "He tries everything. He never stops," Heather said. "He participates in at least one sport each weekend." These weekend outings involve the whole family, including Abel's sister, 7-year-old Ella.

"We give them every opportunity we can," Brian reiterated. "If Abel surfs, Ella surfs. She travels with us whenever and wherever we go. It's definitely a family affair."


Abel is finding success and victory in the sports he's participated in thus far. He learned the fundamentals of sled hockey last year. "There are two blades on each side of the bucket he sits in," Heather



explained. "The blades are for balance. Hockey sticks with picks allow him to glide himself along the ice."

"I'm just a kid," Abel said with a twinkle in his eye and a smile on his face, "and hockey is my favorite sport!"

In T-ball, baseball and golf, he hits the ball like any other child, but as others run to first base or walk to the next hole, Abel rolls. Soccer is played with a larger ball than normal. The wheelchair he has for soccer is specifically designed so he can handle the ball. "The two casters on the front become his legs," Brian said. "He wheels around quickly to carry, shoot or pass the ball." He body surfs, competes in track and field events and dabbles in rugby.



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One fond memory the family has of surfing includes a beach in California, a surf board and a dog named Ricochet. "She [the dog] helps kids with special needs," Heather shared. The photographs the family treasures from this outing are worth so much, but the smile on Abel's face is beyond priceless.

Abel looked at the picture and said, "I love her!"

The sport, that causes spectators to ooh and ah, is the equivalent of skateboarding, but Abel competes from a sitting position in a WCMX wheelchair designed by Mike Box of Box Wheelchairs. The chair, one of many Abel has received through the company's sponsorship, is made for the radical, abusive skate park experience. "He takes flat jumps and ramps in his wheelchair just like other kids take them on a skateboard," Heather said. "Abel just has this 'no fear' attitude toward life."

Abel grows, but his chairs don't grow with him, so new chairs are commonplace in the Rose family. "The lighter-weight, streamlined chairs allowed him to become a boy who is now able to go play as close to normal as possible," Heather added, and Brian nodded in agreement.

As time goes on, Brian and Heather are learning the world of wheelchair sports is just as competitive as any other. Sometimes it can be just as cruel, too. "Kids can be pushed in the wrong direction," Heather admitted, "but we bypass the negative and focus only on the positive." As parents, Brian and Heather demonstrate the example they want Abel and Ella to follow.

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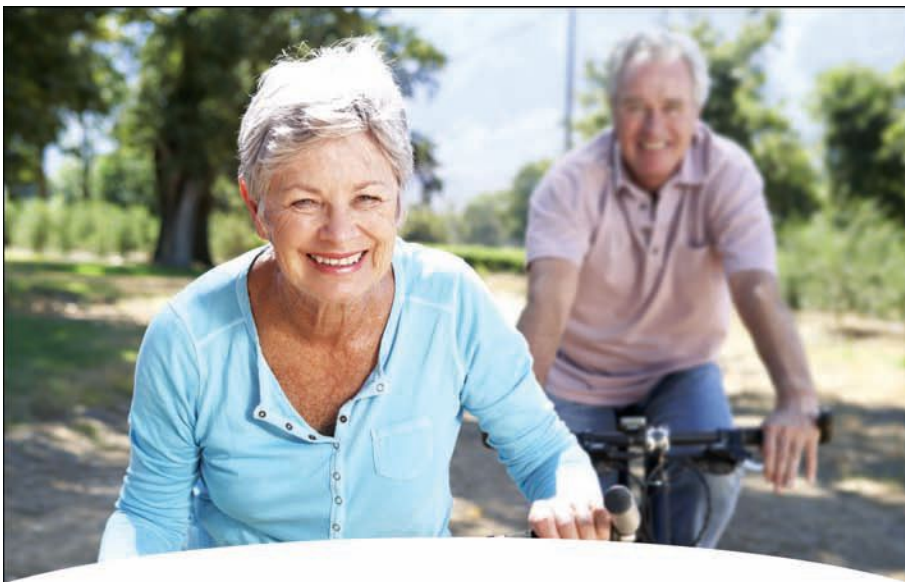


This life of extreme sports for the Rose family began when Abel, at just 18-months-old, was named the youngest sponsored wheelchair athlete ever, and it's been a whirlwind of memories since. He played T-ball for the first time at age 2. His first track and field competition was held last June in Oklahoma at the Endeavor Games. Abel received a gold medal for his age and second for qualifications. The family traveled to Utah last November so Abel could see if he might like the sport of skiing, which he did. The apparatus used for skiing is similar to the bucket with blades he uses for hockey. The only difference is the third blade at the front of the bucket. "It's used for balance," Brian stated.

Like most toddlers, Abel has started to gain the fear that comes with being a bit older, but sports remain his one passion. Brian and Heather simply want him to do all he can do for as long as he can. Abel has adapted to everyday life. He may be in a wheelchair, but handicap is not a word in his vocabulary. "He makes friends easily. He understands that rolling is running for him," Heather said. "He smiles from ear to ear most of the time. He never really has a bad day."

Abel is very much the happy-go-lucky child his parents talk about. He flirts in his boyish way with the nurses when he does have to spend time in the hospital. He jokes about what others see as a disability. He plays the drums and travels all over the country as the poster child for spinal chair injuries. Two years ago at Christmastime, he received a leather jacket from the cast and crew of *Sons of Anarchy*.

He's made lasting friendships he would never have made otherwise had his life turned out differently. Yes, Abel's life would have been so different if he'd been born normal, but what's normal? **NOW**



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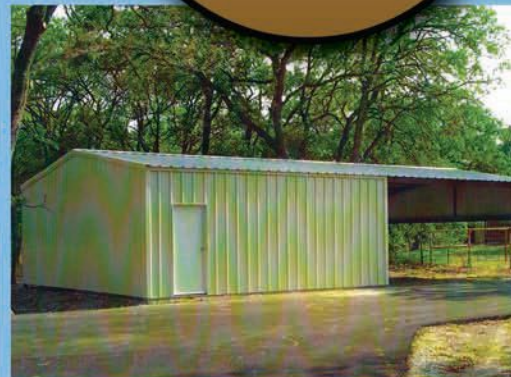


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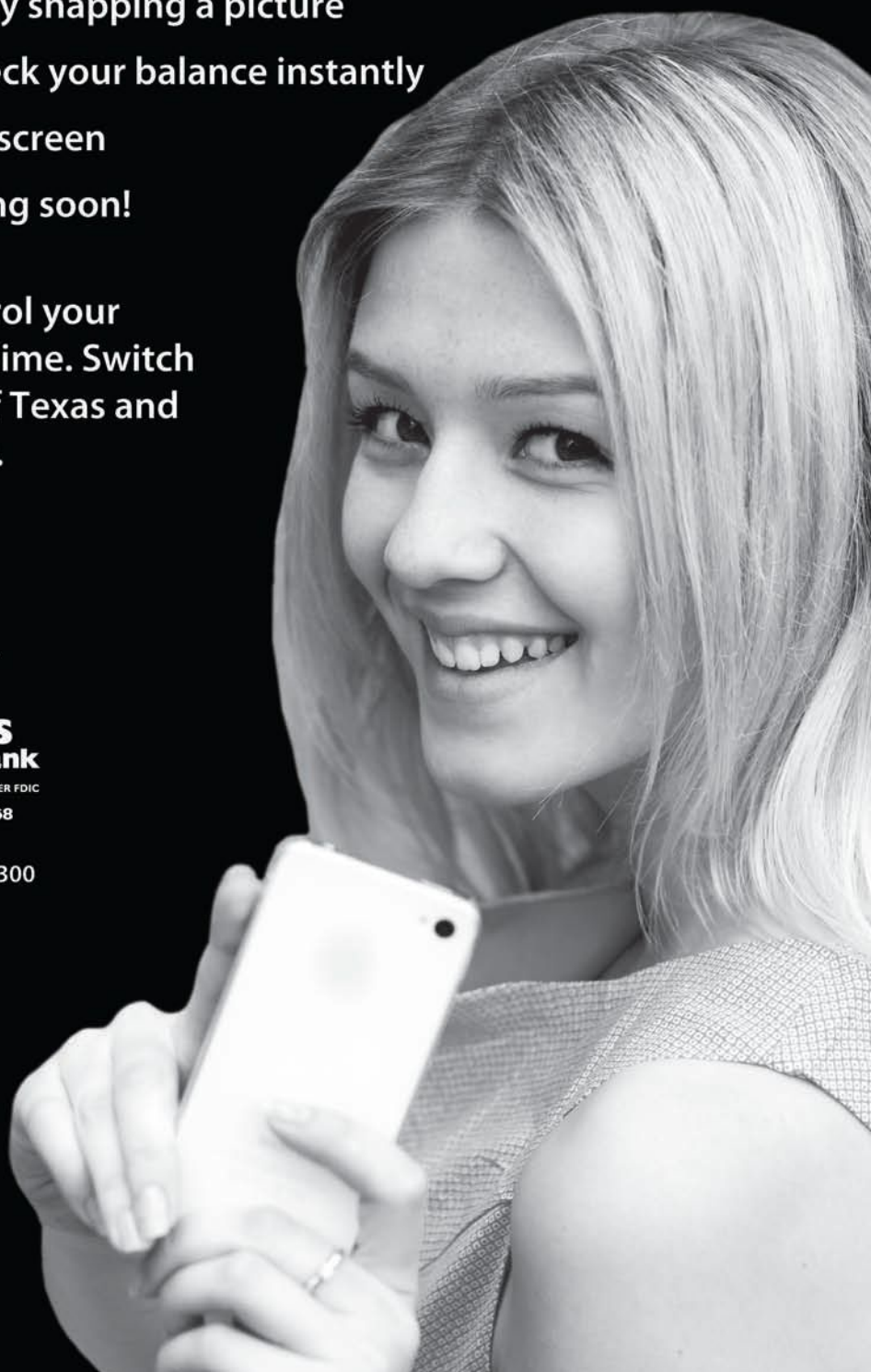
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Playing Chicken

— By Callie Revell

After nine years with the Waxahachie ISD, the last four of which she has taught at Clift Elementary, Portia Wood definitely isn't out of ideas. Her latest project has greatly impacted how students learn and how



teachers teach on campus. Portia and her husband, Andrew, live on a ranch. When Andrew's nieces and nephews come to visit, they are enthralled by all the animals, especially the chickens and their

hatching eggs. "I saw how much they enjoyed it, and I thought it would be great for the kids at school," Portia said, "especially the ones who have never experienced something like it before."

With that thought, the outdoor sustainable classroom was born. Built with volunteer help, the project began operation last December. With the help of a fellow teacher, Holly Reid, Portia wrote a grant for the funds to construct the facility. After designs were finalized, it became clear that the scale of the project

was bigger and better than Portia ever anticipated. With help from teachers, parents, volunteers from the Avenue Church and members of the Dineen family, a garden and large chicken coop appeared behind the school. John Paul Dineen, a local farmer, designed the coop to be spacious and sturdy. "He wanted to make sure it would last and his grandchildren would get to enjoy it one day," Portia said.

The outdoor classroom, affectionately called Chicken Salad by the students, is split in half. Each half has a garden bed, and the chickens rotate between the two sides. This allows the newer plants to grow while the chickens eat harmful bugs, till the soil around the mature plants and fertilize the garden on the opposite side. "Every grade level has a section in the garden that is theirs," Portia explained. "They all take turns tending the garden and taking care of the chickens." The area also features a compost system to

"A lot of the kids only associated vegetables with the grocery store."



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create excellent fertilizer for the garden.

The coop currently houses five Bantam Cochon chickens: one rooster, two hens and two chicks. This breed is



small with feathered feet, and they don't dig as deeply as other breeds. Portia donated some of the chickens from her ranch, but three of them were hatched right on campus. The coop has a viewing area where students can see eggs and new chicks without disturbing the chickens.

Though ravaged by rabbits earlier this year, the garden is now thriving, especially the flowers and herbs. "I don't have a green thumb," Portia admitted. "I enjoy gardening, but I'm still learning." She has had good luck with blueberries and blackberries, and the students will harvest sunflower seeds from the giant sunflowers to replant next year.

Portia enjoys harvesting vegetables in particular, because the students get to

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experience a new concept about food. "When the eggplants came in, they thought that was the coolest thing," Portia said. "A lot of the kids only associated vegetables with the grocery store. They don't understand where food comes from. Through the project, they learn that there's a starting point, and you can actually do it yourself." Portia hopes the garden will continue to thrive so the students can eventually taste what their hard work has grown. She even has plans to form a garden club for students with advanced gardening skills. "Our garden will get better as we gain more experience," Portia said.

The outdoor classroom works, because it makes learning exciting and tangible. "The idea behind it was to have an ecosystem where kids can see how the environment interacts," Portia said, adding that teachers at Clift use the chickens and plants to teach life cycles, genetics and science safety. "It just reinforces what we're already doing," Portia has noticed the children gaining empathy, kindness and responsibility from their interactions with the chickens. "Animals have a way of making kids understand how to take care of things," Portia said. "When we have kids go down by themselves, they've learned they have to be trustworthy."

Portia's students always look forward to going outside and visiting the chickens or working on the garden. "For the kids,




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when they're outside, it doesn't feel like the classroom," Portia said. "It becomes fun for them, so they remember it more, and it becomes more meaningful." The outdoor classroom has helped learning



come alive for her students. "When you're reading about it, it's someone else's experiences," Portia said. "When you're in the middle of it and doing it, it becomes something that stays with you forever."

So far, the feedback from students, parents, teachers and the community has been great. "We did a ribbon cutting last spring, and we had a huge turnout," Portia said. "It was a great success. It's seen a very positive response from the community." Parents need to sign a consent form before their children can participate in the outdoor classroom. As far as Portia knows, no one has denied consent, and Portia thinks that is a good sign. The most resounding approval, however, has been from her students. "At the end of last year, most of my kids said their favorite thing was the chickens," Portia said. "They absolutely love it!"

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Portia has big plans for the outdoor classroom as new opportunities arise and new ideas are brought to the table. “As we continue to build it, involvement will grow,” Portia said. “We’ve had parents offer to volunteer, so my goal this year



is to get them more involved.” Portia hopes to install a gutter system to collect rain for the garden. She also envisions a better seating system so teachers can host reading groups outside. To provide a bigger harvest for the children, she plans to plant fruit trees, which are low maintenance and provide big results.

As a longtime educator, Portia loves seeing excitement in her students when they are given the opportunity to learn hands-on. “When we had the eggs in the incubator, the first thing out of their mouths every morning was, ‘Have they hatched yet? Have they hatched?’” Portia laughed. “They were so excited.” Portia is encouraged by the passion in her students when they interact with animals and plants. “They want to take care of them. It builds empathy and a sense of community. This is ours. It’s a common bond with them, and they don’t forget it. Some of the kids from previous years still come back to check on the chickens.”

Overall, Portia knows the outdoor classroom is a wonderful addition to Clift and hopes many future students will enjoy the (literal) fruits of her labor. “This is just the start. It’s going strong, and it’ll continue as everyone gets more comfortable with it,” Portia said. “The kids and teachers will continue to benefit from it for years to come.” **NOW**

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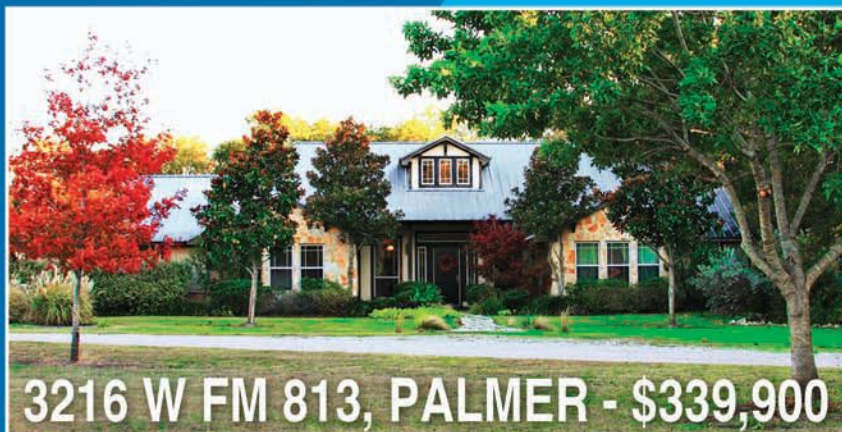
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At Home With Gary Don and Dawn Smith

Some couples move a lot at first and then settle down. Gary Don Don and Dawn Smith took a different route, living in the same house in Arlington for 20 years.



They decided to purchase six acres in Midlothian. After six years, the acreage became too hard to maintain, so they rented a home in Waxahachie. Shortly after they moved, doctors diagnosed Dawn's mother with cancer. Uncertain of the future, the couple continued renting, eventually welcoming Dawn's mother into their home.

After she passed, they sold her home and planned to build a house. The builder kept trying to get them to move in before finishing the house. The idea didn't seem wise, so they refused. When the builder went bankrupt, they were glad they weren't stuck with an unfinished home.

For years Dawn had driven by an old-fashioned-looking home, fascinated. "I used to drive by all the time and wonder what it looked like inside," she said. The inviting front porch stretches across the house, reminiscent of days when people



sat outside visiting. When the house went on the market, she got her wish.

"It was terrible inside," Gary Don said. But they liked several features. After buying it, they spent time remodeling,



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turning the house into their home. The house came with history. The original structure had burned to the ground. The owner rebuilt the house to look like an older home. But instead of using the original foundation, they built a pier and beam design. The large rooms and hardwood floors add to the illusion of age.

One of their first projects included remodeling the back deck. The original design had two sets of steps going down out of the house and then a second set going up into the garage, somewhat unsteady and awkward. A deck joining the house and patio provided a stable, even passage.

At first, Dawn didn't care for the hunter green countertops in the kitchen. Yet, the color contrasts beautifully against the dark flooring. White tiles line the space between counters and



upper cabinets. Painted tiles, dispersed along the middle row, picture blue vases holding red roses with green leaves. The decorative touch complements the countertops. Although Dawn wishes they were roosters instead of flowers, she doesn't want to replace them.

As one of her many collections, roosters grace the dining room. Originally, this room looked into the backyard. Now the windows open to a sunroom, where they display a tribute to Dawn's father. Pictures and naval memorabilia hang on the walls. Her mom and dad had lived in Spain for a time, and some decor in the house came from there. Wherever her dad went, he brought back a doll. Dawn gets them out, occasionally.

The large living room sits in the middle of the house. Comfortable furniture, a corner fireplace and flat-screen television

above it make the room a great place for gathering with friends or relaxing at the end of the day.

A third bedroom has become their exercise room. Gary Don admits they don't use it often. A picture of Dawn's mother hangs on one wall, while another holds a needlework piece featuring a seascape and lighthouse. Although it doesn't match anything in the house, she created the piece while her mother went through cancer treatments. "I'll probably never get rid of it," she said.

A creative person, Dawn needed space for crafts, so they made one smaller room into a crafter's haven. There she makes quilts and detailed dolls with big eyes and tiny fingers. In 2013, she made Santas and snowmen from bowling pins. She also collects Santa Clauses and owns 500. In the fall of 2014, she used Mason jar rings to create decorative pumpkins.

The two bedrooms on the other side of the house are the largest. Both have as much space as the living room and include large bathrooms. The master bedroom has an angled corner with enough space for a desk and chair and windows looking out to the sunroom and

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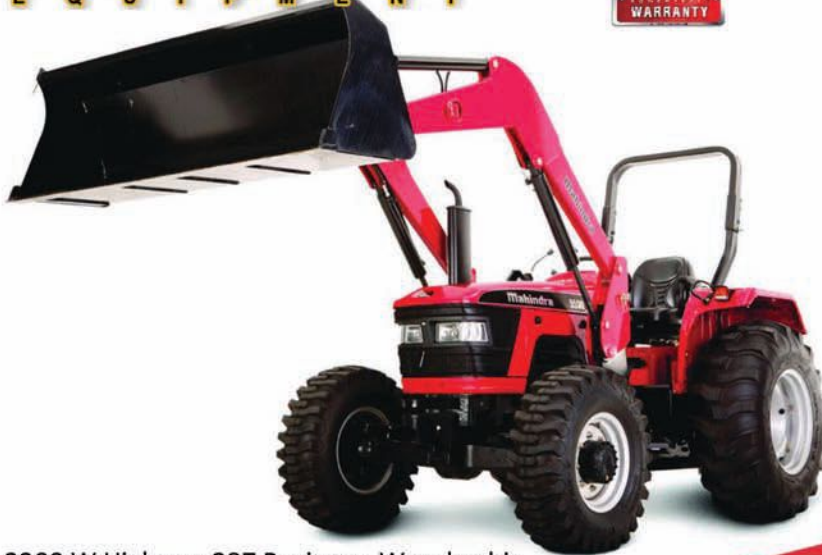
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backyard. When they first moved into the house, the carpet looked antique with its massive flowers. The previous owner had used fingernail polish to paint the flowers on a ceiling light plate to match. They repainted the fixture a solid white and replaced the carpet.

The backyard contains a pond beside the patio, complete with fish and a small waterfall. The gentle sound of water, large trees, green grass and an area large enough to use as a dance floor create a peaceful atmosphere. Although Gary Don and Dawn don't entertain often, they celebrated their 40th anniversary in their backyard, where they renewed their wedding vows.

Within the first three years of living in the house, cars crashing through their fence disturbed their peace three times. Shifting the fence farther back from the corner didn't solve the problem. In an innovative move, Gary Don had large boulders placed between the fence and street. He often hears the squeal of tires as drivers take the corner too fast and hit brakes hard to avoid crashing into the rocks. "I don't want anyone to get hurt — especially my grandkids and pets," he said.

While Dawn's decorative influence appears in the house, Gary Don has his space. When they bought the house, two side-by-side wooden buildings sat in the backyard. In an ultimate project, Gary Don connected them, creating his own studio. Guitar-shaped artwork identifies the building as a music place. There he teaches guitar lessons, writes and records his own music. He loves teaching his five students — John Blocker, Lee Sechrist, Hannah Hensley, Brooklin Calk and Jeremy Boyd. He's proud of their



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Gary Don began writing country songs in the early 1980s. He has 10 songs under contract, with his work featured in movies such as *The Guilt Trip* and *Snitch*, plus one episode of *Pretty Little Liars*. In addition, he has had multiple songs recorded by three Australian singers. He just got back from Nashville, where he landed a song-writing opportunity with Grey Creek Productions. "Small successes," Gary Don decreed. "I'm still waiting for the biggie."

His decorations consist of accolades, Southwest Airlines memorabilia and a treasured Christmas card from Loretta Lynn and multiple album covers from artists who have recorded his songs. He wired one building with the capability of



recording an entire band. An adjoining window allows him to see from one side to the other. With today's technology, all recording can be done in one room without special wiring.

Dawn works part time at Hilltop Lanes bowling alley, just for fun. Since they are both retired, Gary Don and Dawn can often be found at home together. Most days, he heads to the studio and makes music. She retreats to her craft room to create.

Even though they started over after 20 years, the couple seems quite settled in their home, with no indication of leaving any time soon. Perhaps this will be their second 20-year stint — not so backward after all. **NOW**

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Ready, Set, Run!

— By Sara Edgell

In the state of Texas, there are over 6,000 children on average in foster care waiting to be adopted. Additionally, about 8,000 adoptions take place each year. Last year, the Texas Baptist Home for Children was responsible for 37 of those adoptions, a number the organization is extremely proud of. Considering their mission statement, "This ministry exists to protect the sanctity of human life and to promote the preservation of the family," the

staff at TBH does everything within their power to ensure children find their families and families find their children. Dana Holt is just one of the many staff members who go above and beyond the call of duty to ensure this organization's meaningful and important work is a success.

The home was founded in 1910, initially operating as an orphanage. However, as society changed, the need for orphanages diminished. Therefore, in the 1950s, the home



Run

became a campus featuring new buildings to accommodate foster children and expectant mothers. But as time went on, the need was for up-to-date and cooperative housing. In the 1970s, new residential-style facilities were built to replace the existing dormitories, which allowed those living on-site a more realistic family living experience. The goal was to provide a stable home-like environment for individuals in transition to their forever family.

Currently, the property houses eight group homes, two of which are cottages. The homes are typical structures featuring plenty of common living space, including a kitchen, living room and dining area, as well as four to five bedrooms to accommodate multiple foster children and live-in parents. Additionally, each home has a spacious yard and direct access to the property's open grounds, park and chapel. "On campus," Dana stated, "there is a community-feel, because you are among people who understand."

The homes serve a variety of different functions: one accommodates

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expectant mothers, while another is an exclusive teen group home, and yet others are specialized for young children. Despite these differences, there is one commonality — love. “The Texas Baptist Home is a multi-service agency that serves children, youth and families through residential and community-based programs,” according to Jami Hogan, the program administrator. “The purpose of



these programs is to enable ministries, local churches and the community to meet more efficiently the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs of individuals and families.”

The ultimate goal of TBH is to place children with families. In order to do this most effectively, Dana works together with Jami and several others who specialize in private and infant adoptions and foster-to-adopt and straight-adopt





scenarios. Jami serves as the adoption program administrator, overseeing the daily functions and operations, while Jennifer serves as the post-adoption services coordinator. And Dana closes out the adoption squad, serving as the adoption director. Together, five women comprise their own sort of super hero team, fighting for the preservation of the sanctity of family.



In addition to her general duties, Dana also has organized TBH's annual 5K race for the past three years, but this year marks the first year Jennifer will take over these duties. The first annual 5K occurred in 2012, and since its beginnings, TBH and Dana have witnessed the event grow in success. The greatest revenue came in 2013 — an impressive \$25,000 in funds, while 2014 saw the greatest number of participants



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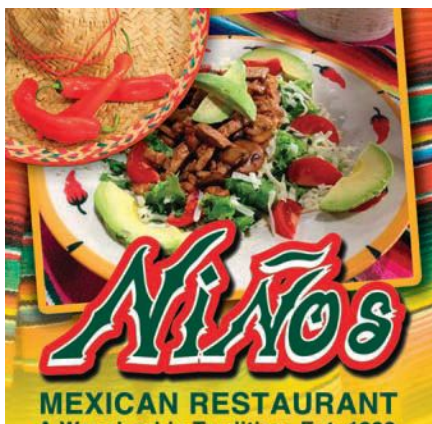
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with over 250 racers. "Our goal this year is to raise \$20,000 and host at least 250 racers," she stated. "We encourage everyone, including families that have adopted through the agency, to come out that day. It's a way to raise money for their potential needs, but also a powerful way to share their stories of adoption."

Each time a child is adopted through TBH, their name is placed on a tiny gold leaf, which is then added to one of the two trees in the chapel. "Our goal is to find permanency for them and to find a good family for them, where they will be loved and thrive," Dana explained. However, the children and families need assistance acclimating to their new family dynamics. Because many of these children have suffered hardships and were removed from their biological family by Child Protective Services, they often need specialized counseling to help them through the difficult process. "Adoption isn't a Band-Aid for these kids. All their pain from the process doesn't just go away," Dana said. "It has to heal. That's why we provide these continued services and resources." Therefore, the purpose of the fun-run is not only to generate funds for these children and their families, but also to generate support and spread awareness.

Even though the fun run is, indeed, tons of fun, a ton of hard work goes into organizing the event. To prepare, Dana does a lot of footwork, including securing both local and regional sponsors. She is also responsible for advertising and gathering goods and services for the silent auction that occurs on race day. "It's a lot of work," she admitted, "but it's more than worth it. I look most forward to seeing everyone support adoption and some of the adoptive parents and birth

Cancer Institute of Dallas would like to welcome Dr. Binu Nair to the team!



Dr. Binu Nair is board certified in Medical Oncology and Hematology by the American Board of Internal Medicine. After his education, Dr. Nair joined the faculty of Feist Weiller Cancer Center at LSU Health Science Center, where along with taking care of patients, he was involved in many cancer related clinical research as principal investigator or sub investigator and taught for three years. Dr. Nair has authored and co-authored articles and abstracts in peer reviewed journals, regional and national conferences.

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parents coming to walk together. That is truly amazing to witness.”

The run will take place at Getzendaner Park on January 24 at 8:00 a.m., and it is open to people of all ages. Each year, there is a different theme for the race. This year's theme will be Mustache Dash. All participants are encouraged to wear their best mustache gear for an “imperial” celebration and a “walrus” of a good time. Participants can run individually or in teams. The fee is \$30 for an individual and \$25 per person for groups of four or more. Each racer will receive a timing chip, and at the end of the race, awards will be given to first-, second- and third-place finishers for both the youth and adult divisions. But the fun doesn't stop once the winners are announced. In addition to the silent auction, there will be live music, vendors, bounce houses and lots of excitement and entertainment.

Ultimately, Dana hopes the fun run will serve as an opportunity for the community to come out and show their support for families impacted by adoption. “Being able to see where these kids have come from, where they've been and where they are now is the most rewarding part of this job,” Dana admitted, “and that's what the fun run celebrates.” After all, there aren't any unwanted children, just families waiting to become complete. So, grab your mustaches and running shoes and join in on the excitement by running for a great cause — family. See you at the finish line! **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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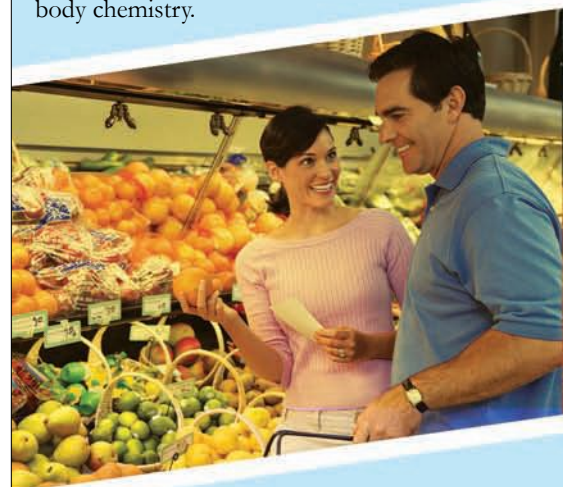
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confer with them on areas where you can improve. Then, whether you find yourself in your home or out on the town, you can balance mental and physical goals for great health.

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



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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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Doctors are available to guide you in discovering what is necessary to stop the stress on your mind and body and begin the healing. Seek advice from experts in nutrition. Diabetes, for example, is not necessarily always a permanent condition. A focused, disciplined, balanced diet supports your body's ability to heal itself. With courage, determination and continued direction from your health care practitioner, help is available.

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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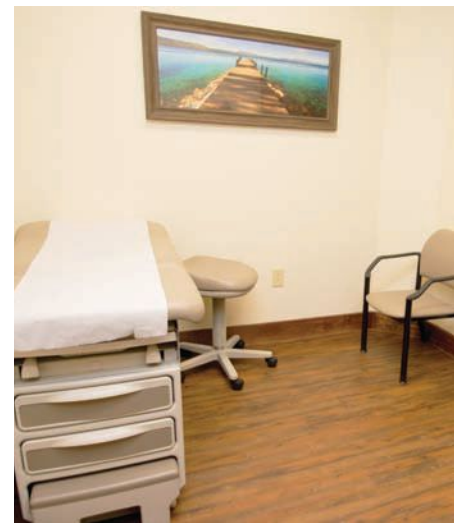


ClinPoint Trials

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Marisa Sibley, Dr. Thomas Ledbetter, Dr. Peggy Linguist and Sherry Johnson work together with trial volunteers in the advancement of medicine.

Medical Advancements

Tomorrow's cures begin today at ClinPoint Trials.

— By Sandra Strong

ClinPoint Trials is bringing clinical research to Waxahachie and the surrounding areas, one clinical trial at a time. Their mission is simple. “Our goal is to provide the very best care to patients, as we work together to advance medicine,” said Sherry Johnson, ClinPoint Trials, RN, CCRA, owner and site director. “To know clinical research is happening close to home and to know we could be involved in a medical breakthrough is exciting.”

What is a clinical trial? A clinical trial is a research study in which volunteers receive investigational treatments under the close supervision of a physician and other research professionals, as stated in a brochure available in the ClinPoint office. The treatments are developed by pharmaceutical companies that handpick qualified physicians to conduct clinical trials to determine the benefits of investigational drugs. “Clinical trials are important to everyone,

because we don’t move forward medically without them,” Sherry emphasized, proudly mentioning that Dr. Thomas Ledbetter is serving as the medical director and adult principal investigator at ClinPoint Trials, while Dr. Peggy Linguist is the pediatric principal investigator.

Clinical trials provide the research needed for new treatments and new medicines. “We need to constantly be moving forward,” Sherry reiterated. “But we can’t move forward without the help of volunteers who are willing to participate in the trials.”

Who can participate in a clinical trial? Every clinical trial has unique qualification criteria. Volunteers must meet the criteria for the clinical trial prior to being accepted as a participant. Criteria can include age, gender, the type and stage of a disease, previous treatment history and/or other medical conditions. Marisa Sibley, a study coordinator at ClinPoint, explained that participants are considered for qualification

case-by-case, trial-by-trial. “A call to ClinPoint does not mean a commitment to participate. There are so many variables for qualification because each trial is different.”

How does a trial work? One group may receive an investigational treatment or study drug, while a second group may receive a placebo or treatment already available. Regardless of the type of treatment they receive, study participants are treated like kings and queens. The staff at ClinPoint makes a strong effort to cater to their study participants in any way they can to let them know that they are appreciated. “We want to give our patients the best of care and inform them on every detail of the study,” Sherry said. “Trial volunteers are always going to know what their role is and what the study hopes to accomplish.”

What are the benefits of participating in a clinical trial? Participants receive free, study-related exams and medical treatment at no charge and health insurance is not required. The treatment a participant receives has the potential to make a positive impact on their personal health, as well as on the health of others. Participants are also

“Clinical trials are important to everyone, because we don’t move forward medically without them.”

able to gain access to medications not yet widely available.

Volunteers are also compensated for their time and travel. “That’s definitely the favorite benefit,” Marisa laughed. “Our participants love knowing that when they come into our office they aren’t going to have to pay us. Instead, we are going to pay them.” The amount of compensation varies from trial to trial.

ClinPoint Trials has brought something new to Waxahachie, where the opportunity to participate in clinical trials has never been available without a long commute. “We are sure people will have questions about clinical trials, and their questions are important,” Sherry said. “We encourage people to call us for answers.” **NOW**



ClinPoint Trials is seeking children to participate in a clinical research study.

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Aniah Johnson-Gurode, 3, shakes hands with Santa while shopping with her mom at Wal-Mart.



The St. Joseph Catholic Church Choir performs during the annual Habitat for Humanity Festival of Trees event held at Waxahachie Bible Church.



Mason Tye, 7, and Kylie Tye, 4, share an evening out at TaMolly's with their parents.



A group of shoppers from all over Ellis County wait in line at Belk for Black Friday shopping to begin.



Students from Pettigrew Academy go door-to-door singing carols.



Baylor Scott & White Medical Center Board Members Bonney Ramsey and Bobby Dyess volunteer at the front desk during the hospital's grand opening weekend.



Santa Claus makes his grand entrance during the Christmas parade.



Rachelle Giddens puts the final touches on a tree for the annual Habitat for Humanity Festival of Trees event.



The John Deere entry is a big hit with parade attendees.



Tenth grader Sammy Camarillo stops by the NOW office on his way to the Waxahachie Homecoming Parade.



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How to Roll Over Your 401(k) to a Traditional IRA

When you leave your job, your 401(k) balance can come with you. You may be tempted to keep some or all of the money instead of rolling it over, but that is rarely a good idea. If you cash out your 401(k) plan balance, you generally pay the income taxes due on the entire amount withdrawn, as well as a 10-percent penalty tax, unless you are at least 59 1/2 or unless you are retiring from your employer at age 55 or older.

If, however, you want to keep the money in place for retirement, a good strategy to consider is rolling the funds over into an Individual Retirement Account, or IRA. The process is simple:

1. Find an IRA investment (such as an annuity, a bank CD or a mutual fund) that's appropriate for you. You will have to do some research or talk to a financial professional to find out which options are right for you.
2. Contact the administrator of your former employer's plan and arrange the direct rollover to the custodian of your new IRA. (The exact procedure may vary a little from company to company, but don't worry — they've all dealt with this request before.)
3. Sign documents to directly rollover the funds to your new account.
4. The funds will arrive in your IRA for investment as you chose in step 1.

A word of caution: You can receive a distribution of your account balance from the plan instead of arranging for a direct rollover. This might not be the best idea. If you take a distribution, the plan administrator will have to withhold 20 percent of the distributable amount for federal income taxes.

That is a credit toward taxes that may be due when you do your income tax return. When you do this indirect rollover, you can increase the rollover amount, from your own funds, equal to the 20-percent withholding amount. Doing a direct rollover, however, avoids this negative consequence. If you roll over the amount of the check you receive without adding that 20-percent back, then the amount withheld will be treated as a taxable distribution. You will generally have to pay income taxes on that amount as well as a 10-percent penalty tax if you are younger than 59 1/2.

Before investing, consider the funds' investment objectives, risks, charges and expenses. Ask for a prospectus or summary prospectus containing this and other information. Read it carefully. Securities, insurance and annuity products are not FDIC insured, are not bank guaranteed and are subject to investment risk, including possible loss of principal. **NOW**

Neither State Farm nor its agents provide investment, tax or legal advice. State Farm VP Management Corp. is a separate entity from those State Farm entities which provide banking and insurance products. Prior to rolling over assets from an employer-sponsored retirement plan into an IRA, it's important that customers understand their options and do a full comparison on the differences in the guarantees and protections offered by each respective type of account as well as the differences in liquidity/ loans, types of investments, fees and any potential penalties.

Adam Rope is a State Farm agent based in Waxahachie.

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January 7

WISD: First day of spring semester.

January 10

After Hours Improv Performance:
1:00 p.m., WHS Fine Arts Center.

Jon Wolfe in Concert: 9:00 p.m., Rockett Café and Club, 5790 FM 813.

January 12

WISD Board of Trustees meeting:
6:00 p.m., WISD Administration Building.

January 19

Martin Luther King Day: WISD staff and student holiday. All campuses will be closed.

January 24

Hachie Health Hike: 10:00 a.m.-noon, downtown Waxahachie. Hike begins at the Waxahachie Farmer's Market located at 410 S. Rogers St.

January 27

Girl Scout Monthly Volunteer meeting:
7:00-8:30 p.m., Brown Street Church of Christ, 2471 Brown St. For more information, visit joinus@gssu251.org.

January 29

Annual FirstLook Fundraising Banquet:
7:00 p.m., Waxahachie Bible Church, 621 N. Grand Ave. Reservations are required. An opportunity to make a financial gift will be extended. For reservations or more information, visit www.txlifeinvestors.org or call (972) 938-7900.

February 6

Waxahachie ISD's DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) Day: reading times are 8:45 and 10:15 a.m. Contact Melissa Cobb at mcobb@wisd.org or call her at (972) 923-4631 to reserve your place to read.

February 12

Fourth Annual Daddy Daughter Dance:
6:00-9:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center, 2000 Civic Center Ln. Tickets are \$15 per person and they go on sale **January 5**. Tickets must be purchased in advance. This year's theme is *Frozen*. For more information, call (469) 309-4041.

February 28

Waxahachie Symphony Orchestra presents Arts District Chorale:
7:00-9:00 p.m., Presbyterian Church, 402 N. College St. For more information, visit www.waxahachiesymphony.com.

Zane Williams in Concert: 9:00 p.m., Rockett Café and Club, 5790 FM 813.

March 7

Deeper Journeys with Nichole Nordeman, Lisa Harper and Tammy Trent: 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., The Avenue Church, 210 YMCA Dr. Tickets are \$35. To purchase tickets, visit theavenuechurch.com/events. For more information, call (972) 937-5301.

Ongoing:

Mondays

Celebrate Recovery: 7:00 p.m., Cowboy Church of Ellis County, 2374 Hwy. 287 Bypass W. For more information, call (972) 935-9801.

First and Fourth Mondays

Avenue Moms: 10:00 a.m.-noon, The Avenue Church, 1761 N. Hwy. 77. Register online at www.events.theavenuechurch.com or call the church office at (972) 937-5301 for more information.

Third Mondays

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

Fourth Mondays

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

Last Mondays

Friends of Sims Library meeting: 10:00-11:00 a.m., library meeting room, 515 W. Main St. Newcomers are always welcome.

Mondays and Thursdays

Fitness Revolution: 6:30 p.m., Salvation Army, 620 Farley St. Work out to fun aerobics choreographed to upbeat Christian and wholesome music. \$15 per month. Call (214) 477-1164 for more information.

Tuesdays

Waxahachie Toastmasters meeting: 6:30 p.m., Lyceum at Sims Library. For more information, call (469) 245-8681.

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) meetings: 6:30 p.m., LaQuinta. For more information, call Wendy Merritt at (469) 256-8989.

Second Thursdays

Crackpots meetings: 6:30 p.m., Cowboy Church of Ennis. Call Vicki Bell at (469) 285-4845 or Myra Morrissey at (972) 998-5868 for more information.

Fridays

Business Networking International meetings: 8:00-9:30 a.m., LaQuinta, 311 Stadium Dr. For more information, call (469) 222-9160.

Story Time at Sims Library: 10:00-11:00 a.m., presented by the Jr. Service League, children 3 and older. In addition to reading books, children will participate in a craft and receive a snack. Call the library at (972) 937-2671 for more information.

Second Saturdays

Cheesy Striders Multiple Sclerosis & Parkinson's Self Help meeting: 10:00 a.m., Waxahachie Bible Church, 621 N. Grand St. For more information, contact Linda DeFrank at (214) 514-5236.

Third Saturdays

Waxahachie Jamboree: 7:00-9:15 p.m., Women's Building, 407 W. Jefferson St. Reserve tickets are \$10. When still available, tickets can be purchased at the door for \$7.50. For more information, call Hoyt Patterson at (214) 535-3473 or Gary Kirchmeier at (214) 707-7826.

Fourth Saturdays

Bristol Opry: 7:00 p.m., featuring local singers and musicians. For more information, contact Jim Gatlin at (972) 846-2211.

Sundays

GriefShare meetings: 2:30-4:00 p.m., Cowboy Church of Ellis County in the sanctuary Youth Inc. room. For more information, call (972) 935-9801 or visit www.cowboychurchofelliscounty.org.

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



Red Hot Shingles

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

Many of us have seen the commercials of people sharing their stories of pain from screaming blisters on their body caused by shingles. If you have ever had chickenpox, the varicella-zoster virus that causes chickenpox, remains in you and may later cause shingles. After the infection of chickenpox goes away, the virus goes dormant or asleep in your body. Later in life, it can reawaken and manifest itself as shingles.

Approximately 1 million cases of shingles occur in America every year. The majority of people affected are elderly. However, if a child has had chickenpox, it is possible for him or her to get shingles. The reason the virus reactivates in some people is not clear. Some conditions causing this are a weakened immune system from cancer or HIV. Chemotherapy, steroids and/or radiation can all increase the risk of reactivating the virus and producing shingles.

While it isn't a life-threatening condition, shingles can be very painful. The usual pattern is a band or strip of inflamed skin covered with fluid-filled blisters that usually appears on one side of the body. Several days before the blisters appear, you may experience itching, burning, numbness and tingling. Pain is frequently listed as the first symptom felt. Other symptoms of fever, headache, chills and an upset stomach may be present also. Shingles may persist for weeks.

Shingles cannot be spread from person to person. However, the varicella-zoster

virus from a person with an active case of shingles can be transmitted by direct contact to a person who has never had chickenpox or been vaccinated for chickenpox. The resulting infection would be chickenpox, not shingles.

If you have an active case of shingles, try to keep the rash covered. Avoid touching the area and stay away from people with weakened immune systems and pregnant women until you are no longer contagious.

Diagnosis is made by patient history and visual examination. Your physician may choose to take a sample of the fluid for laboratory examination. While there is no cure for shingles, antiviral medications can decrease the severity of the symptoms and help avoid complications. It is important to take the antiviral drugs as soon as symptoms manifest themselves. Numbing topical agents to the rash may provide temporary symptomatic relief. In some cases prescription medication may be necessary for the pain.

Needless suffering can be avoided through vaccinations. Children should be vaccinated against chickenpox. If you are older and have had chickenpox, a vaccine is available to lessen your chances of getting shingles. Check with your doctor for information regarding vaccinations. **NOW**

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

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In the Kitchen With Ludean Green

— *By Sandra Strong*

Ludean Green started cooking alongside her mother at the age of 5. When she was 10, she made the first of many homemade fried pies. “I accidentally put salt in the recipe instead of sugar,” she remembered with a laugh. “That’s one thing I’ve not been able to live down.”

Her early experience in the kitchen prepared Ludean for the career path she chose as an adult. “I was a waitress for 50 years,” she said. “I loved every minute of it.” For Ludean, cooking is still therapeutic. She makes a lot of her own recipes, and her favorite spices are garlic and cinnamon. “I find cooking to be relaxing,” she explained. “When I’m in the kitchen, I seem to forget my problems.” **NOW**

Tiger Butter Candy

Makes 64 pieces.

- 1 lb. white bark, melted**
- 1 cup crunchy peanut butter**
- 1.25x2-inch baking cups**

1. Mix all ingredients well. Dip 1 tsp. of mixture into small baking cups. Allow to set until hardened.

Good Orange Slice Cookies

Makes 140 cookies.

- 2 cups flour**
- 2 eggs**
- 2 sticks margarine**
- 2 cups brown sugar**
- 2 cups oatmeal**
- 2 cups pecans, chopped**
- 2 cups orange slices, cut in small pieces**
- 1 tsp. vanilla**
- 1 tsp. baking soda**

- 1 tsp. baking powder**
- 1/4 tsp. salt**

1. Thoroughly mix all ingredients together. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto cookie sheet.
2. Bake at 350 F for 11 minutes. Allow to cool for 10 minutes before removing from cookie sheet.

Hardware Snacks: “Nuts, Bolts, Screws and Washers”

- 1 14-oz. box Wheat Chex**
- 1 12-oz. box Crispix**
- 1 14-oz. box Corn Chex**
- 1 14-oz. box Rice Chex**
- 2 cups pecans, whole**
- 8 oz. straight pretzels**
- 7 oz. Cheerios**
- 1 cup hot sausage drippings**
- 2 sticks margarine**
- 4 Tbsp. garlic salt**

- 1.** Stir the first 7 ingredients in a mixing bowl. Pour mixture into a roasting pan.
- 2.** Mix remaining ingredients in a saucepan. Pour sauce over the dry ingredients.
- 3.** Bake at 225 F for 3 hours, stir mixture every 30 minutes.

Olive Dip

- 8 oz. cream cheese**
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise**
- 1/2 cup pecans, finely chopped**
- 1 cup olives, finely chopped**
- 2 Tbsp. olive juice**
- 3 green onions, finely chopped**
- Dash black pepper**

- 1.** Mix all ingredients together. Chill overnight.
- 2.** Serve with your choice of crackers.

German Cookies

- 1 cup brown sugar**
- 1 cup sugar**
- 2 sticks butter**
- 2 eggs**
- 3 1/2 cups flour**
- 1 3.5-oz. can coconut**
- 2 cups pecans, chopped**
- 1 Tbsp. water**
- 1 tsp. vanilla**
- 1 tsp. soda**

- 1.** Mix all ingredients together. Make small balls in the palm of your hand. Place cookie balls on a cookie sheet.
- 2.** Bake at 350 F for 15 minutes.

Hawaiian Bread

Makes 6 loaves.

- 1 8-oz. can crushed pineapple, undrained**
- 1 16-oz. pkg. coconut**
- 4 eggs**
- 2 cups sugar**
- 4 cups flour**
- 1 cup oil**
- 2 cups pecans, chopped**
- 1 6-oz. jar cherries, drained and chopped**
- 2 tsp. baking soda**

- 1.** Mix all ingredients together. Pour into 6 4x6-inch bread pans.
- 2.** Bake at 315 F for 45 minutes.

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