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JANUARY 2016

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never lost sight of
her artistic goals

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At Home With Brandon
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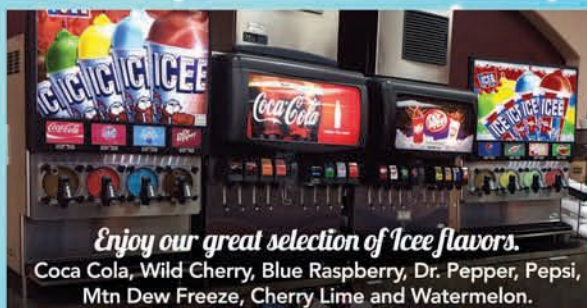


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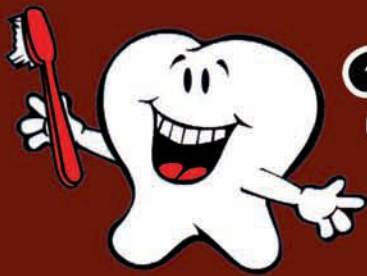
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ON THE COVER



Jillian Arreazola uses the acrylic on glass method to recreate famous artwork.

Photo by Amy Ramirez.

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Editor's Note

Happy New Year!

Life is based on the choices we make from day to day. Back in June, I made a new, healthier lifestyle choice that changed me for the better. Even though I've lost enough weight and inches to warrant a new wardrobe, the most important change I've found is how good I feel about the possibilities of the coming year.

I don't have resolutions, but I do have a goal in mind for the near future. I want to run a 5K. I know that probably sounds silly to most, but I'm setting goals that are doable for me at this stage in my life. I want my goals to be manageable, as I work to conquer them one at a time. After I cross the finish line, I will smile and simply say, "It is what it is," and it won't matter where I place because I will have done what I set out to do. I hope your life choices in the coming year bring you great satisfaction, too!

Sandra

Sandra Strong
EnnisNOW Editor
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CREATING

Outside the Box

— By Sandra Strong

Jillian Arreazola moved to Ennis from Allen, Texas, with her family when she was in the fourth grade. Her journey in the vast world of art began as a sophomore at Ennis High School. Her ability to work with glass has matured over the years to include pieces that are one of a kind in their design and uniqueness. “I needed to choose an elective,” Jillian remembered. “The jewelry class looked interesting to me, so I chose Jewelry I as my elective that year.”

That first year turned into so much more than an AP jewelry course. Under the tutelage of Jeannie Lucky, Jillian was able to master her artistic craft of choice while also making a lifelong friend in the process. “I was with Mrs. Lucky for three years,” Jillian explained. “She was my mentor. She stretched me beyond my limits and taught me how to create outside the box.” Jeannie took Jillian out of her



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comfort zone, thus creating a young artist who has an eye for vivid colors and how well they will blend when fused together.

During her sophomore year, Jillian was introduced to glass fusing — the art form that bonds disparate pieces of compatible glass together using heat and gravity in a kiln. The glass is heated in a controlled method at a specific temperature and, basically, cooled in the same controlled manner. Jillian learned the basics of her craft that first year. She learned the difference in the full-fused and tack-fused methods of glass art. Full-fused pieces have depth based on the number of glass pieces used, but the final object is brilliant to the eye and smooth to the touch. Full-fused glass is baked at a much hotter temperature. The hotter temps allow the glass to melt one color into another. Art lovers can see and feel the different levels of glass used when admiring the tack-fused method. The tack method is baked at a much lower temperature. The levels, sometimes four or more, melt just enough to permanently fuse the chosen glass together, while leaving each level unique unto itself.

The limited number of pieces Jillian created as a high school student are masterpieces in and of themselves. They may not be high in number, but they are off the chart when it comes to brilliance and overall wearable beauty. There is not one pendant that she favors over another. In her mind, they each have some quality that make them all her favorite. “I feel obligated by society to have a favorite,” she admitted. “I don’t have one favorite piece, but each piece has something favorite about it.” Jillian did gift one specific pendant to her grandmother.



It was the same pendant that earned her a fourth-place ribbon at a county art show, but her grandmother still wears the pendant today with first-place pride.

Jillian was eager to get back to Jewelry II when her junior year began. She was equally excited to see Jeannie. "She was my encourager," Jillian confessed. "She brought the ability out of me." Jillian totally understood her role in the teacher/student relationship. "Mrs. Lucky could only do so much," Jillian shared, "then it was up to me to move forward in my artistic craft."

Jillian not only moved forward, she was able to take the fused glass methods she had learned to a level that represented her as an artist. She began to experiment with dichroic glass, frit glass, thin wire and charms. Dichroic glass is very glossy and offers a brilliant shine. Frit are tiny pieces of glass that come in all shapes, sizes and colors, sometimes as small as a pea or a large grain of salt. When methods are fused together and embellished with twisted wire and dangling charms, the finished result is nothing less than amazing.

By the time she was preparing for her AP Jewelry III final exam as a senior, she had grown in artistic ability, but more importantly, the once shy sophomore had matured into a confident senior with a lofty idea for her final test. "We had to choose a specific theme. Mrs. Lucky's idea was to emulate the painted work of other famous artists using acrylic on glass," Jillian said, also mentioning that this technique has been around a long time. Her goal was to recreate well-known works of art on small rectangular pieces of white glass using a tiny brush

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and acrylic paints. "Once the painting was complete, the glass pieces were baked in a kiln. This process seals the paint to the glass." Some of the replicated pieces look exactly like the famous paintings, while others are distorted because of the baking process. "Some teachers expect perfection," Jillian added, "but how does someone critique or grade artwork, since we all see art differently?"

Needless to say, fusing glass is very much like a surprise gift. The artist envisions a piece in their mind as they choose methods, colors and shapes of glass, but once fused, they take on another look altogether. An artist can also re-fuse a piece to try once again to create what they had originally imagined. But, in glass fusing there are no fast and hard rules or guarantees. Surprisingly enough, that's what makes this type of artwork so unique. Never really knowing what you will get when you remove the piece from the kiln is definitely the art of the unknown and unexpected.

Since graduating from EHS in 2015, Jillian has had time to reflect on those who have inspired her to take her artwork to new heights. She refers to her mother as her backbone. Her father paints on canvas with oil as a relaxing hobby. And it was her stepdad who introduced her to the art of photography as a young teen and helped her decide that photography was something she wanted to pursue and learn more about as a college freshman at Texas State University.

For Jillian, a larger percentage of her inspiration will always come back to her high school art teacher who, after more than 40 years in the classroom, retired the same year Jillian graduated. "I utilized and took advantage of every single opportunity offered to me in Mrs. Lucky's art classes," Jillian said. "Mrs. Lucky was an expert art teacher who is now a wonderful lifelong friend."

"I so enjoyed her as a student. Her confidence level grew each year," Jeannie said. "She had a goal from the beginning, and she never lost sight of it."

Currently, Jillian is in the market for a kiln she can call her own so when the artistic bug strikes, she has all she needs to bring the creations in her head to fruition. "I always have a vision of what I hope to make," she said. "It may not always turn out as planned, but the art is in the creating, and all I want to do is create." **NOW**

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TRASH to Treasure

— By Donnielle Tynor

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Love can be a wild, consuming flame, or in the case of Brandon and Bridgette Nichols, it was a slow and steady burn. The couple, who married in March 2010, had known each other from grade school, and both graduated from Ennis High School. Their lives took separate paths for a while, but they were brought back together by fate. The Nichols family has since grown to include 7-year-old Hudson, 4-year-old Hope and 1-year-old Heath.

Brandon started landscaping his junior year of high school and kept working with it throughout college. Eventually, he came to co-own Rock Pile N Nursery, along with Bridgette's father, with locations in Corsicana and Reagor Springs. He has also been a fireman for the city of Red Oak for the past nine years and owns a few ice kiosks around Ellis County. Bridgette decided to stay at home when she became pregnant with Heath, quitting her job of 10 years

Bridgette Nichols



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teaching pre-K. “I love staying at home. I’m not missing anything. It’s the greatest feeling,” Bridgette enthused.

Right after they married, the couple lived in Bristol for five years before they sold their home to buy the 10-acres of land on which they currently live. The couple designed and built their dream home, doing plenty of the work themselves. There is a great deal of mason work throughout their home. “I wanted more stone in here, but I got outvoted. So I did the outside, and she designed the inside,” Brandon stated with a chuckle.

A large fireplace covered in masonry is the eyepiece of the living room, taking up an entire section of wall

between two large windows that take in the green vista of the backyard. Items ranging from framed photographs to a lace throw are artfully displayed on the mantel. Throughout the living room are reclaimed pieces, such as the coffee table, which the couple has collected over the years. “We love the antique look and feel. There are a few things that I bought new, but most of it is just people’s junk that I bought and turned into something we could use,” Bridgette explained. “I love to decorate.” Another large piece in the living room is the television hutch. Trinkets and family pictures line the shelves, and on top, old crates sit atop burlap.

The kitchen is open to both the living room and dining area. Distressed, stacked cabinets in gray and blue take up one wall in the kitchen. Above the tallest cabinet, there is an old shopping cart from the old Safeway in town. “People always laugh when they come over

and see the shopping cart. They always ask how we got it up there,” Bridgette confessed, as she shared the story of the unusual decoration. “I just man-handled it up the ladder. It wasn’t fun.”

Above the marble bar and the dining room table are two unique light fixtures made from old chicken feeders. The couple found the tarnished pieces in Canton and saw the untapped potential. They brought them home to get them wired and hung. “If you look at a lot of our fixtures, you can see how we took old things we found in Canton and repurposed them,” Bridgette said. Both



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the shared kid's bathroom and the master bath have reclaimed fixtures.

The bar, located next to the dining area, was supposed to be a closet in the original design. "We decided to turn it into a bar because there were so many closets in the design that one more would be too much," Brandon stated. To allow for entertaining, they decided to remove the wall across from the bar. This made the bar accessible to the dining room and allowed the open area to flow between each room.



Bridgette decorated all the bedrooms. Hudson's room has a masculine feel with soft browns and decor that is mature. Brandon's deer mount hangs on the wall directly above his bed. Both father and son are avid hunters and enjoy going out together. A bathroom, filled with little touches like antique keyhole cabinet knobs, connects the two older children's rooms. "One day, the kids might tell me how they want their rooms to look, but right now, I'll tell them how it is when it comes to decorating," Bridgette stated with a grin.

Hope's room is decorated with an unassuming femininity that is both soft and charming. A large wall hanging, purchased from an antique store in Waxahachie, consists of pages from old hymnals that have been created into a set of angel wings. The piece adds complexity to the frilly pillows and curtains made from strips of burlap and lace.

When the Nicholises originally designed the house, they were not expecting to be parents again, but as fate would have it, soon after moving in, Heath arrived. Since the original design was only a three bedroom, they decided the media room would eventually become Hudson's. This room also has an attached bath, which will make the transition flow smoother for the family.



The master bedroom has the same charming style as the rest of the home. Two large white, distressed furniture pieces sit in this room, both topped with antiques, family photos and one chalk board for writing prayer requests. The headboard is an old window frame with burlap and lace draped across it. The master bath is extravagant with its open shower covered in the same gray stone as the fireplace and deep-set bathtub made for relaxation. The burlap- and lace-coated chandelier and chicken-feed curtains lend another layer to the unassuming luxury that is presented throughout the home.



From the outdoor fireplace perfect for entertaining to a barn that houses a man cave filled with old signs Brandon has collected over the years, the Nicholises have built their forever dream home. Plus, it doesn't hurt that both Brandon and Bridgette's parents live less than 5 miles away. "We're a close-knit family and our location is perfect," Bridgette wistfully declared as she looked around at her family and home. **NOW**

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Boys Will Be Boys

— By Stephanie Marchbanks

John Wayne, iconic tough-guy actor, once told a father in one of his movies that he left a boy to do a man's job. Shawn McMillan, fifth-grade science teacher at Lummus Intermediate School, would be proud to say he is a man helping boys do theirs.



“I tell my students that being smart and talented is great, but hard work and drive is going to take them further.”

In a job traditionally held by women, Shawn stands out. Climbing out of the ashes of a broken home, he worked hard to make something of himself via education. But from that personal experience, combined with observation over time, he began to notice something. “We’re starting to lose the boys. We can complain all we want about that, but we can’t let ourselves run out of ideas,” Shawn asserted.

The idea Shawn had was to become a teacher, particularly in the younger grades. He wanted to reach students early in their educational career, and to serve as a mentor. “A lot of boys today don’t have father figures, and a lot of what they see on social media are negative examples of male role models,” he explained. “Nobody’s teaching them how to be a man. I teach by example. I know how they think.”

Born in San Antonio, Shawn’s mother was a teacher, and his father was a plumber. Moving around a lot, he grew up in Seagoville and attended high school in Dallas and in Crandall, graduating in 1997. Reaching Eagle rank in the Boy Scouts of America, Shawn loved the outdoors. And he loved something else — science. “I’ve always loved science. I mean, where else can you get your hands dirty, have fun and still learn?” Shawn asked with a smile.

Shawn fell hard for science in his own middle school class. A male teacher

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showed videos to spark interest and add variety. But this teacher made the videos himself, and he was into stand-up comedy. The videos showed Shawn that he could laugh and be fascinated at the same time, and that learning didn't have to be boring. The young outdoorsman was hooked for life.

Shawn loved science so much that in the beginning, he thought he would become a chemist. But his path to a career took him through college chemistry classes that didn't seem to be a fit. He then took three years of nursing classes and worked briefly as an EMT for Care Flight, but eventually, Shawn returned to memories of how his mother loved her job as a teacher, and those thoughts drew him to education. He earned his Bachelor of Science in interdisciplinary studies with an emphasis in science, stamped with *cum laude* honors from Texas A&M University-Commerce.

He immediately began to think about where he would teach. He had definite criteria, and Ennis fit the bill. "I wanted to work in a district that was not a large city. I like the area here. Ennis is small, but you have a bit of cosmopolitan, too," Shawn noted. "It's a nice mix."

That was seven years ago, and Shawn is in his eighth year of teaching in Ennis. He is passionate about the areas of science he covers: physical science, life science, space and patterns in the natural world. He also breaks into the beginnings of the scientific method, and he gets excited about it when he talks. "I come to work, and I like what I do," Shawn admitted.

Shawn also appreciates the school district here and speaks highly of Principal Lori Redning and Assistant Principal Susan Jones. "I could go to another district with my experience, but I love it here. Lori and Susan are great.



It's like a family. And John Chapman, our new superintendent, is really working hard to do the right things, so we can best serve our students."

Shawn's classroom is filled with colorful displays of planets, is decked out with camo curtains and boasts photos strung on twine hanging across the ceiling, which were hung by his wife, Misty. Although a nurse by trade at Doctors Hospital in Dallas, she sometimes comes to the school on Thursdays or Fridays to help him with various things for his class. Bedecked with smiling selfies of Shawn and Misty and images of all things science, the picture clotheslines add an interesting and personal touch. One particularly stunning plant is shown with lovely yellow blooms that belie its ability to ingest flies. Shawn and Misty took that photo on a trip to the desert. "I love the desert," Shawn mused. "If I could live anywhere, it would be the desert. It has a desolate beauty all its own."

Like the teacher who inspired him with funny videos, Shawn incorporates creativity in his classroom. During force-in-motion studies, his students build marble roller coasters from recycled materials from home, such as paper

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towel tubes. The marble must travel freely from beginning to end through two loops. They also construct moving vehicles powered by things like rubber bands or balloons. In both of these activities, pupils must understand and be able to explain how forces work to run their constructions.

In his spare time, Shawn loves to spend time with his wife, and true to his roots as an Eagle Scout, he also enjoys hunting, fishing and hiking. The couple travels a lot in the summers, delighting in big road trips. This past summer, they went all the way to Oregon and ambled back, visiting Lake Tahoe, the redwood forests, Seattle and the Badlands desert on the way. They were recently in Tennessee in the Smoky Mountains, hiking. On his list to visit in the future is Big Bend National Park, which he considers a must-see. All of that nature just goes hand in hand with his teaching.

Although Shawn is as breezy, carefree and relaxed as the natural world he loves, his professional persona includes a strong, balanced structure. On one hand, and in the spirit of his funny science teacher, he shuns the traditional, "Don't smile until Christmas," teacher axiom by not taking himself too seriously and remembering to laugh. But at the same time, he employs a no-nonsense approach that his students appreciate. "They know when it's time to buckle down and work. I say what I mean, and I mean what I say," Shawn maintained. "And when a male staff person talks to a male student, you don't get a standoffish reaction. We've built a mutual respect."

In the end, Shawn wants his students to understand some lessons he's learned from life, which he believes will serve them well. "I tell my students that being smart and talented is great, but hard work and drive is going to take them further." **NOW**

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Jon holds a Texas Air Conditioning and Refrigeration License, Master Electrician License and has over 30 years of experience. JPH repairs, replaces or installs all brands and models of air conditioning/heating equipment (HVAC) in existing or new construction for residential and commercial properties. JPH is an authorized Trane dealer. Jon and his staff also provide residential

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Using his electrical knowledge and experience, Jon provides expert electrical consulting, lighting and cabling solutions and backup power solutions. He works on switches and wiring and assures customers that all electrical circuit installations meet code specifications. "We work hard to meet customers' expectations. We want everyone to be satisfied with the job done," Jon said.

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employees provide service calls. "We have a really good group of guys," Jon said proudly. Training is on-going with mandatory continuing education required every year.

Challenges abound in this ever-changing business. "In prime seasons, it's hard to keep up with the demand, especially in the summer. We work in some pretty harsh environments, so we don't always have pressed pants like you see in advertisements," Jon remarked. He also has to keep up with the ever-changing efficiency and health standards set by the federal government. "Refrigerant that we transport daily is now classified as a hazardous material," he said. Additionally, there are many technological changes with the advent of computerized equipment that can now be linked to customers' smartphones.

"We work hard to meet customers' expectations. We want everyone to be satisfied with the job done."

However, both Jon and Doris confess the joys far outweigh the challenges. "I enjoy being able to resolve customers' problems," Jon said.

"Jon really does care about people in this small community, and he's really good about following up even when a customer's problem is really small," Doris revealed.

Jon is a native of Ennis, and while Doris grew up in Mesquite, her family is from Ennis. Jon graduated from St. John High School and Navarro College as a pilot in the early 1980s. Loving all things mechanical, he apprenticed and learned on-the-job and has studied and passed the licensing exams.

Community is important to this couple. All four of their children live in the Ennis area. Jon serves on the Ennis Airport Board and the city of Ennis Building Standards Commission. Jon and Doris are members of St. John Nepomucene Catholic Church in Ennis.

"We have lots of good customers — loyal, good people," Jon said. "We will continue to treat them right." **NOW**




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When you opened your IRA, you should have named a beneficiary — someone who will receive the IRA assets when you pass away. You could also name a contingent beneficiary if the first beneficiary dies before you. These beneficiary designations are important because they can supersede the instructions left in your will.

If you name your spouse as beneficiary of your IRA, he or she has options unavailable to other beneficiaries. Here are two possibilities:

- **Roll over assets into a new or an existing IRA.** Your surviving spouse can roll over your IRA's assets into his or her IRA or use the money to create a new IRA. And, as long as your spouse is eligible, he or she can then add new contributions to the IRA. This could be a good choice if your spouse won't need the money right away and would like to keep it in a tax-advantaged account for as long as possible. Upon reaching age 70 1/2, though, your spouse will likely need to start taking withdrawals ("required minimum distributions"), unless the inherited IRA was a Roth IRA.

- **Convert the assets to a Roth IRA.** If you are leaving a traditional IRA to your spouse, he or she could roll over the assets into a new or an existing IRA and then convert the assets into a Roth IRA. This move gives your spouse at least two potential advantages. First, if certain requirements

are met, no taxes are due on the withdrawals. Second, as mentioned previously, no withdrawals are even required. Your spouse can leave the money intact for as long as desired. However, taxes will be due on the amount converted to a Roth, so this conversion may only make sense if your spouse has enough assets available in a nonretirement account to pay the tax bill.

Thus far, we've just talked about your spouse as the beneficiary. But what might happen if you've named someone else — perhaps a child or grandchild — as the primary beneficiary of your IRA? In this case, the beneficiary won't have the option of rolling over the IRA. Instead, he or she can either take the money as a lump sum or take distributions over time. If you pass away before age 70 1/2, and you hadn't started taking the required minimum distributions, your beneficiary must start taking withdrawals by Dec. 31 in the year following the year in which you pass away. These withdrawals can be stretched out over your beneficiary's lifetime, though, spreading out the tax obligations. As an alternative, your beneficiary can delay taking distributions, but he or she would need to withdraw all the money within five years of your death.

When dealing with any aspect of your estate plans, including naming beneficiaries for your IRA, you'll want to consult with your tax and legal professionals. You put a lot of time and effort into building the assets in your IRA, so you'll also want to take care in how you pass these assets along. **NOW**

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Jeff Irish is an Edward Jones representative based in Ennis.

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Why Does My Boss Want Me to Have a Checkup?

An interesting trend is occurring in medicine. Employers are not only encouraging annual checkups but are also frequently paying to have them performed on their employees. For some employees, there is a financial premium given for the annual ritual, but for others a financial penalty is assessed for failure to complete the physical assessment. Why is this so? Have employers suddenly decided that it is simply the right thing to do, or is there some other motivator forcing the issue?

Certainly part of the reason for the recent interest in employee health is the finding that healthy employees are more productive and have fewer sick days than less healthy ones. In addition, job satisfaction surveys suggest that healthy employees are happier with their jobs and tend to stay longer with their current employer. Hence, many work places have added gyms and workout facilities to their plants to further encourage healthy habits.

However, the economics of health care has perhaps been the most important driver of the trend to focus on employee health. Unfortunately, health care costs are consuming an increasing percentage of corporate revenue due to the rapidly increasing cost of health care. Additionally, insurance rates are established according to the relative health care risks of the company's workforce. For instance, companies incur higher insurance costs if their employees are older, have numerous medical problems, are obese or are likely to become pregnant. All of these conditions carry a significant risk of higher medical services utilization and, therefore, higher costs. So, employers want to know where their health care dollars are going and the annual physical exam allows them to anticipate their projected

health care expenses. Some feel that this information could ultimately be used against employees and may ultimately jeopardize their employment. Taken to its logical conclusion, hiring practices and salary adjustments may ultimately be affected by one's performance on a standard physical screen regardless of one's job performance.

With that in mind, how can one prepare for the annual employer-sponsored physical exam? The first recommendation is to work on weight-optimization. That is to say that the employer-sponsored screen is heavily focused on one's weight. Not only is the person's weight measured but also his waist circumference and body-mass index (bmi) may be included. Even small changes in weight can help these parameters as well as one's blood pressure, triglycerides and sugar which are typically included tests. One should arrive for the exam, fasting for at least 10-12 hours prior to the examination. That includes avoidance of coffee, tea or soda since they may alter these measures as well. Go to bed early the night before the scheduled exam and, if possible, schedule it on days that are less stressful.

Truly the old adage applies today as much as ever: A pound of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Employers realize this and are taking significant steps to ensure a healthy workforce. Failure to achieve certain measures of health may one day jeopardize one's ability to find and retain suitable employment. So, let's get healthy! **NOW**

Larry A. Jinks, M.D., F.A.C.P.
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January 5, 19

Ellis County HEALS support group meeting: 6:30 p.m., 408 Water St. The group hopes to connect with survivors of suicide loss in Ellis County, while giving them a safe place to share their struggle and pain. For more information, email elliscountytheals@gmail.com or follow them on Facebook.

January 23

Annual 5K Run for Their Lives Round-up for Children: 8:00 a.m., registration; 9:00 a.m., race begins, Getzendaner Park, 400 S. Grand Ave., Waxahachie. \$30 per person; groups of four or more are \$25 per person. Proceeds help support the Texas Baptist Home for Children adoptions. For more information and to register, visit www.tbhc.org or email cbarber@tbhc.org for sponsorship opportunities.

Midlothian Fire Fighter's Community CPR Class: 9:00 a.m.-noon, Midlothian Conference Center. \$20 deposit. If you show up for the class, the \$20 will be returned to you. Open to the public.

January 29

TX Life Investors' Celebration benefiting FirstLook: 7:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center. This will be an evening of powerful

testimonies, inspiring information and an elegant dinner featuring prolific comedian Mike Williams. FirstLook has several underwriting opportunities available for individuals and businesses that include premier recognition and advertising at the celebration. For more information on becoming an underwriter, email donna@txlifeinvestors.org. To register for the event, visit www.txlifeinvestors.org or call FirstLook at (972) 938-7900.

February 13

Ennis Czech Music Festival: 1:00-10:30 p.m., Sokol Activity Center, 2622 E. Hwy 34. Doors open at noon and no reservations are required. \$7 per person, ages 13 and under are free. Listen and dance to five bands: Czech Harvesters, Jodie Mikula Band, Czech & Then Some, The Moravians and Ennis Czech Boys.

Ongoing:

Mondays and Wednesdays

Sign Language Class: 4:00-5:15 p.m., Ennis Public Library, 501 W. Ennis Ave. Classes are free and available for all ages. No sign up required.

Fourth Mondays

Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis County

meeting: 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the Waxahachie Bible Church, 621 Grand Ave.

First Wednesdays

Bluebonnet Patches Quilt Guild meeting: 9:30 a.m., First Presbyterian Church, 210 N. McKinney. Contact Judy Wensowitch at (972) 921-8800 or Diana Buckley at SeldomSeenQuilting@gmail.com for more information.

Fourth Thursdays

MACS: 6:00 p.m., Tabernacle Baptist Church Life Center. Evening includes a covered dish meal and a program of singing or informational message.

Fourth Saturdays

Bristol Opry: 7:00 p.m., featuring local singers and musicians. Sponsored by Bristol Cemetery Association and Caring Hands of Bristol. For more information, contact Jim Gatlin at (972) 846-2211.

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



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In the Kitchen With David Vineyard

— *By Virginia Riddle*

A few years ago, David Vineyard learned he was allergic to wheat, corn and bell peppers. His new allergies, combined with a dairy and peanut intolerance, challenged him to find gluten-free recipes and to modify some of his favorite family recipes. “I had to switch to made-from-scratch organic meals,” David explained.

David, a self-taught cook, enjoys sharing his knowledge and talents. “Cooking is more an art than a science,” he said. Often, he can be found at area farmers’ markets selling his cuisine. At home, David enjoys mixing different types of foods and spices ranging from Italian to Mexican and often uses Asian cooking methods. “I prefer quick meals like saucepan soups and stir fries because I can have a balanced, healthy meal prepared within an hour,” he said. **NOW**

Maple Cream of Broccoli Soup

Makes 2 servings.

2 strips maple turkey bacon
1-2 tsp. avocado or olive oil
1-2 garlic cloves, minced, or to taste
1 8-oz. pkg. mushrooms (if pre-sliced, use 3/4 of a 16-oz. pkg.)
1 cup Pacific Mushroom Broth
Salt, to taste
1 12-oz. pkg. Birdseye Steamfresh Broccoli Florets
3/4 cup almond or coconut milk
1-2 Tbsp. 100% maple syrup, or to taste
Shredded Lisanatti Almond Cheese

1. Cook bacon in a skillet over low heat until desired crispness is reached.
2. Cut bacon into little pieces; set aside.
3. Add oil to a 2.5-qt. saucepan and sauté the garlic and mushrooms over medium heat for 5-8 minutes, until mushrooms are done and mixture releases a nice aroma.
4. Add broth, bacon and salt; leave mixture on medium heat while stirring.

5. Cook broccoli in the microwave according to the package instructions.
6. Add broccoli to soup mixture; stir in milk.
7. Transfer soup to a blender; pulse to desired consistency.
8. Pour soup into a saucepan; over low heat stir in the syrup.
9. When hot, serve in bowls with almond cheese on top.

Russian Tea

2 cups boiling water
4 tea bags
2 cups orange juice
1 cup lemon juice
1 cup grape juice
4 cups apple cider
10 cups water
1 cup pineapple juice, or to taste
1/4 to 3/4 cup mulling spice, or to taste

1. Pour boiling water over tea bags; allow time to steep to desired strength.
2. Combine tea with remaining ingredients

in a coffee urn with mulling spice in the urn’s basket.

Carrot Cake Waffles

1/4 cup rice flour
1/4 cup almond meal/flour
1/4 tsp. guar or xanthan gum
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
1/4 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. coconut sugar
1/3 cup H-E-B Organic Almond Milk
1/4 cup shredded carrots
2 tsp. pure vanilla
2 Tbsp. maple syrup
Cooking spray or oil

1. Combine first eight ingredients in a mixing bowl; stir well.
2. In separate bowl, mix milk, shredded carrots and vanilla well.
3. Pour the wet mixture into the dry ingredients. Add syrup; stir until blended.
4. Add cooking spray or oil to a hot waffle iron.
5. Pour half of the batter into the center of the waffle iron; close the lid.
6. Consult waffle iron instructions for recommended cooking time.
7. Remove cooked waffle and repeat instructions 5 and 6 with the other half of the batter.

Grain Free Pie Crust

Cooking oil or parchment paper
2 cups almond flour
3/8 tsp. salt
Pinch of Stevia
2 Tbsp. plus 2 tsp. coconut oil, melted
2 Tbsp. pure maple syrup

1. Preheat oven to 350 F
2. Either grease the bottom of an 8.5-inch spring form pan or pie pan or line an 8-inch square baking pan with parchment paper.
3. In a bowl, combine all ingredients; stir to form crumbles.
4. Transfer crumbly dough to prepared pan; press dough down evenly and firmly with hands.
5. Bake 14 minutes.
6. After baking, remove; press down crust with a spoon. (For a 9-inch pan, increase all ingredients by 1.5 times. Baking time will remain the same.)

To view recipes from current and previous issues, visit www.nowmagazines.com.



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