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December 2008



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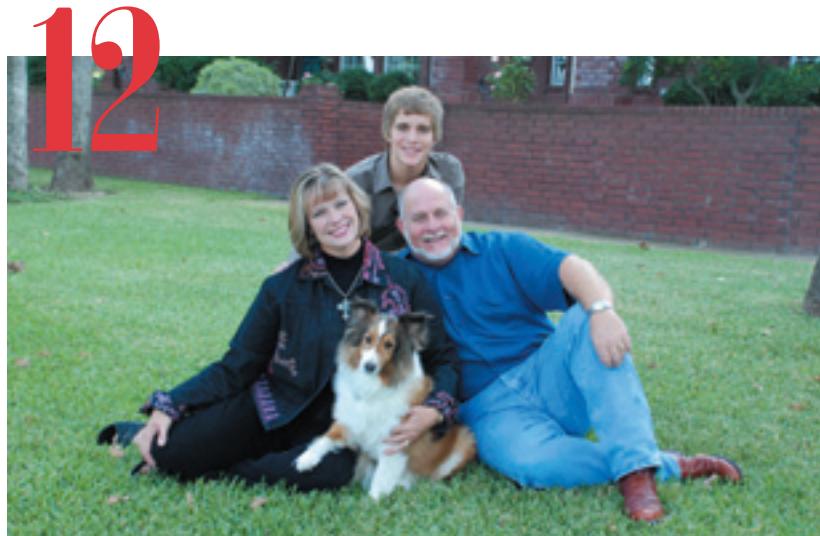
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Editor's Note

Dear Readers,

The community loves reading your stories, and now I have one to share about myself: I am no longer Melissa Rawlins. I am now Melissa Collins! I have been blessed with Harold, who is not only an electrician, but also a pastor with an effective prison ministry. We were wed in a beautiful outdoor ceremony on October 23.

In the 17 months we have published *BurlesonNOW Magazine*, I have learned of industrious, humble people with unusual hobbies and upright philosophies. I am excited that we are growing — thanks to strong support from local businesses — so that we are now covering the community of Joshua, also. Your stories are wonderful to tell, and I hope you will continue to send me story ideas. This month we all have a lot to celebrate, and I am sure you will enjoy peeking into the lives of people who focus on others as part of their daily lives.

May you always enjoy peace and love, Burleson!

Melissa Collins

BurlesonNOW Editor

melissa.nowmag@sbcglobal.net



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Dr. Neef completed his obstetrics and gynecology residency at University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas, where he received the 2006 Academic Excellence award. He earned his medical degree from the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston Medical School. He holds a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in finance from Texas Christian University in Fort Worth.

Dr. Neef holds memberships in the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the Texas Medical Association. Located in the Huguley medical office buildings, he accepts most insurance plans, including Medicare and Medicaid.

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Go Team Go!

— By Melissa Collins

As Aaron worked on his Eagle Scout project for the purpose of developing leadership skills, he learned the valuable talent of reaching out to others for help.

People from all corners of Burleson and Johnson County pitched in to help Eagle Scout Aaron Lamb renovate The Johnson County Veterans' Monument located on Renfro Street, between I-35 and Hurst Road. As Aaron worked on his Eagle Scout project for the purpose of developing leadership skills, he learned the valuable talent of reaching out to others for help. Businesses in Burleson donated hardware and food for the workers who volunteered their time and energy over two weekends last summer. The city of Burleson donated the American and Texas flags, and the Cleburne Veterans Administration donated the American Legion and MIA/POW flags. The cost of all supplies and food donated was well over \$750.00.

As he planned the project, Aaron understood the level of teamwork the project would require because he has been involved in others' Eagle projects. "I have helped two or three of my friends with their Eagle projects," said the 18-year-old Burleson High School senior. "We did some community projects together as well. A lot of my friends are in Boy Scouts. We cleaned up a park, painted fire hydrants, and set up exercise equipment on the walking path around Huguley [Memorial Medical Center]," Aaron said.

For his own Eagle Scout project, Aaron gathered others in Troop #318, Longhorn Council, to do some pretty dirty work. His sister, Bethany, joined in the effort, and together, 14 volunteers accomplished the following: killed ants; pulled weeds and removed overgrown bushes; removed remaining gravel; laid heavy plastic to discourage weeds from growing back; installed new gravel donated by Carroll Rock Company; installed flag pole cables; procured and

put up flags; repainted black lettering on the marble; repaired marble in a few places; and re-caulked the entire monument. Since the spotlights were not working, Aaron also found someone with a background in electrical work to help him fix the electronic eye that turns the spotlights on automatically at night.

Aaron set up two weekends in June for everyone to work together to renovate the monument. "It took a little more time than we expected," said Aaron, "and we stayed an extra hour or two each night." Aaron and his crew worked on three separate days, and Aaron and his dad went back a fourth day to put up the last two flags. "I had everyone else come to actually do the work," Aaron said, grinning. "I was the one who went over to get the donations from Home Depot, Burly Fence Company, Bransom's grocery store, Walmart and Texas Tools. I found out the names of the managers of local businesses and talked to people with a summary of the project in my hands. I went to Albertson's and Burleson Pizza Company for one weekend's lunch, then Sonic for the next weekend's lunch." Of course, Aaron needed his folks' help for this part. "He got everything set up," said Cheryl, Aaron's mother. "We drove him around since he didn't have his driver's license yet."

As it turns out, this project was deemed more difficult than most Eagle Scout projects. Why do so much work? "The monument represents the heart of Johnson County, because it memorializes all the loved ones and family members that died in WWI, WWII, South Korea and Vietnam," Aaron explained. "I did not know anyone who was a veteran. Still, I saw it as a great project." Aaron's father, Jim, added, "What makes

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it personal is that we're now fighting for our freedom in Iraq. We were sad to see the monument so run down when it represented the sacrifice of lives of people in Johnson County's history."

"It makes me feel good to know we completed the renovation," Aaron said. "I have a really good feeling, since it made a big difference from what the monument was before. Doing this project makes me feel like I was a big part of the community in helping them out." Aaron will continue to



"Doing this project makes me feel like I was a big part of the Community in helping them out."

help the community by helping his Boy Scout troop.

"I'm going to mentor others in the Boy Scouts, by helping them out with their merit badges," Aaron said. "I remember Kyle VanCamp was my mentor, and Adam Meyers, and I remember they both went on a lot of our campouts, supported us, did all the games and helped us out with the merit badges on the campouts. Now, one of them is serving a mission for our church in South Korea, and one of them has already served his mission from Las Vegas and is now attending Brigham Young University (BYU)."

Aaron has similar intentions. "I have one more year in high school. Afterward, I'll probably go on a mission, and then come back and go to college." A self-assured young man, Aaron calls

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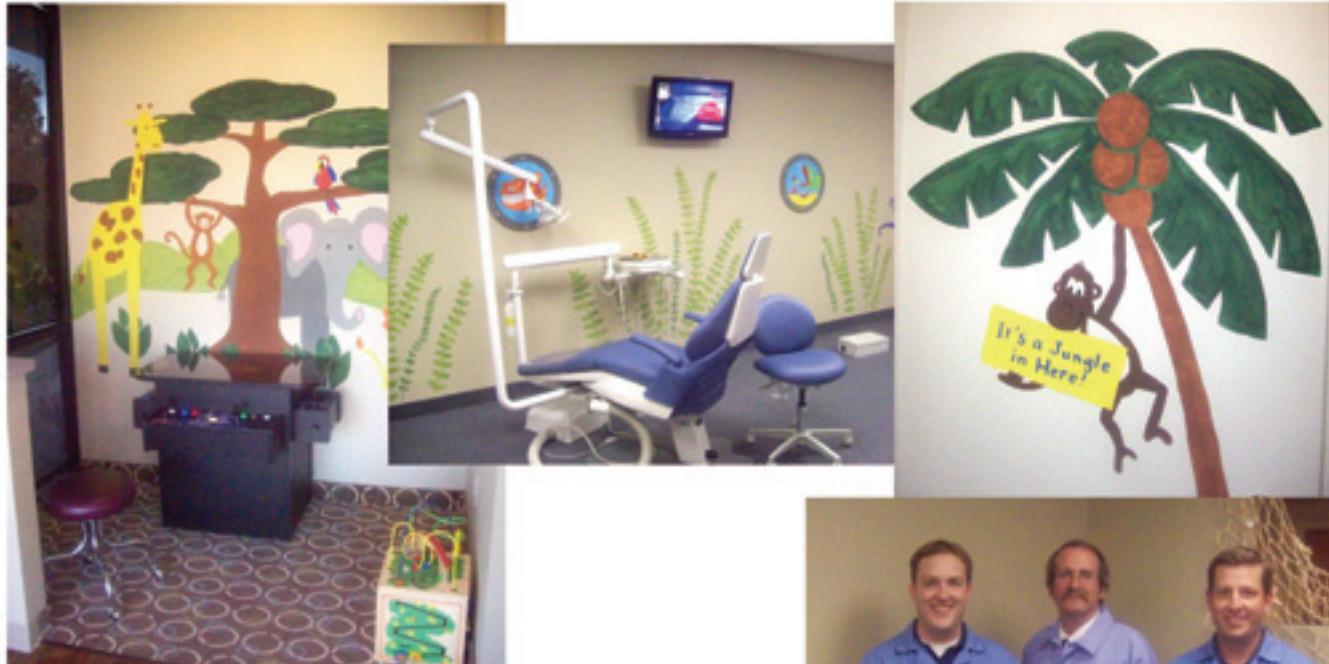
himself an average student. "If I can, I'd like to go to BYU. I want to study business/financing."

He and his family credit much of Aaron's maturity to Boy Scouts. "Boy Scouts has shown me how to depend on myself and know that I can get through anything, no matter what happens — when I depend on some friends to help me out along the way," Aaron said. That is the exact mission of the organization, according to Aaron's Scoutmaster, Paul Adams. "Boy Scouts was formed to teach boys how to manage their lives. The big thing was the moral code behind it. The whole scouting program is about teaching boys to be better citizens and more responsible for their lives. We teach this as we work through the merit badge projects. Boy Scouts is designed to be self-motivation by boys, where boys mentor each other by helping each other and boys motivate themselves," Paul said. Each boy holds responsible positions within the organization. Aaron acts as Senior Patrol Leader (conducts meetings, makes sure agendas are followed). "It's a boy-led program," Paul explained, "in which boys learn how to run meetings, how to encourage other boys to participate."

Other Boy Scouts will continue to participate in Aaron's Eagle Scout project, long after his graduation from high school and departure from Burleson. Troop #318 will come back to the monument periodically to do any weeding necessary. "And Texas Tool Traders, the business that now resides in the old Veterans Affairs building, has agreed to take care of the flags, lowering them to half mast when needed," Cheryl said.

More than anything, Aaron said the project taught him the value of teamwork. "To get something like this done, you need a leader to tell the volunteers what to do, and you need some hardworking people who will do what you say and won't give up on you. You need to be able to rely on them. I learned I couldn't do the project without the team." **NOW**

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The Story Behind It All

— By Jaime Ruark



At Home With

Steve and Sherri Sechrist

Only Scrooge himself could not love the Christmas lights displayed outside the Sechrists' beautiful two-story home. Obviously, Steve and Sherri along with their son, Doug, have a true love of the holiday season — obvious, because of the 20-foot-tall candy canes, which Steve made, adorning the two pillars framing their doorway. Even from high up in the sky, there is no way Santa and his reindeer could miss such a merry display.

Traditions and memories fill the Sechrist household, with a fun story behind it all. "Sherri was pregnant when we bought the lot," Steve recalled of their purchase in Burleson in '92. "We debated for a long time where we would move. I had a friend who bought a lot here, and when we came out here, we just really liked the area. By the time it was built, we had Doug in a playpen sitting out in the middle of the lot."

Steve works from home as the vice president for a food distributor, and Sherri is the vice president of marketing for Cheldan Homes, so building an attractive home that was also livable was important. "We don't put as much weight on décor as we do on having things that remind us of fun times in our lives," Steve added.

With four bedrooms and three baths, the 3,850-square-foot house affords Sherri room enough for her

decorating whims. "I'm very eclectic. I mean, I have a bust of Curly from *The Three Stooges*!" Sherri laughed. "Steve loves them, so we have a lot of Stooges memorabilia. And I like Christmas, so I keep little Santas and things out year-round. At some point, maybe when Doug turns 30, I might put away his tee ball trophies, but probably not."

A large built-in shelf and the fireplace mantle in the living room provide perfect views of the family's favorite things from their comfy leather couches. Numerous windows let in the sunshine and the kitchen offers a long bar — the only divider between the two rooms — making this open and airy space a popular family hangout. "In the kitchen, I display my Santa collection given to me by my husband and son. This is where we do all our entertaining. I don't have a formal dining room; I didn't want one when we built the home because we don't do formal dinners," Sherri noted. "We like to be very casual and comfortable."



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There is a formal living room, however, in the front of the house where Sherri's gorgeous grand piano accentuates her white decor. A shelf here is filled with Department 56 churches, gifts from her father and Steve, which are lit from within to give the room a special glow. "We love to travel, and I love the old, old churches, and these remind me of pretty ones I've seen in Hawaii and Canada," she said. Decorated for the holiday in gold and white, a large, lit tree can be seen through the window from the street, as well as two pencil

trees that glow on either side of the front door. Greenery wraps around the banister of the staircase just inside the foyer, a perfect ornament to the beautiful family portraits, which capture all of the Sechrist children and provide more special memories.

Steve's office, where he spends much of his time, is also home to an interesting array of collections and personal favorites. "One of my best friends passed away a year ago. He was a great man, and he was very eclectic. I told his wife I wanted something that would remind me of him," Steve

explained of the rather creepy bowling ball residing in his office alongside more *Three Stooges* memorabilia, Burleson Youth Association baseballs and a funny little stuffed squirrel, all complete with stories Steve loves to tell. "I don't decorate this room," Sherri made sure to point out with a wry grin.

Two bedrooms and a game room are located upstairs, an area which belongs to Doug, a sophomore at Burleson High School who spends his free time lifting weights, playing Xbox or the guitar. "That's his domain, and I try never to go up there except once a year

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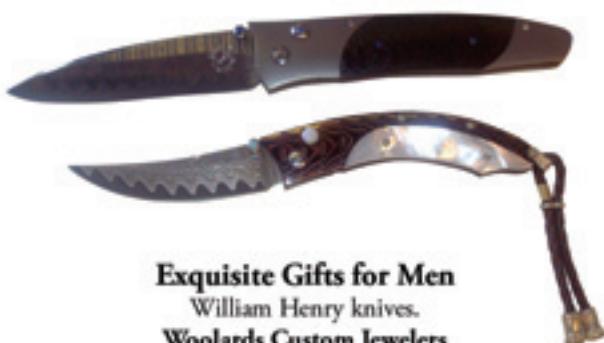


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if Grandma's coming," Sherri said.

The family exchanged in an easy banter, with Steve and Doug chiming in about the massive Christmas overhaul that begins when Halloween decorations are taken down. "There are at least 30 big boxes that come out. Everything transforms. Everything changes, and as long as she does it all, I'm fine with it," Steve quipped, with his son nodding in agreement. "She talks to the ornaments while she's taking them out of the boxes," Doug added.

The holiday is by far Sherri's favorite time of year, and her love of the season shows as the house becomes a holiday work of art. "It's kind of become an obsession," she joked. "It's become a ritual every year. When no one's looking, I start replacing Halloween decorations with Christmas things, and then suddenly someone says, 'There's a Christmas tree here and it's November!' I've gotten so much stuff now that I take pictures of everything when it's out so I can remember where it goes

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the next year."

The story behind the giant candy canes is, of course, also filled with laughter. "The first year I was helping Steve put them up and there was a huge gust of wind. It was either let go of the candy cane or go with it, so I let go," Sherri recalled with a chuckle. "I don't know whether I quit or just got fired from helping, but I leave all the outside stuff to Steve and Doug and one of the neighbors." Sherri also used

to have help from her daughter, Lauren, who now lives in Oregon. "She used to play a big part in the ritual of putting everything out. Now she's just too far away, but she does come home every Christmas," she added.

For the Sechrist family, Christmas is about recalling past fun times and making even more family memories. "I have every ornament Doug ever made, and I have a ceramic tree that Steve's sister, who passed away, made

for his mother. Things like that are really precious to me," Sherri expressed. The downstairs guest bedroom is a perfect example of her precious things, with pillowcases embroidered by her grandmother, quilts made by her other grandmother and a great-aunt, and antique pictures of Steve's ancestors.

"The older I've gotten, the more I've realized what's important. It's about family and God," Sherri said. "That's what the Christmas spirit is all about." **TODAY**

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Every technician is state-certified and attends regular meetings on quality and safety. When asked what integrity means to him, Clint said, "Integrity is how you perform when no one's watching. With so many other A/C companies around, we have to be different." Not only does Southern Air do residential, their commercial department is growing at a substantial rate also. "I believe our quality and integrity are the main reasons the referrals continue to come in. Referrals are the best compliment we can ask for. Having been raised in the Burleson area, taking care of my neighbors is very

important to me," Clint said.

Southern Air has 13 radio-dispatched trucks on the road and offers 24-hour emergency service. "We're here when you need us, with over 35 years experience," Clint said. He feels Burleson was the right choice for Southern Air. "The area is growing, but still has a small town feel. I believe that's why so many people are moving to Burleson," he commented.

Southern Air is located at 431 North Burleson Boulevard. Call them at (817) 447-8247 and you will see the difference! They are open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Saturdays, with phones answered 24 hours a day. Southern Air accepts payment by MasterCard, Visa and check.



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It's Hard To Stop A Trane.

Santa's other Helper

— By Jaime Ruark

Everyone knows the story of Santa Claus and his toy workshop at the North Pole, where his elves make all the toys for the world's girls and boys. Some people may not be familiar, however, with another of Santa's helpers, Bob Spurlin, and his wood workshop right here in Burleson's back yard, where beautiful ornaments, decorations, picture frames, candy bowls and more are lovingly created by Bob's careful hands. His giving spirit makes it Christmas in his workshop year-round.

Bob's woodworking talent is inherent; his father and younger brother also dabble as a hobby. "I got started in high school with woodworking at Cleburne. In fact, in the front room we still have the bedroom suite I made in school," Bob said. The bed, dresser, desk and cedar chest all still stand as solid testimony to his talent, even as a young man. His proud wife, Jo, added with a smile, "When we got married, that was our first bedroom suite, and I'm not about to get rid of it."

Life took Bob along a different path, and woodworking fell to the wayside as he became an elementary school teacher. Working in the Burleson Independent School District for 30 years, he moved up through the ranks as assistant principal, principal and assistant superintendent. "I started thinking about retirement. We're big fishermen, but you can only fish so much," Bob laughed. "I was looking for a hobby to keep busy."

His hobby indeed keeps him busy, as word spreads of his intricate creations and more and more of his work is given as holiday, birthday or anniversary gifts. "I started with the scroll saw in 1990. I thought it'd be fun to try," Bob recalled. "I started out making simple puzzles, and then I got a little better at it." Jo keeps careful pictures of all his work, photos that have become a testimonial timeline to Bob's skills as he improves.

Bob's pieces are displayed throughout the home, from silhouettes of their granddaughters, Hannah and Meredith, to a Noah's Ark, the intricate fret work making the animals come alive. Usually the first recipient of a new piece, Jo may



be running out of places to display his art, as each year more is added to the collection. "You can just look around the house and everywhere you see his work. Our Christmas tree is full of ornaments he's made. Every year he comes up with a different one," she said, displaying a delicate praying cowgirl, three wise men, a sleigh and Santa ornaments. "We also have a big nativity set that goes in our front yard."

Bob uses patterns found in magazines and at the many conferences and seminars he attends, including a special scroll saw picnic in Branson, Missouri, they have attended for the last three years. "We've met a lot of nice people. You see, we woodworkers don't keep secrets from each other. We share ideas and help each other," he noted. Jo added, "While he's in his seminars, I walk around and look for patterns that I like."

The intricacy of his art is perhaps best displayed in his Lord's Prayer work, currently hanging at the United Methodist Church. Made of red oak and standing at 37-and-a-half inches tall and 32-and-a-half inches wide, pictures do not do its beauty justice. "He made it in memory of his friend, Nick Kerr, and gave it to the church," Jo shared. It took the couple six hours just to get the pattern positioned onto the wood, making this piece a true

ARTS NOW

labor of love. "It took 120 hours to complete. I worked on it a little every day," Bob added. "When I saw in the paper that the State Fair of Texas was accepting entries for woodworking, I entered it just to see what would happen. I ended up winning first prize."

Bob sells his work, charging just enough to buy more wood, but more often his creations are given as gifts. "My daughter, Suzanne, keeps me busy. She called me up one Wednesday and wanted me to make 54 Christmas ornaments by Saturday," he laughed. He has also made puzzle mascots for all the Burleson schools which have animals as their mascots.

Even Santa's helpers need a little help sometimes, and Jo provides quality-control assistance, insuring that each piece of oak, mahogany or



ash wood is perfect to the last tiny detail. "I don't have the patience that he does," Jo expressed. "He doesn't make mistakes. He's a perfectionist when it comes to his work."

"I think homemade gifts just mean a little more," Bob humbly suggested. "If you know the person who made it, it makes it that much more special." **NOW**

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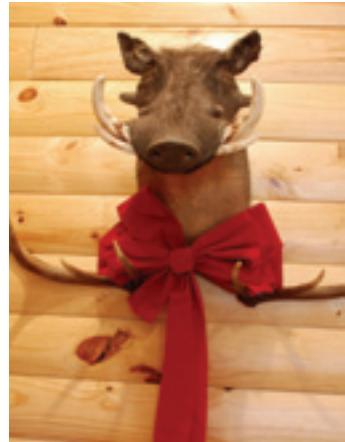
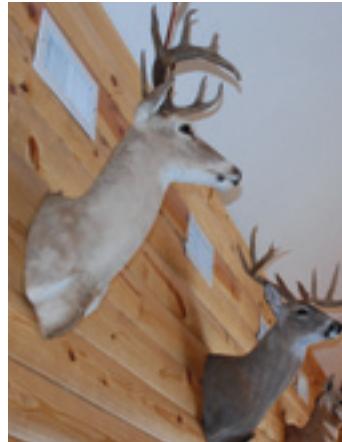
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Smack dab in the middle of whitetail deer season, Eudean Rice and his family of conservationist marksmen are splitting their time between home in Burleson and their ranch on the Peace River, near Childress, Texas, where God has placed an abundance of dove, feral hogs and whitetail deer. "When bow season opened, my son, Terry, and I went and looked at some deer and nobody shot anything. It's just fun to go out and get up to eight feet from some does and a buck," Eudean said, explaining that even during rifle season, the men in his family do not shoot, or harvest, unless the buck scores at least 150 on the Boone and Crockett rating scale.

There is an exception to that rule. "Every now and then, you have to take a cull buck, a 6-7-8-point buck between 5 - 7 years old who will never achieve our goal of 10 points or better on his horns," said Eudean. "Otherwise, they will get dominant and won't let the other bucks breed. That's when we invite a friend up and say, 'Hey, you want a big deer?' Hunters in the Hill Country can harvest a buck that will weigh 80 pounds on the hoof. Up in the Panhandle, where our ranch is, we've got big whitetails, and they can weigh 200 pounds."

Still, Eudean's family and friends only harvest one buck and one doe, per man, per season, taking the meat home for meals. They harvest using the 'West Texas technique,' which Eudean



'Tis the Season!

— By Melissa Collins

defines as sitting up on a mountain with binoculars and looking for a deer that's worthy of taking. "Then you spend the rest of the day trying to get close to him."

Filling the freezer is only one reason Eudean hunts. "I've been involved in shooting sports my whole life," Eudean grinned. "God gave me this talent to shoot a rifle and a pistol. My son has it, and it looks like my grandson, Brooks, has it. As old as I am now, I can still shoot quarters out of the air with a .22. I think that's something you're born with."

Eudean grew up in Forest Hill and first started shooting in his backyard. "We'd take rifles, saddle up our horse and ride around all day long. Terry Ford, one of Burleson's well-respected school principals, was with me. Nobody cared if you went down and shot squirrels or rabbits or anything else for dinner," said Eudean, who also ran around Burleson and Kennedale when he was a kid.

In the late '70s, when Burleson was still pretty rural, Eudean and his wife, Shirley, moved to their home south of Cana Baptist Church. Their son, Terry, graduated from Burleson High School and went on to run the family construction business with his wife, Kay. Eudean volunteered with the Rotary Club for 20 years. "That's probably the best organization in town," said Eugene, adding, "I opted out for a little while. I am retired, and do so much hunting and fishing right now that I am running ragged."

Terry and Eudean have hunted together in Walnut Springs, San Saba and Comanche for years. "It's nice now to have a ranch where you know nobody's out there drinking, you're not going to cripple anything," Eudean said of the 4,400

acres he and Terry purchased in the year 2000. "We've brought up my grandson to hunt," said the proud grandfather, "and it's given Brooks respect for the animals as much as anything else. I can remember hunting with him when a huge boar presented himself. He wouldn't shoot it. He said, 'There may be a big buck come by. We can always shoot a hog.' I've also seen him pass up many a deer."

"We're trying to hand down the tradition of hunting," Eudean said. Building healthy herds is their mission on the 5RRice ranch, where Eudean and Terry work together to boost food and water sources for the quail and deer. Texas Parks & Wildlife Department

"We've brought up my grandson to hunt."

taught them to take 50 percent of the brush off the huge ranch, and after eight years the task has morphed into maintenance. "By clearing brush, we knew that possibly prairie chicken, plus both deer, would come back — but most of all it would bring back the springs. We've got most of it done by now; I still go up and push brush. We can tell the wildlife has really flourished. They're big healthy animals."

Eudean even plants crops strictly for the deer, who are free to graze on winter wheat, clover, turnips and peas. "This is something we'll hand down years from now," Eudean said. "In the very early days, everybody just harvested animals to eat and we depleted our game in Texas. We used to be full of buffalo. In 1883, we killed the last western herd of buffalo in Aspermont [in Stonewall County, Texas]. Now the antelope is pushed all the way up to the far panhandle. They used to be all over Texas. If we keep building our herds like we do now," Eudean said assuredly, "all these animals will come back someday." As they do, families like Eudean's will enjoy the harvest. **NOW**

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Cuties!

— By Melissa Collins

Drive by The Little Gym one day or evening when they are hosting an Awesome Birthday Bash, or Parents' Survival Night or even a regular class, and through the plate glass windows you will see a collection of children playing on colorful mats — dancing, laughing, hanging from bars and/or doing forward rolls. Look closely and you will notice they are not running wild, but are following instructions that you just cannot hear.

If you walk inside while the toddlers warm up to the music, you will observe the instructors and the children in perfect communication. “The children stop and say, ‘Freeze,’ just like the instructors,” said Karen Kingston, mom-turned-business-owner, who enjoys her clients and their families. “The children watch and learn. They’re just little sponges! It’s very exciting to watch them.”

Building their clients’ self-esteem is the mission of all four owners and the staff at The Little Gym. When two

kinesiologists, Amy-Nicole and Michael Frank, asked Karen and her husband, Barry, to invest in the franchise, the decision was not hard. “Our children are so pushed, and everything is so competitive in today’s world,” Karen said, “I really liked The Little Gym’s philosophy after I checked into them. We help children learn social and emotional skills — plus we’re a fully equipped gym. Really, our goal is to prepare children to be successful for life.”

Their strategy is threefold. “We help them to accomplish things they’re afraid to try,” Karen said. “Also, we encourage them on things they feel they’re not doing well on. They don’t have to be their best, just try their best. Finally, we have a good time with them. When you get to know their little personalities and how they learn and how they react, you learn how to work with each child.”

The Little Gym offers classes for children 4 months to 12 years of age. Curriculum ranges from gymnastics to dancing to tumbling to strength building — all developmentally appropriate and all focused on influencing the children’s brains and hearts, as well as their bodies. “Wednesday night is crazy in here,” Karen laughed. “We have a class going out at 6:30 and a class going in at 6:30.” The Little Gym installed two different doors between the waiting area and the gym so the outgoing class could receive their special stamp at one door, enticing them to leave while the new class comes in through the other door.

"We get them moving," Karen explained. Three-year-olds and younger come in with their parents, who also get to move with their kids! Karen listens to her clients' needs, recently switching the time of the older students' karate class for the spring semester to accommodate school schedules.

According to Karen, after only 10 months in business, The Little Gym is quickly growing. One customer, S. Breedlove, said, "The Little Gym in Burleson has been a blessing to our family. They offer our son a community in which to be a part. The motor skills he works on there make him more confident as he learns to move about in his world. Social skills (from taking turns to cheering a classmate on) are practiced and strengthened in a noncompetitive atmosphere. All of this builds his self-esteem and communication skills, which will affect all aspects of his growing. I can teach him colors, letters and numbers



to prepare for school, but The Little Gym helps him build healthy character."

The Little Gym, located in the new shopping center on the southwest corner of FM 731 and Hwy. 174, is open Monday - Thursday, 9:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.; Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. and Saturday, 9:00 a.m. - noon. Birthday parties are by appointment from noon - 6:00 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. Contact The Little Gym at (817) 426-3456 to schedule your child's free introductory class. **NOW**



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Teaching Through Family Values

— By Melissa Collins

Belinda Shamblin does what it takes to connect with each of her students — even if it means acting like their mother. She is the kind of teacher who will go watch her students compete in their favorite sport on a Saturday morning. Other teachers say Belinda is one of Frazier Elementary's amazing teachers, and an inspiration to her co-workers, as well as her students.

While teaching at Bransom Elementary in 2006, she was awarded Teacher of the Year. Humble Belinda said, "I won't ever forget that. I work in a district where there are outstanding educators. For me to have been chosen for that honor was phenomenal because, I just think I'm doing my job." In fact, she thinks every teacher should receive the honor. "We all do what we love," she smiled, thinking of her desire to see her third grade students succeed.

When she was in high school, Belinda's memory book said she wanted to be a teacher. "I listened to other people, though, who said I could make more money elsewhere. So, I went the business route," Belinda explained. "I didn't feel I was contributing to make anybody a better person, however. So then I stayed home with my kids, started volunteering in the classroom, and eventually became a teacher. It came full circle. I love what I do now, helping people learn. My family is in full support of the fact that this is not an 8:00 - 3:00 job for me."

Her husband, Wayne, once constructed the space station in her classroom back at Bransom when her students were studying the solar system. Her 16-year-old daughter, Morgan, goes with her to cheer Belinda's students. Her 18-year-old son, Patrick, lets Belinda talk about him and the rest of the family to her students. "My students know about my family, even my dog. It's important to be real with them," said Belinda, who uses subtle touches — like a small table lamp on an end table near her desk — to create a feeling of being



at home in her classroom. She has even "divided" her classroom into four "families," so that students can interact with each other as Belinda encourages them to learn about each other.

"I think being a mom makes me a more sensitive teacher than I would have been before my children," Belinda said. "I wouldn't have been as compassionate. Now, I look in my room, and I'll just have a deeper understanding of how the kids work. I hope that at the end of the year, each child achieves the goals they've set for themselves because I'm taking them where they are and working with them. I help them realize that we're all so different, but we all have special talents and can each be successful."

The measure of success is how much Belinda's students have grown academically and socially in one year. "We're doing this little scrapbook that contains a synopsis of their journals in monthly pages. ... So at the end of the year, they can look back on this and reflect on what they've learned this year. This prepares them for the writing they'll do in fourth grade," Belinda said.

Organization is the key that Belinda uses to weave such creative work into the students' 7:50 a.m. - 3:10 p.m. day. "I'm still very traditional. My classroom is pretty structured. Everybody knows the procedures. I teach the students to be organized, as well. If you get 22 kids in here and they're all just free spirits, learning couldn't happen. I tell new teachers that the main thing to focus on is classroom management. In the first two weeks, let them know your expectations and

get the rules and procedures down."

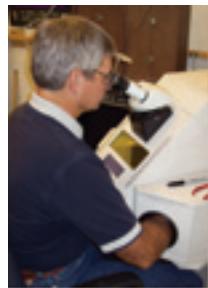
She learned this during her first year of teaching, at Lillian Elementary in Alvarado, Texas, where she taught English and Spelling to third-graders. "The next year, when I first came to Burleson, I was at Bransom, and my principal put me between two teachers of the year, Rexanne Higgins and Beth Fanning. I was surrounded by master teachers. You just feel the need to rise to that expectation," said Belinda. "It's the same thing here at Frazier," she added.

Belinda's third grade team of teachers implement all initiatives the district (or the principal) stresses. Morning Meeting, the brainchild of Frazier Principal Christy Strayhorn, requires the students to greet each other every morning. "It may be a high-five, a soft

"My students know about my family, even my dog."

knuck' or a handshake," said Belinda, "something to show each other that they're valued. They have to make eye contact and say 'Good morning' to each other. It's the sweetest thing to see all these 8- or 9-year-olds speaking each others' name and saying, 'Good morning,' and they're very sincere."

Another hallmark of Belinda's style is to ask for help. "If there's something I don't know how to do, or my class is not getting something, I'm not too big to go across the hall and ask another teacher how to help my students." Belinda stresses that to her class, too. "I'm trying to establish a classroom community, because we're all here to help each other through cooperative learning, through supporting each other, not putting each other down," explained Belinda. "The social sense of community must be there, the students must feel like they belong, so that they will reach their full potential. I treat these kids like I would treat my own children." **NOW**



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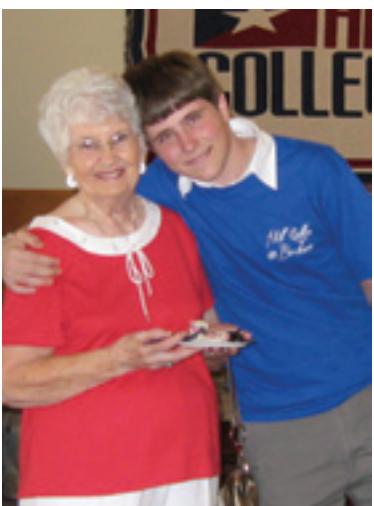
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Around Town **NOW**



Kris Horton, top left, offered Harold Collins a taste of Lone Oak Winery's tawny port. A ribbon cutting, top right, was held at Burleson Premiere Cinema. Alfredo Lemus and Arzide Garcia of the texture crew, second row left, finished a new home in the Hidden Meadows subdivision. A ribbon cutting, bottom left, was held at First Baptist Church in Joshua. Steven Holt, bottom center, hugged his grandmother, Christeen Holt, after receiving a scholarship from the Burleson Opportunity Fund. Emily Galbraith and Samantha Ahrens, second row center right, thanked Mayor Ken Shetter for the Burleson Opportunity Fund. Chris Turner, second row right, introduced himself to Sandy Smith and Constance Resendez during the Chamber's quarterly luncheon. Three friends, Laura Penton, Donna Thiessen and Dana Bell, bottom right, enjoyed happy hour at Lone Oak Winery.

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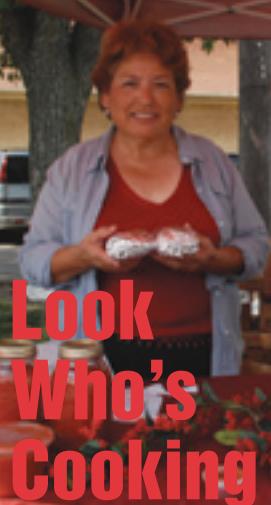
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**FRESH
TAMALES**

— By Faith Browning

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1 cup rice, uncooked
1 clove garlic, minced
1 small can tomato sauce
1 cup chicken stock or one chicken bouillon cube
1 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. pepper

In medium saucepan, add olive oil and rice; stir fry rice until light brown. Add garlic, tomato sauce, chicken stock and salt; stir well. Bring to boil, then reduce heat; cover to simmer 15 minutes or until done.

BUNUELOS

A Christmas Tradition

2 cups flour
3/4 tsp. salt
1/4 cup oil
2/3 cup water
cinnamon sugar, to taste

Combine flour and salt, add oil and mix well. Add water (you may add more if necessary); knead into a soft dough. Let it sit a few minutes, take dough and divide into 11 or 12 balls. Roll out to form a very thin tortilla.

With a fork, poke holes throughout the tortilla; fry in hot oil until golden brown, remove and drain on paper towel. Sprinkle with cinnamon sugar. May be served with hot cocoa, coffee or hot tea.

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1 qt. hot water
3 15-oz. cans white hominy, drained

In a deep pot or skillet, brown meat in oil. Add chopped onion; sauté for a few moments. Add minced garlic, salt, hatch peppers and water; cook for 30 minutes. Add hominy; continue to cook 15 more minutes.

CARNE GUISADA

1 lb. ground sirloin — can also use cubed pork meat
1 Tbsp. olive oil
1 large clove garlic, minced
1/2 tsp. salt
pepper to taste

1/8 tsp. cumin
2 Tbsp. flour
1 cup water

Place meat in pan over medium heat with olive oil and brown lightly. Add garlic, salt, pepper, cumin and flour; brown until there is no more white left in the flour. Stir in water; if gravy is too thick add water accordingly. Slowly simmer for 10 minutes. Serve with your favorite vegetable dish.

PORK AND ZUCCHINI

1 lb. pork, cubed in small pieces
2 Tbsp. olive oil
1 clove garlic, minced
1/8 tsp. powdered cumin (optional)
1 tsp. salt
pepper, to taste
1 cup water
6 medium size zucchini, chopped
1 10-oz. can Ro-Tel tomatoes

Brown meat in olive oil until light brown; add garlic, cumin, salt, pepper and water. Cover and cook for 10 minutes. Add zucchini and Ro-Tel tomatoes. Cook for 20 minutes over medium heat stirring occasionally. Serve with Spanish rice.

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Insiders know to come early for the yummy tamales Rose Trevino sells on Saturdays at the Burleson Farmers Market. Owning her own tamale shop in White Settlement, Texas, started with a simple craving Rose had during one of her six pregnancies. "There were no shops that carried the tamales with the seasonings that my mom used to make when I was growing up," she explained. "I set out to make my own tamales; it took me all day long, from sun up to sun down. When everything was seasoned just right, I knew I had accomplished my mission. We had tamales for dinner that night knowing our tradition would continue."

Rose enjoys baking and creating casseroles. Her favorite dish to prepare is her Carne Guisada. "I have been cooking with love for 40 years," she expressed. "I try to cook from 'scratch' each and every time." **NOW**

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Don't Wait for Market to Hit Bottom Before Investing

— By Lynn H. Bates Jr.

Whether you've been investing for four decades or four weeks, you've no doubt heard this classic piece of investment advice: Buy low and sell high. And it's generally good advice, too, because the less you pay for your investments, the greater your chances may be for earning bigger returns. But how low is "low"? Since stock prices have already fallen so much, shouldn't you wait until the market hits bottom before investing?

Ideally, that would indeed be a smart move. In reality, however, it's impossible for anyone to predict when a bear market will hit its lowest point. Did we bottom out before the huge rally on Oct. 13, which turned out to be the stock market's biggest day in seven decades? Or are we going to bottom out following the drop of 733 points on Oct. 15, the second-worst day ever for the Dow Jones Industrial Average? Given such wild extremes, it's pretty hard to project when the market will finally hit its lowest point. Still, identifying the bottom isn't strictly a matter of guesswork — because we do have a history that we can study.

Of course, in the investment world, what's happened in the past can't necessarily predict the future. Nonetheless, it's also true that the financial markets over time, have shown some definite patterns. Consequently, it's interesting to note that, since 1900, the average bear market has lasted slightly over 13 months, according to Ned Davis Research

— and the current bear market is 12 months old. So, unless we are facing a truly disastrous economic outlook, history suggests that our present bear market could be close to running its course.

If we are nearing a market bottom, what does it mean to you? It means opportunity. A bear market tends to bring down the prices of most stocks — even those that represent strong companies with good prospects. Right now, you have a chance to buy these quality stocks at lower prices. And buying quality stocks at good prices can be a formula for long-term investment success.

But what if we're not yet at the market bottom? If you buy stocks now, and the market declines further, won't you be making a mistake?

That depends, in large part, on how much farther you think the market may fall. Following the Oct. 15 drop, the S&P 500 was down 38 percent in 2008. That's already a pretty big drop, and it's certainly big enough to have dragged down the prices of even good stocks. Could these prices fall further? Of course. On the other hand, quality stocks are typically the first ones to bounce back when the market recovers, so if you wanted to wait until you were sure we hit rock bottom before investing, you might miss the first stages of a rally — which is when the biggest gains typically happen.

In all likelihood, we are in for more volatility in the months ahead. And it will only be at some point in the future when we can look back and truly identify the market bottom. By then, it may be too late to take advantage of it — so don't miss the opportunities you have today. **NOW**

Lynn H. Bates Jr. is an Edward Jones representative based in Burleson.



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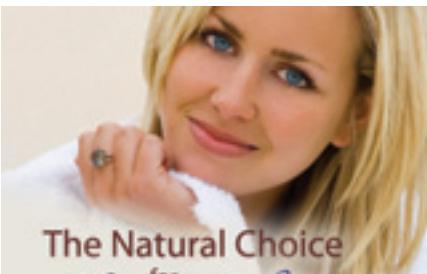
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Keeping the Lid On

— By Betty Tryon, R.N.

Babies crying, debts mounting, family tensions and every time your boss looks at you — he frowns. No wonder your blood pressure is sky-high! If quieting the baby, stable finances and a satisfied boss could eliminate your hypertension, you could lessen the demand for blood pressure medicine. Unfortunately, the causes of hypertension are not so simplistic. Hypertension is when the blood pressure is higher than normal. Everyone's blood pressure can vary throughout the day. Your physician can help determine what is normal for you.

The exact causes of hypertension are varied and in any one individual, multiple factors may come into play. Those most at risk are women who take birth control pills, those who are pregnant and those who have a family history of hypertension. The familiar culprits of alcohol, a diet high in fatty foods and too much salt, smoking, not enough exercise and obesity work their destructive ways in this medical situation also. Knowing you are in the high-risk group is certainly helpful, but not foolproof. There are other causes of hypertension not so easily explained or identified. The definition of blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against blood vessel walls when the heart beats (systolic pressure) and when the

heart rests in between beats (diastolic pressure). Because of that pushing force, anything that causes significant pressure against the arterial walls such as narrowing of the arteries or the heart pumping faster and harder than it should can cause hypertension. Stress cannot be overlooked as well as the risk in older individuals. Chronic kidney disease can precipitate hypertension. Some disorders of the thyroid contribute to high blood pressure.

Usually, there are no symptoms that lead to the discovery of hypertension. For this reason, many call it the silent disease. The only way to know for sure is to have your blood pressure checked. If the hypertension has become critical, you may experience severe headaches, eye changes leading to difficulty with vision, becoming easily fatigued and/or irritated. If the kidneys become involved, blood in the urine would indicate possible renal damage.

Part of the treatment for hypertension is to pursue a healthy lifestyle. Drug therapy may be initiated by your doctor along with other healthful recommendations such as: stop smoking, avoid unhealthy fatty foods, avoid foods high in sodium content, maintain a healthy weight, exercise and limit alcoholic intake. Follow-up with your physician is necessary for blood pressure checks and appropriate lab work. Hypertension can be very dangerous. It is important to maintain the regime your physician plans for you. **NOW**



A photograph showing several people in a gym setting, some on treadmills and others stretching. Overlaid text includes "Coming Soon!", "New 740 sq. ft. Aerobics Center", and "Online Nutrition Program included".

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December 2008

Community Calendar

December 1

Burleson Independent School District board meeting: 6:30 p.m. (817) 245-1000.

December 4

Chamber of Commerce Quarterly Luncheon: 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., United Methodist Church. Outstanding citizens will receive annual Chamber awards and new board members will be introduced. Guest speaker: Pat Cunningham, director of Experience Works, a nonprofit organization helping women age 55 and older who are retraining to work out in the job market. (817) 295-2161.

December 6

Santa's Breakfast kicks off the day-long festivities with pancakes, sausage, juice and coffee served by Santa's elves from 7:00 - 11:30 a.m. at the Burleson Community Center, located at the corner of Hidden Creek Parkway and Chisenhall Park Lane. Cost: \$3 per child; \$4 per adult in advance or \$5 per child; \$7 per adult at the door. CASA of Johnson County will

be at the Santa Breakfast selling Kidz Klubhouses raffle tickets to raise funds to help abused and neglected children in Johnson County (www.casajohnsoncounty.org).

Burleson's annual Christmas parade begins at 6:00 p.m. from Kerr Middle School (lineup begins at 4:30 p.m.). Following the parade, Santa will flip the switch on the 10,000 lights of the 25-foot tall Christmas tree at the corner of Johnson Ave. and Ellison St. Once the tree is lighted, Atlas Enterprises will light off a Christmas-themed fireworks extravaganza to choreographed holiday music. For information about the breakfast, tree lighting and fireworks, call the city's parks and recreation department at (817) 295-8168. For information about the parade, call Lisa Keese at (817) 447-7300.

December 11

Burleson City Council Meeting: 7:00 p.m., City Hall. (817) 447-5400.

December 13

Burleson's Best Buy teams with CASA of

Johnson County to raffle tickets for Kidz Klubhouses: 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m., Best Buy parking lot at 12820 South Freeway. (817) 558-6995.

Eighth Annual Blue vs. Red Charity Flag Football Game between Burleson Fire Department and Burleson Police Department to benefit Heart for the Kids: 1:00 p.m., stadium at Kerr Middle School on Johnson Ave. Cost of admission is one unwrapped toy for a needy child. (817) 447-5400, ext. 286.

December 22 - 31

Student holiday from Burleson Independent School District. (817) 245-1000.

December 25, 26

Christmas Holiday. City offices closed. No trash collection.

For more community events,
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Dr. Choudhary has extensive training in gastroenterological and biliary endoscopic procedures. He is one of only 277 Fellows of the American Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy. The American College of Gastroenterology and the American Medical Association, among other organizations, have honored Dr. Choudhary with many awards and recognitions.

Dr. Choudhary completed his residency in internal medicine at Bellevue Hospital Center and New York University Medical Center in Manhattan. He did a three-year fellowship in gastroenterology and hepatology at Yale University Gastroenterology Program in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and he received advanced training in therapeutic gastrointestinal endoscopy at Tulane University Medical Center in New Orleans.

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