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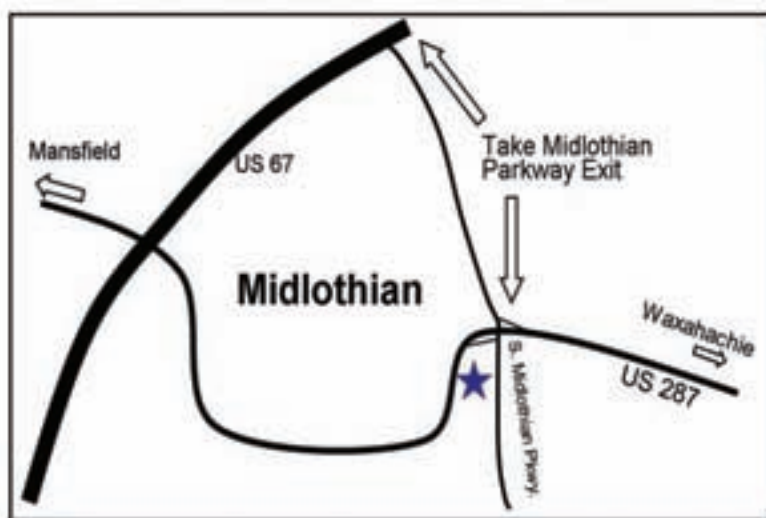
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On The Cover

May the warmth of the season fill your heart with cheer!

Photo by Lauren De Los Santos.

Editor's Note

Merry Christmas, Midlothian!

From the Peanuts comic strip, Charlie Brown's friend, Linus, helps him understand the true meaning of Christmas. He said, "And there were in the same country, shepherds, abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them and the glory of the Lord shone round about them ... Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger' ... that's what Christmas is all about, Charlie Brown!"

As we celebrate the meaning of Christmas this season, Midlothian hosts many activities for your enjoyment, everywhere from places of worship to community events, including the annual Christmas Light Parade sponsored by the Midlothian Downtown Business Association.

From all of us at Now Magazines, thank you for your support, and we wish you peace and blessings this holiday season!

Betty Tryon
MidlothianNOW Editor



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Caring Carries the Day

— By Betty Tryon

“The Jacksons have undertaken a huge emotional tug-of-war with the children under their care.”

A tsunami wave of fear washed over her as she fled to the only place of safety she knew — under the bed as far back as she could go. Something in her mind frightened her and irrational or not, there she cowered and trembled, no doubt wondering if anyone would help her. Help was on its way. Penetrating the darkness, a soft, soothing voice said, “This is Nana. We are not going to hurt you. Please come out.” Eventually, she came out and found herself wrapped in arms of love and understanding. As startling as this might be to some, it

was just another day of caring in the lives of Bernice and Robert Jackson, foster parents with Refuge House. In their seven years of foster parenting together, Bernice and Robert have had more than 50 children living in their home and under their supervision.

The Jacksons recalled the day they decided to become foster parents in their home. Robert stated, “Bernice was working as an HCS (Home and Community Based Waiver Services) community-based home supervisor and began having trouble with her feet. So, I talked to her about doing it

in our own home, as opposed to going to someone else’s home.” Bernice explained, “HCS homes are homes purchased in a subdivision for special needs kids, with a den mother. I was the den mother. Robert and I decided we wanted to become foster parents instead.”

With the full support of their one biological child and granddaughter, Bernestine and Jazmin, the Jacksons began foster care. Because of Bernice’s knowledge of special needs children — 40 years’ experience with Mental Health and Mental Retardation in Texas — the couple decided to focus only on special needs children in their home. Robert stated, “We felt a calling for it.” When a child enters their home, all the emotional baggage the child carries comes with them. There was one child, in particular, who stood out from the rest. Bernice said, “We had a foster Caucasian daughter who was a wreck when she came into our home. She told us she didn’t like black people. But we prayed and knew she had good potential. Her grandmother




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was very prejudiced but now [the grandmother] says we helped save her soul. She calls me her earthly sister. The girl graduated from high school, signed up for classes at Navarro [College] and has a full-time job. She calls us mama and daddy and says that in front of her biological daddy. She now has a good foundation and just needs to keep being encouraged. She visits us whenever she likes and calls at least five times a week.

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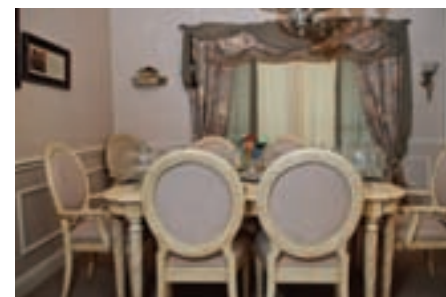
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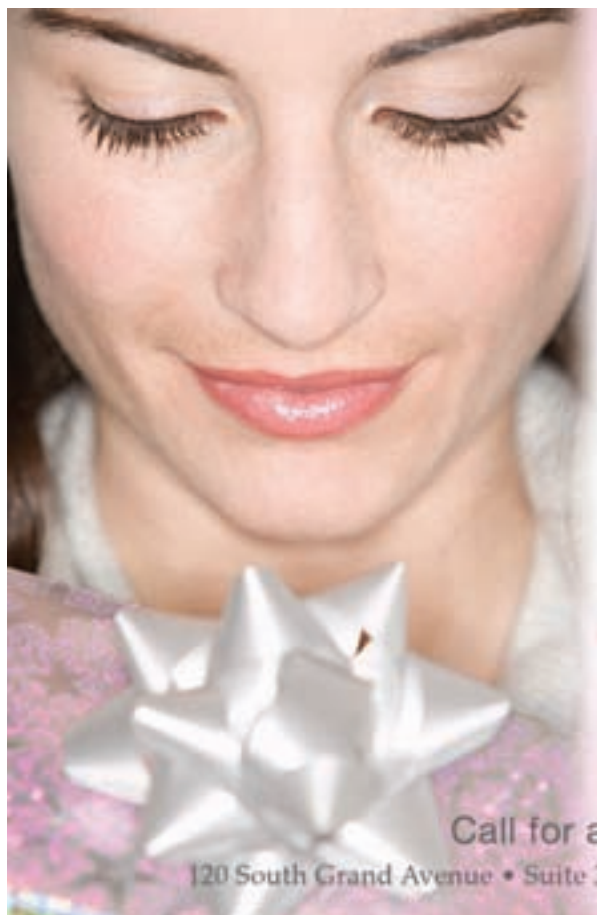
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She wanted us to adopt her, but her grandmother wanted her to keep the family name. It was nothing personal. We understood. Her grandmother and dad think it's neat that she now has an extended family."

Perhaps the one child who brought the most sadness and joy was Michael Ybarra. Although he was a foster child in the system, his name can be used because he is now deceased. He came to the Jacksons in remission from brain cancer. He was very aggressive and bitter, but his life changed in their home. Bernice recalled, "He was baptized and sung in the choir. I think he brought our neighborhood together." Michael's story appeared on network TV, and those touched by his life and story generously shared of themselves to make his final days wonderful. Bernice stated, "The Make-A-Wish Foundation arranged for him to have lunch with the [Dallas] Cowboys." Robert proudly showed a photo of Michael standing with Jerry Jones wearing Jones's Super Bowl ring. Other photos with players such as Tony Romo and Terrell Owens tell the story of a wish come true. It was not just the rich and famous who



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responded. Midlothian's firefighters filled a giant tank with water and catfish was donated so Michael could have an idea of what it was like to fish in Galveston. The Jacksons still miss him since his death last year.

Bernice shared, "You don't give up on a child until they get to a point where they are harmful to themselves or to others. And it's not that you have given up, it's just that you have reached your plateau. When children first come into your home, they go



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The Jacksons have undertaken a huge emotional tug-of-war with the children under their care. However, the child who grabbed their heartstrings and did not let go is Amanda, their adopted daughter. She came to them in 2005, a product of fetal alcohol syndrome and abandonment. Bernice described



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her as "...very soft spoken, mild mannered and starving for love. She just wanted a family. Amanda had been in foster care all her life, with two failed adoptions. She wears a hearing aid in both ears. We adopted her in 2007. My husband and I prayed over this and talked to our biological daughter about it. We are too blessed to allow this child to float in this big old world without a family, and we



said it is going to stop now. We are her family."

In caring for the children, the Jacksons place a high premium on personal conduct. Bernice said, "It is very important to us. Good manners are something anyone can learn. Teach a child the things they need to succeed, and it doesn't have to be academically." Robert agreed adding, "We let Refuge House know that one of our house rules is that they call me Mr. Jackson or PaPa. I am not Robert to them. The same goes for my wife. They are to say 'yes sir' or 'no sir,' not 'yeah.'"

The Jacksons know foster parenting is a difficult task, but their faith propels them forward. Their church, Bethlehem Baptist Church in Mansfield, has been a great source of help and encouragement. Bernice shared, "We cannot save everyone. We have some very good stories that we know God is pleased with because of our mission. When you see them [the children] two to four years down the road and they make that curve, you know God is in it." Part of the satisfaction in caring for children in desperate circumstances is the knowledge that you helped turn their lives around. **NOW**

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It's A Wonderful Eclectic Life

— By Janice C. Johnson

Christmas lights on a large tree invite you to join the celebration at Mike and Megan Nelson's home, even before you go inside. The tree welcomes holiday guests, as it stands on their front porch. Megan's rule of thumb is that "you can never have too many trees, or too many lights." She and Mike put up trees in every room, even a tiny one in the laundry room. They have one on the back porch, too. Each tree has its own theme creating an eclectic Christmas spirit throughout the house.

If anyone lives and breathes the word "eclectic," it would be Mike and Megan. They know how to work with diverse elements and pull together the best features of each. In fact, it is a way of life for them. Nine years ago, they brought together their individual skills and creativity and formed their own company and a marriage as well. "We both

worked in the architectural field. We worked in the same building in Dallas and met in February of 2000," Megan said. "We married in November of 2000 [and] started a company the same week we were married."

The couple's first home was a loft in a 90-year-old Dallas building where the American Airlines Center now stands. Later when it came to designing a home on acreage in Midlothian, Megan explained, "We took some elements from that style: an openness in the main areas with natural daylight." Exposed beams and rafters help bring

At Home With

Mike and Megan Nelson





“uptown loft” together with small-town “southern comfort,” giving the three-bedroom, two-bath home a chic ranch feel. Natural woods anchor the different wall colors of sage green, deep red and light khaki.

Between these colors and the vaulted Christmas-tree-height ceilings, Megan said the home lends itself to decorating for Christmas. “It’s like it was made for it,” she said. “Lights go everywhere. I wrap my windows inside and out.” Some years they also wrap the ceiling beams in lights.

Megan dresses the small dining room tree in all silver and gold ornaments, creating the sparkly look she had always idealized as a child. The main tree in the living room displays more variety. Mike and Megan, also enthusiastic travelers, have collected Christmas ornaments from every place they have ever been. Slowly these have taken over their tree. Regardless of season, Megan said, “If there is one guarantee in life, it’s that the airport gift shops will have Christmas ornaments.”

The Nelsons begin decorating the



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week before Thanksgiving. Mike said, "I just do as I'm told," but Megan said he enjoys Christmas [preparations] more than he lets on. He did admit that "if something doesn't look good, I might inch it over a little, but we do decorate together." Actually, Megan noted, "We spend all of our time together. We ride to work together; we work in the same office at work; we ride home together; then we fall asleep together. I don't think either of us wants to do it any other way; it's a wonderful life."

The Nelsons' company, NR2 Architects, specializes in K through 12 educational facilities. They love working in small Texas towns, as they feel that there is still something charming about them. The firm employs seven people, just the right size for the Nelsons. Though busy, they have been able to spend more time at home since they set up one of the bedrooms as an office and linked it to their Dallas office.

Besides their careers, the couple has brought other interests together, such



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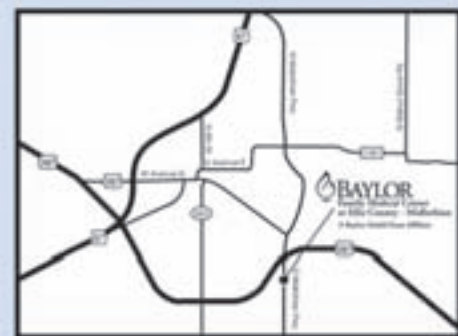
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as Megan's love for animals and Mike's love for nature. "Our home's art has become centered around wildlife," Megan said. The walls are decorated with stunning animal pictures by professional photographers that they seek out during their travels. They have adopted three dogs that supervise the home, and two cats who manage pest control outdoors in the detached garage/shop. Mike and Megan enjoy the outdoors and the views from their porches — the front porch for sunrises and the back for sunsets.

Both Mike and Megan love music of all sorts, and their combined CD collection probably numbers in the thousands. "I've been known to work out to rap music," Megan smiled. She and Mike have at least 40 Christmas CDs. Every December Elvis and Bing Crosby challenge "A Charlie Brown Christmas" for the top favorite spot.

The music helps set the mood for the couple's Christmas Eve traditions. After attending midnight Mass with



Megan's parents, the two come home to hot cocoa, snickerdoodle cookies and presents for each other. Early in their marriage, they opened one gift on Christmas Eve and saved the rest for Christmas Day. Mike liked to give Megan a "silly" gift, while she offered something more serious. Over time, the single gift has "turned into an all-out frenzy" and every gift gets opened the night before Christmas.

This has actually helped Megan. "Christmas Day dinner is at our house," she said, "and I get to have things cleaned up for that in plenty of time." After more gifts and dinner, the family recovers by playing board or card games, "until we can't stand it." Those Christmas dinners are as eclectic as anything else in the Nelson household. Finding themselves burned out on traditional Christmas foods



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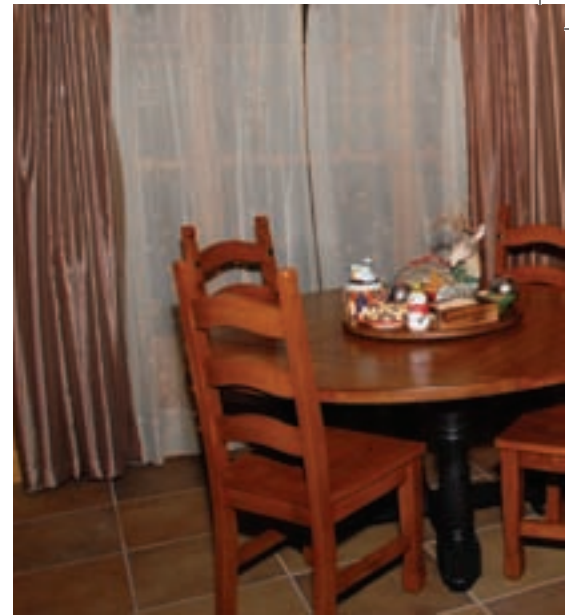
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Top: Hillary, Carolynn, Megan, Alicia
Bottom: Johnnie, Brandi (owner), Denise, Kristi, Jamie (not pictured)

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Christmas
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John 3:16
*For God so loved the world
that he gave his one and
only Son, that whoever
believes in him shall not
perish but have eternal life.*



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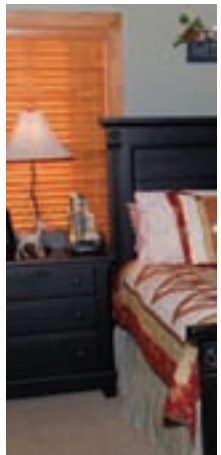
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over a month of holiday parties, they began taking on a different cuisine each year. Megan enjoys the challenge. Over time she has prepared Southern, Italian, Chinese and one traditional Christmas meal. Now their tradition, she said, is “no tradition.”

Their favorite so far? “The Italian,” Megan said. “Everyone was so full we couldn’t even play cards.” This year Megan takes on a new challenge — Mexican Christmas. “This will be my first attempt at tamales,” she stated. “I’m excited, nervous, scared — and prepared with a backup plan (Dallas Tortilla Company in Oak Cliff).”

The family holiday is just one sample of the Nelsons’ hospitality. They entertain often, favoring back-porch dinner parties. When weather





sends them indoors, they also like to gather around the see-through fireplace in the living room. The couple hosts a Christmas party each year for their clients, who are friends as well.

When asked what he likes best about Christmas, Mike thought about times when his work takes him into schools, sometimes during a program or rehearsal. "The best thing is seeing the kids so excited in December," he said. "There's something so neat about hearing little kids singing Christmas carols."

Warm and inclusive, the Nelsons find a place in their home for



everything from vacation mementos to family religious heirlooms, pulling it all together so each item harmonizes with the whole. Their home is their favorite place. Megan put it simply, "We want to retire here." **NOW**

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Around Town **NOW**



The Midlothian High School cheerleaders pose for one final picture before the end of the MHS football season.



Members of the Miller Elementary student council organize a collection of items to be sent to military troops.



Riders gather at Dee Tee's prior to the start of a trip to a bike rally in Bandera, Texas.



Members of the Midlothian Chamber of Commerce welcome Happy House Party Rentals with a ribbon cutting.



Local police and fire officials discuss their jobs at TE Baxter Elementary.



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MISD Wishes Everyone

2009 Gold Performance Acknowledgements

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) awarded nine Midlothian ISD campuses and the District with Gold Performance Acknowledgements (GPA). The GPA system acknowledges districts and campuses for high performance on indicators other than those used to determine accountability ratings.

The Gold Performance Acknowledgments reflect areas of academic performance and growth that go beyond state accountability ratings. Commended Performance refers to the percent of examinees scoring at or above the TAKS commended performance standard (scale score of 2400). A campus/district may be awarded Gold Performance Acknowledgment(s) by each subject tested if 25 percent or more of its students receive commended performance. Comparable Improvement (CI) is a measure that calculates how student performance on the TAKS test has changed (or grown) from one year to the next, and compares the change to that of the 40 schools that are demographically most similar to the target school. The Texas Success Initiative (TSI) shows the percentage of 11th grade students who are considered ready to begin college-level work, based on their performance on the TAKS exit-level examination. For acknowledgment on this indicator, the campuses must have 50 percent or more of its examinees scoring at or above a scale score 2200.

The following is an overview of the Gold Performance Acknowledgements across the district:

Midlothian ISD - College-Ready, Commended Writing, Commended Social Studies, TSI ELA, TSI Mathematics

Baxter Elementary - Commended Reading/ELA, Commended Mathematics, Commended Writing

Irvin Elementary - CI: Reading/ELA, Commended Reading/ELA, Commended Mathematics, Commended Writing, Commended Science

Longbranch Elementary - CI: Mathematics, Commended Reading/ELA, Commended Mathematics, Commended Writing, Commended Science

LaRue Miller Elementary - Commended Mathematics, Commended Writing, Commended Science

Mt. Peak Elementary - Commended Reading/ELA, Commended Mathematics, Commended Writing, Commended Science

Vitovsky Elementary - CI: Mathematics, Commended Reading/ELA, Commended Mathematics, Commended Science

Frank Seale Middle School - CI: Reading/ELA, Commended Reading/ELA, Commended Writing

Walnut Grove Middle School - CI: Reading/ELA, CI: Mathematics, Commended Reading/ELA, Commended Mathematics, Commended Writing, Commended Social Studies

MHS - College-Ready, TSI ELA, TSI Mathematics

The 2009 District Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) is available online at www.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/account/2009.

MISD Wins Appeal on Accountability Rating

MISD's appeal has been approved by The Texas Education Agency. The accountability ratings for Midlothian ISD and Midlothian High School have been changed from "Academically Unacceptable" to "Academically Acceptable." Read the official Texas Education Agency letter on the MISD website.

Campus Ratings

Baxter Elementary - Exemplary

Irvin Elementary - Exemplary

LaRue Miller Elementary - Exemplary

Longbranch Elementary - Exemplary

Mt. Peak Elementary - Exemplary

Vitovsky Elementary - Exemplary

Frank Seale MS - Academically Acceptable

Walnut Grove Middle - Recognized

Midlothian High School - Academically Acceptable

Hike For Heros

The 14th annual "Hike for Heroes" will benefit Midlothian Special Olympics on Monday, December 14th starting at 6:00 p.m. The 5K walk/run will begin in the MHS parking lot in front of Meadows Library. Early registration is \$20. After December 4th and the night of the walk, registration will be

\$25. All participants will receive a specially designed T-shirt. The PAL classes at MHS sponsor the walk/run, and all proceeds go to Midlothian Special Olympics. Sponsorship is solicited for refreshments and T-shirt expenses so that all monies from registration can go directly to Midlothian Special Olympics. If you are interested in sponsoring the Hike for Heroes, please contact **Laura Truett** at 972-775-8226, x1171.

PAL is a service organization and they have held this exciting event for the last 13 years. Many of the PAL students work with the Special Olympians throughout the year. Midlothian Special Olympics use the proceeds to go to competition, buy uniforms and help in any other need that they may have. Last year, \$2,500 was raised.



Students Donate Blood to Red Cross

The Midlothian High School Community Problem Solvers hosted the 4th annual blood drive in honor of Jenny Lehman, a former student who was killed in an automobile accident. This year, the CMPS students' goal was 108 units. A total of 155 students signed up to donate, 129 units were successfully drawn, and in return a total of 387 lives will be saved. Red Cross volunteers were impressed with the number of students who recently donated blood and were touched by their kindness.



**MISD WILL BE CLOSED FOR WINTER BREAK
DECEMBER 21, 2009 THRU JANUARY 1, 2010**

Wish Everyone A Happy Holiday!



MISD CONTINUES "SSC" PROGRAM (Super Senior Citizen)

The "Super Senior Citizen" program offered by Midlothian Independent School District will once again be active for the 2009-2010 school year. This program provides free admission to all Panther home athletic contests. The "SSC" club is open to all MISD residents over 65 years of age and to all MISD retirees regardless of age.

To join the "SSC" club and receive your free gold card good for admittance to all Panther athletic home events, just come by the athletic office, located in the lobby of the arena at the High School campus. If you have additional questions, you can call 972-775-8174.

Preparing Students for College

Midlothian ISD's goal is to develop the student as a whole and as an individual. Emphasis is placed on providing the child with basic academic skills and opportunities to apply these skills to a higher-level thinking. It is the aim of the district to provide the best possible preparation for its students' college education or future employment. The curriculum of the Midlothian ISD is designed to help the child reach his or her highest potential.

The MISD College Readiness Initiative is to ensure that all students are academically prepared and provided the opportunity to attend college. Examples of programs designed to prepare students for college readiness:

- **Advance Placement Courses:** 172 juniors and seniors are currently enrolled in AP courses to receive district and college level credit.
- **Benchmark testing** at all grade levels.
- **Career Pathways Exploration** for all 8th graders.
- **Destination Imagination** is a community-based, school-friendly after-school program that builds participants' creativity, problem solving and teamwork in enjoyable and meaningful ways.
- **Dual Credit Courses:** 201 juniors and seniors are currently enrolled in Dual Credit courses to receive district and college level credit.
- **Duke University Talent Identification Program (TIP)** - The Duke Talent Search assists in the early identification of talented students with excellent mathematical and verbal aptitude. The 7th grade talent search identifies academically talented 7th graders based on standardized test scores achieved while attending elementary or middle school.
- **Encouraging Students to Achieve!** All juniors take the PSAT test funded by MISD.
- **Math Pentathlon** provides a highly motivational format for developing and practicing important mathematics concepts and skills while strengthening strategic thinking/problem-solving abilities.
- **Pathways:** MHS has over 17 career pathways, which are a system of coordinated programs and experiences designed to synchronize educational goals with employment needs of the future. It prepares ALL students for the future by merging rigorous academics with real-work applications and experiences.
- **The PLAN** is a test given to sophomores to predict what they would make on the ACT test. It also includes an interest inventory that suggests careers based on the students' choices, as well as high school courses that would be beneficial.
- **The Princeton Review** advances student progress to prepare for the SAT college entrance exam.



Longbranch student, Matthew S., proudly displays a 3-D landform diorama he made in Mrs. King's 3rd grade class.

Turn Your Trash into Treasures for Midlothian Teachers

WANTED: Recycled Office Supplies

Keep Midlothian Beautiful, an affiliate of the Midlothian Chamber of Commerce, is partnering with local businesses to turn "trash into treasures" for Midlothian teachers. The Teachers' Treasure Warehouse Project is designed to help recycle office products, furniture and supplies, and to provide a new resource for free materials for classrooms.



Examples of donations for the Warehouse include: bookshelves, file cabinets, small desks, folders, binders, chairs, tables, dry erase boards, general office products and other supplies.

"With the creative projects that teachers provide for their students, there are also many other items besides office furniture or supplies that would be considered valuable," said Linda Lanier, Chairman of KMB. "New paper plates, glitter, yarn, poster board and googly-eyes can be used for art projects, or Halloween costumes can be used for creative play." Teachers with Midlothian schools will be invited to visit the warehouse on a scheduled day to be announced to "shop" for supplies they can use in their classroom. The teachers are not charged for this service.

A Keepsake Storage building, located on Walnut Grove, sponsors this event for the Chamber and Keep Midlothian Beautiful. For more information, contact the Midlothian Chamber of Commerce at 972-723-8600 or visit www.midlothianchamber.org.

Curriculum Available Online

www.midlothian-isd.net/curriculum

With a click of a button, teachers, parents and students can easily access the district-wide curriculum anytime and anywhere. This initiative is part of the district's focus to provide excellent resources for those interested in reviewing the established curricular areas demonstrated.

Join MISD on ...

News! Connections E-News E-mail

Midlothian ISD has expanded communications to the community through an online electronic newsletter. The new MISD Connections E-News provides subscribers important district news, weather related closings and delays, as well as late breaking news as needed. In addition, the newsletter contains district announcements and links to calendars, online meal payments, Powerschool, athletic schedules and more. To join, visit www.midlothian-isd.net or contact Jana Hathorne at 972-775-8296.

Facebook and Twitter

Are you on Facebook or Twitter? MISD would like to encourage parents and community members to join the new Facebook group and/or Twitter network. To join our Facebook Group, search for "Midlothian ISD" and submit a request or you can follow MISD on Twitter! These services provide a regular update about Midlothian ISD, from district and campus news to sports news.



MEF Family Movie Night



Midlothian families are invited to attend the first ever MEF Family Movie Night on Friday, December 18 at 6:30pm. The fundraiser will be held at the Midlothian High School auditorium. During intermission, popcorn, candy and drinks are available for purchase. The movie title and advance donation packages to reserve your seats early will be available on the MEF website at www.midlothian-isd.net/mef.



Kickoff to the Holidays

— By Betty Tryon

Somehow, Christmas does not seem official until the twinkling lights and beautiful ornaments decorate the tree. Here in Midlothian, under the direction of Mary Rustin, the Festival of Trees event begins its sixth year. Sponsored by the Art Council of Midlothian Conference Center, it all started in 2003, as a way to bring more people into the center and celebrate the season. Mary explained, "When we first opened the building, there wasn't much out here. People had difficulty locating it. Since money

is always tight when it comes to advertising, I was trying to think of some way to get the public here to become aware of the building and to know how it could be used. Looking at the gallery and lobby area, I just thought it would be a tremendous thing to have it covered with decorated Christmas trees. That's how it got started. It was publicity for the building, as well as a community activity."

The event is truly a community activity, in that any person or group

can decorate a tree and display it at the center. The center reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of decorations but, so far, has not had any concerns in that area. Mary stated, "We send information to the schools. Any club can have a tree. We have had trees from the hockey club, the chess club, the drama club — all from the high school. The Rotary Club usually has one. ABWA (American Business Women's Association), one of the chapters, puts up a tree. We make it available to businesses also. They can put a tree up and put their business cards on it, or whatever. We have had some really clever ones with that. Individuals can put one up, if they so choose. All we ask is they bring the tree and decorate it themselves."

Through the years, a bevy of creative trees has greeted visitors to the conference center during the holiday season. Mary has had a front-row seat to them all. She laughed as she remembered some of them. "One of the cleverest trees we have had came from a business called Wallpaper, Paint and Plus. They decorated the trees with little paintbrushes hanging

down. Their little ornaments were made out of wallpaper and paint cans were wrapped as packages under the trees. Quilts 'n More always made a cute tree because they put quilted ornaments on it. When the UPS Store (United Parcel Service) opened, she made a tree out of boxes. I thought that was really clever."

Different area organizations have shown a great deal of creativity with their trees. A tree to celebrate the "Race for the Cure" was done in pink. The Historical Society brought history alive by decorating a tree with old photographs of historical significance. The Art Council of the Conference Center took pleasure in decorating a tree the old-fashioned way, with popcorn and cranberries strung together. Old Christmas cards made into ornaments and construction paper garlands looped around the tree to complete the picture. The Girl Scouts handmade all of its ornaments and used its cookie boxes for gifts under the tree, while the Boy Scouts put each members' face inside emblems on the tree. The hockey club's tree sported miniature hockey sticks and ice skates. One of the karate schools in town made little figures of each of the participants in the school. Each figure wore the color of the level belt they had earned.

Area schools put their creative touches to trees. Navarro College embellished its tree using its emblem: the bulldog. The Art Club at Midlothian High School created a beautiful tree with a Van Gogh [the impressionist painter] theme. T.E. Baxter Elementary School decorated a tree using ornaments made of clay. Mary remarked, "I thought it was great. It was a beautiful tree." Local churches were represented also. Mary stated, "The Sunday School class that I taught at First Baptist Church had a tree covered in angels. The Mother's

Midlothian Conference Center Arts Council

Festival of Trees



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Day Out group had little slates with all the little kiddos' names written on them."

Individuals within the community expressed their personal individuality in their trees. Carol Floyd, a local artist, showed her creativity one year through a "Go Green" environmental



tree; another year, she amazed viewers with a tree covered in pink flamingos. Veneta Roach crafted beautiful tattered snowflakes covering a white tree. "People get creative. We always have one or two trees that are outstanding because of the uniqueness or beauty {of the trees}," Mary marveled. "I'm a sentimentalist, and I think Christmas trees represent the hope people have, whatever their hopes are. I think it's the key to the celebration of Christmas. We try to do this the first weekend in December. It is a kick off to what people expect during the holidays. The very beauty of it all stirs something in people, too. The thing I think about the most is when you see people come in and do the trees and stand back with a sense of satisfaction and hope."

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Horse Listener

— By Alex Allred

In just one week, however, the results were obvious.

"It was amazing! You could see they were changed on the inside," Jerilyn said. Children who had never touched a real horse were suddenly riding bare back, "with their hands in the air!" But it was one child, in particular, who really touched Jerilyn. Withdrawn and uncommunicative, "You could tell that she was questioning how she could trust another human being," Jerilyn said of the little girl. "So, we

kept going back to the horse, asking her how she could get the horse to trust her. She had been fighting so many battles. She was the adult in her family and had so much on her shoulders." By working with Jerilyn and her horse, the little girl was able to find release.

"Horses are so pure, and they know when you're not being honest."

"Horses are so pure, and they know when you're not being honest. If you're not congruent, if you are harboring anger inside but smiling on the outside, your horse knows something is wrong." The horse allowed the little girl to deal with her feelings openly.

It is this purity and honesty that keeps Jerilyn so involved in the horse world, but admittedly, it is not what first drew her in. Like so many girls, Jerilyn loved horses. While she grew up in Arlington, her grandparents owned horse property in Sulphur Springs, Texas, allowing her to



For Jerilyn Cardwell, horsemanship is a journey of trust, faith and the unlocking of secrets. While the title of "horse whisperer" belongs to another, Jerilyn is definitely a "horse listener."

Recently, Jerilyn held a horse camp for disadvantaged children, with the hopes of instilling a greater sense of self-esteem and pride in her young charges. "But I think I walked away with so much more," Jerilyn said. "These kids thought of themselves as alone in the world," she continued.

ride horses in wide open spaces. But unlike so many, Jerilyn knew no fear. When she was only 3 or 4 years old, she was already riding horses others would not. By the time she entered elementary school, she rode horses into town racing at breakneck speed. When a new horse showed a little too much exuberance, family members would say, "There's a crazy horse. Put Jerilyn on it!"



However, Jerilyn did not own a horse of her own until she was married with children. She majored in business at University of Texas at Arlington with the idea of owning a restaurant one day. Instead, she began a decorating business but stopped once she and her husband, Terry, had children. "I wanted to be a stay-at-home mom," she said. Still, her passion for horses never waned.

Terry and Jerilyn moved to Midlothian more than five years ago with their two sons so that Jerilyn could finally get the horse she had always wanted. Starbucks, now a 12-year-old Palomino quarter horse, became her guinea pig. "I did everything on that horse," Jerilyn laughed. But when she learned about the training methods of the internationally renowned horse trainer, Pat Parelli, she said her life changed.

The Pat Parelli program is as much about self-improvement as it

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is the study and training of horses, exposing students to every aspect of horsemanship, including the business side. Initially, Jerilyn sent away for instructional DVDs but quickly began attending seminars and successfully tested to become a low-level instructor. Then, the call came. Only 10 instructors in the United States were selected to move on to the next level. “This was a huge honor!” Jerilyn said, still remembering that life-changing phone call.

Jerilyn has traveled to Pat Parelli’s training facility in Pagosa Springs, Colorado, for the past two summers and has become a Level III instructor, making her not only one of the most educated and experienced trainers in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, but in the United States. This avid horse lover and self-professed, “share-aholic,” has never been happier. “As a trainer, I want my students to be as good as I am or better. I will give you as much information as I can; I just feel so blessed to have been trained under Pat and Linda [Parelli]. It is a blessing to be able to share.”

So many years ago, the thrill of a horse had been a wild ride for Jerilyn. Today, she knows much more. “There is a saying by Ronnie Willis,” she said, “that ‘the inside of a horse is good for the outside of the man.’ The emotion of the horse can bring out the best in you. It is so true.”

For Jerilyn, that moment of clarity came while she was working with students and their horses and Starbucks came running into view to show off. “He backed himself through the barrels and looked at me like, ‘Look Mom, look what I did!’ He was looking for that conversation and that connection with me, and right then I knew that solidified it.” Jerilyn has discovered one of the most glorious secrets of all: Horses cannot talk, but they can speak — if you listen. **NOW**

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Cheering for Excellence

— By Betty Tryon

Competition and excellence is the mantra for Liberty Cheer All-Stars. As the winner of five state championships and eight national championships during the 2008-09 season in which they had 28 first-place wins, they have a right to celebrate their hard work. Michael Wright, one of the coaches, stated, "We prepare, prepare, prepare and train all the time for competition. When we get the score sheet back, we figure out where we can improve. We always try to be a step ahead of the competition."

Carrie Smith, Lyndsey Rose and Ashley Brown, owners of Liberty Cheer, agree that they want the children who compete to do their best. Although much time and effort is spent in perfecting their performances, they make a point of leading their charges with compassion. Carrie said, "A lot of our parents like that it is a family environment. We treat them as if they are our own kids and use positive reinforcement. Everyone who comes here will make a team, no matter who they are." In keeping with the spirit of placing everyone who

tries out on a team, Liberty Cheer developed a special needs team this year.

Lyndsey agreed with their concept of inclusion: "It is something they should be able to experience because it is fun. Also, I think it is good for their self-esteem. We are not here to tell a kid they can't do something they love." The coaching team was able to observe one child, who was very shy when she started taking classes, eventually open up and become more confident. Other than the obvious physical advantages from the exercise, there are additional benefits gained from cheering. Ashley said, "They receive positive reinforcement from cheering. They gain lifelong friends and their parents become friends."

Every coach is fully certified. They are members of International All State Federation (IASF) for cheer and dance teams and members of Cheer Gyms of America (CGA). Carrie explained, "That means we are fully certified to judge competitions. It helps us when creating our routines because

Business NOW

we know what the judges are looking for. We try to keep up with everything that's new and with any rule changes." In addition, the staff participates in community events, such as the homecoming parade. They also hold choreography camps for middle schools in the surrounding communities.

In further explaining the competition, Michael stated, "Each level is capped with a certain amount of skills that you can do. The whole reason we go to conferences is so we learn how to maximize our points in each level to produce the maximum scores possible for each team. So that we place well, we make sure we are knowledgeable

"We treat them as if they are our own kids and use positive reinforcement."

enough about the rules, so we can push the limits. We want them to have the best chance to be successful."

In addition to "cheernastic" classes, Liberty Cheer All-Stars offers floor and power tumbling, and an elite dance team. The facilities have two full competition spring floors and the rooms are fully air-conditioned and heated. The parents enjoy two convenient viewing windows in their room. Tryouts for teams are held once a year, during which the students perform a routine the coaches teach them. Their skills are then evaluated for placement on a team. The next tryouts are in April 2010. For more information, go to www.libertycheerallstars.com. Call them at (972) 775-5323 or (972) 322-8363 or e-mail carrie@libertycheerallstars.com. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Their location is 1080 Dividend Road in Midlothian. **NOW**

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Priceless Direction

— By Betty Tryon



In his mind, the 10-year-old boy was already a great director. Sitting in church, he could see himself facing the choir and directing every note with a masterful lift and swing of his arms. Some dreams do come true and Laurencio Arroyo, associate director of bands at Walnut Grove Middle School, lives his dream every day.

Coming from a family of music lovers, it was natural for Laurencio to seek his special niche in the musical field. He chose band. "I started band in the seventh grade and started playing the saxophone. I graduated from West Texas State University, which is now West Texas A&M University, with a bachelor's in music education. I remember my first teaching job as if it was yesterday and feeling scared to death. It was in Greenville, Texas, as the assistant director of the band at the high school. I taught there for nine years but wanted to become a head director."

Before Laurencio left Greenville, he left his mark on the band that is now forever a part of its history. Not surprisingly, he heralds that memory as the most memorable of his career. He explained, "My best memory was when I was working with the jazz band in Greenville. That was a group that just got better and better with every school year.



One of my student's grandfathers heard a recording of our Thanksgiving concert and could not believe it was a high school band. He asked for the band to come to Tulsa, Oklahoma. He rented a charter bus and set up all of these performances for us. He also set up studio time for us to record. That is something I will never forget; for those students to be in a professional studio recording a record. The following year, he sent another bus, and we played at high schools and at a hockey game. We went back to the studio and recorded another 45 [record]."

The third year the grandfather was ill, but the band had made such a favorable impression that the hockey team sent its bus to bring the band back to play again. Motivated, the students raised enough money to return to the recording studio for their third 45. The fourth year they made two recordings. Laurencio continued, "It was the 25th anniversary of the jazz band in Greenville. I was able to put all of the recordings on one album. Those kids will never forget that: going into the studio and putting that album together. I have the album framed in my office at home. I wouldn't trade those years for anything. Priceless. Just priceless."

In 1990, Laurencio, his wife, Monica, and son, Laurence, moved to Midlothian. "I knew Midlothian would be a special place," he said. "My wife teaches at the high school, and when we first met the administration and walked into the classrooms, we both knew this would be the place we would end our careers. It continues to be a special place."

Education NOW

Laurencio's 15-year-old son carries on the family tradition of music. He is a sophomore at Midlothian High School and plays in the band. Laurencio stated, "My son reminds me of myself when I was young. I mentioned that I knew at a very young age what I wanted to be. Well, he knew at a very early age that he wanted to be a percussionist. He has been in band since sixth grade."

Beginning his 31st year of teaching band, Laurencio starts it one degree richer. "I graduated this past August from the University of North Texas and earned a master's in education administration. I tell others that I want to be a principal when I grow up," he smiled. "It's not that I want to get out of band; I love what I do, but I want to be able to help more kids. I want to be a role model for kids. ... I want to let them know that if they work hard enough, they can become successful. It was so important to my parents that their kids go to college."

Laurencio enjoys a special relationship with his students and still has contact with some of the ones he first taught and their parents. In May 2009, he was selected as one of the Star Teachers with the Midlothian Education Foundation Showcase of Stars. Another honor he received was to be inducted in the Frank Seale Ring of Honor in September 2008. The Ring of Honor recognizes teachers who exhibit a pattern of excellence in their profession and in their relationship with other educators and students. "It was the highest honor I have received as an educator. I use my own experience when relating to kids," he stated. "I promised myself when I started my career, I would treat kids with respect and be there for them and help them every step of the way. That is why I build rapport with them. The kids know that I want them to succeed, and I will do whatever I can to help them become successful."



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In The Kitchen With Paula Baucum

— By Faith Browning

Growing up on a small farm, Paula Baucum can vividly recall spending time in the kitchen. “My first cooking experiences were baking peanut butter cookies and canning fresh veggies with my mom,” she said. “Also, Elaine McWhorter gave me many hours of her time. She taught me the joy of welcoming people into your home, cooking them delightful favorites and making them feel special.”

Paula enjoys preparing her favorite

holiday recipes like her Rosemary Lemon Turkey and the Italian Sausage Thanksgiving Dressing. “I always make extra for family to take home with them after the holidays,” she admitted. “We enjoy having family together: talking, laughing, making jokes and remembering my husband, Stan’s parents. We miss them so much, but their legacy continues. We like to believe those are answered prayers from them.” **NOW**

CILANTRO LIME VINAIGRETTE

Awesome salad dressing and great on grilled salmon, too.

- 1 cup packed cilantro
- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 cup lime juice
- 1 Tbsp. Dijon mustard
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. pepper
- 1/2 tsp. minced garlic

1. Puree cilantro, olive oil, lime juice, Dijon mustard, salt, pepper and garlic in a blender or food processor until smooth.

PAULA'S OLD-FASHIONED CORN BREAD DRESSING

- 2 lbs. cooked Italian sausage, crumbled or sliced
- 1 large onion, diced and cooked
- 3 stalks celery, sliced
- 2 small cans water chestnuts, drained and chopped
- 2 small jars sweet corn relish
- 2 bags or packages herb stuffing mix (I like to use Pepperidge Farm.)
- 1 cup butter, melted
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 2 cans clam chowder soup (do not reconstitute)
- 1 pan corn bread, prepared, crumbled
- 2 Tbsp. fresh rosemary, chopped
- 2 Tbsp. fresh sage, chopped
- 2 cups Parmesan cheese, shredded
- 1 tsp. fresh ground black pepper

1. Combine all ingredients; place in large pan. Cover tightly and bake at 300 F until heated through (approximately 1.25 hours.)
2. Remove foil and brown top.
3. Serve immediately. (Excellent for leftovers.)

PAULA'S SEAFOOD SALAD

- 1 lb. shrimp, cooked (steamed)
- 1 lb. scallops, cooked (steamed)
- 1 lb. mussels, cooked (Walmart has a terrific frozen steam bag of mussels already seasoned; just pop in the microwave.)
- 1 cup celery, chopped
- 1 cup grape tomatoes, halved

- 1/4 cup red onion, chopped (more to taste)

DRESSING:

- 3/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- Zest of 2 medium to large lemons
- 1/3 cup fresh squeezed lemon
- 1 Tbsp. Dijon mustard
- 2 Tbsp. rice wine vinegar
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- Fresh ground black pepper, to taste

1. Mix cooked seafood with vegetables.
2. In a saucepan, whisk together dressing ingredients. Gently warm to infuse flavors.
3. Pour over the seafood salad. Garnish with fresh lemon slices. Eat warm or refrigerate.

MARIJANE BAUCUM'S TRADITIONAL HEAVENLY POTATOES

- 12 potatoes, cooked and mashed
- 8 oz. cream cheese
- 8 oz. sour cream
- 2 Tbsp. onion, diced
- 2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. garlic salt
- Paprika, to taste
- 1/4 - 1/2 cup cheddar cheese, grated

1. Mix all ingredients.
2. Spray casserole dish with Pam® cooking spray; put potato mixture in dish and dot with butter or margarine.
3. Cover with foil; chill in refrigerator for 24 hours.
4. Bake at 350 F until bubbly; sprinkle with paprika and grated cheddar cheese.

CHEWY CHOCOLATE GINGERBREAD COOKIES

- 7 oz. best quality semi-sweet chocolate
- 1 1/2 cups (or more) all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 1/4 tsp. ground ginger
- 1 tsp. ground cloves
- 1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg
- 1 Tbsp. cocoa powder
- 1 Tbsp. freshly grated ginger
- 8 Tbsp. (1 stick) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1/2 cup dark brown sugar, packed

- 1/4 cup unsulfured molasses

- 1/4 cup granulated sugar, for rolling cookies

1. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper; set aside.
2. Cut chocolate into 1/4-inch chunks; set aside.
3. In a medium bowl, sift together flour, baking soda, ground ginger, cloves, nutmeg and cocoa; set aside.
4. In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream the grated ginger and butter until light and fluffy, about 4 minutes. Add the brown sugar; beat until combined. Add the molasses; beat until combined. Add the reserved flour mixture in batches until fully incorporated. Mix in reserved chocolate.
5. Cover with plastic wrap; refrigerate until firm, 2 hours or more.
6. Heat oven to 325 F.
7. Place the granulated sugar in a pie plate. Using a 1 3/4-inch scoop, shape the dough into a ball; roll each ball of dough in sugar. Place on baking sheets.
8. Bake until the surface of the cookies cracks slightly, 13 to 15 minutes. Transfer cookies to a wire rack to cool completely. (Cookies are better if eaten the next day.)

AMARETTO CREAM

- 1 16-oz. container sour cream
- 1/4 cup brown sugar, firmly packed
- 1 Tbsp. amaretto liqueur
- 1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon

1. Mix all ingredients together.
2. Refrigerate one hour.
3. Quickly stir again and sprinkle with a little more cinnamon. (You may add more brown sugar to make it sweeter.)
4. Serve with fresh strawberries.
5. Another alternative is to use Kahlua liqueur and mix a bit of chocolate syrup into the cream at the last minute, but still use the cinnamon — it goes terrific with chocolate, too!

To view more of your neighbors' recipes, visit our archives at www.nowmagazines.com.



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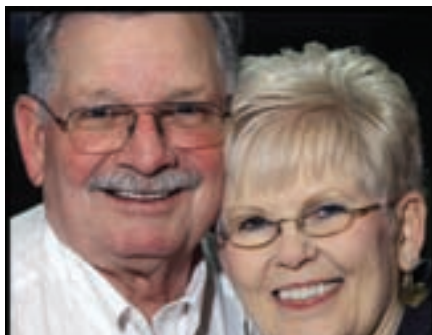
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Preparing for Your Financial Future

— By Tim Tobey

When most of us think of investing, we immediately think of investing for retirement. While that is an important aspect to be considered, there are other pieces of the puzzle that are also important. Establishing a budget, investing early and regularly and saving for post-secondary education should also be considered.

Establish a Budget

Establishing a budget is a great first step in planning your finances. A budget is a useful tool for recording all of your income and expenses. By writing down how much money you earn and spend each month, you can see where your money is going. This will assist you in being able to prioritize your expenses and needs. Any money left over can be used for saving and investing. Even a small amount of money invested regularly can help.

Invest Early and Regularly, Even Small Amounts

One reason to start a regular investment program early is to give your money as much time as possible to grow through

compounding. If you haven't started investing yet, then consider starting now and getting into the habit. Just remember that the amounts you invest do not have to be large, especially if the money is taken directly out of each paycheck. You will be surprised how little you miss money you don't see. If you're already investing every month, look for ways to contribute more through bonuses and monetary gifts.

A Hypothetical Example

The value of starting early is illustrated by a 25-year-old investing \$2,000 per year for 10 years at a hypothetical 8 percent fixed rate of return with all gains and dividends reinvested. This 25-year-old would accumulate \$314,870 by age 65. A 35-year-old investing \$2,000 per year for 30 years and reinvesting all gains and dividends will have \$244,692 when he or she reaches 65. These hypothetical examples are for illustrative purposes only and are not intended to represent or imply the actual performance of any specific investment. It is important to note that any investment involves risks that may result in the loss of principal and there is no guarantee that the strategies illustrated will

produce positive investment results.

Planning for Post-secondary Education

Preparing for your children's or grandchildren's post-secondary education is important, especially when tuition costs are rising every year. Investing in a Registered Education Savings Plan is an option that can provide a Canadian Education Savings Grant (CESG) of 20 percent up to a maximum of \$500.00 per child per year.

By considering all the pieces to the puzzle when developing your approach, not just retirement, you may be better prepared to meet all the expenses in your financial notebook.

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Tim Tobey is a State Farm agent based in Midlothian.

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Sleep Stops Here



— By Betty Tryon, R.N.

It is getting harder to find a good night's sleep. Approximately 40 million Americans wake every morning feeling exhausted, or they drag themselves through the night to face another day without sleep. There are many different sleep disorders with some of the most common ones being insomnia, narcolepsy and sleep apnea. Sleep apnea is a disorder that affects roughly half of all Americans in their struggle to wake refreshed and rested.

Sleep apnea, defined as cessation of breath, may occur hundreds of times during the night; you simply stop breathing for a few seconds, start breathing again, stop again and so on. You may be completely unaware this is happening, and only be conscious of the side effects during the day — a constant feeling of tiredness and drowsiness. You may have morning headaches and feel irritable or waken with a dry throat. If you do not realize that a problem exists, your bedmate surely will. Sleep apnea is punctuated with snores, snorts and even choking sounds during the night. Not everyone who snores has sleep apnea nor does everyone who snores need to rush out to see his or her physician. A visit to the doctor may be in order if your bed partner notices loud snoring with long pauses (about five to 10 seconds) of not breathing.

These episodic periods of not breathing can be very stressful

on your cardiovascular system. Consider the physiology when you stop breathing. Your oxygen level falls to a precarious level. Hence, your organs are not getting the oxygen they need to function properly. Your body tries to compensate by having your heart work harder or pump faster to provide the body's cells with the proper amount of oxygen. This will increase your blood pressure. With this scenario recurring many times an hour over the course of the night, you increase your susceptibility to hypertension, a stroke or cardiac arrest.

When you visit your doctor, he or she will evaluate your medical history along with information you give regarding your sleeping habits and how that is affecting your daily life. An examination of your nasal and oral tissues for abnormalities will also be done. If a sleep disorder is diagnosed, treatment will be aimed at restoring normal sleep activity. This may be as simple as implementing some lifestyle changes such as avoiding alcohol, losing weight and learning to sleep on your side. Sleep apnea can be serious. An effective treatment plan from your health care professional will help to improve your sleep and banish those exhausted mornings. **WOW**

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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Thank you Janice at J & H Gifts for the beautiful background!

Outdoors
NOW

Gardener Gifts

Under the Tree

— By Nancy Fenton

It is that time of year again, and I have been going through the catalogs and newspaper clippings that I have saved all year in order to compile a Christmas wish list. There are some new things on the market and lots of old standbys, such as medium-sized tarps to pick up all those pesky leaves and weeds that come out of the flower beds. Good gloves are always nice. Both Amaryllis and Paper White bulbs are fun gifts, and after several months of indoor enjoyment, they can go into the yard come spring. The indoor/outdoor weather station allows you to check the temperature outside without leaving the house.

I am going to ask for several Slinkies (metal ones) this year. I have it on good authority that a metal Slinky attached to the bottom of a bird feeder surrounding the pole will deter squirrels and raccoons.

New this year is a butterfly habitat, complete with a coupon for cocoons to be ordered when your gardener wants to watch them hatch. Planting bags are another new find. These are bags with handles that hold between 16 and 45 quarts of soil that can be planted and then moved around. They sound perfect for porches, balconies, and small patios or yards.

A rain barrel is also a great gift, and you can go a step farther and install it on your gardener's downspout or under a valley in their roof. Rain barrels can be purchased online or from catalogs, but they are a lot more expensive than those made in the rainwater harvesting classes currently being held around the area. Half-day workshops run between \$30 and \$50 and participants come out with a 55-gallon rain barrel ready to attach to their downspout at home. Catalogs charge \$150 and up plus shipping. Check with the following people for a workshop in your area: Waxahachie: John Smith, Waxahachie Parks Department, (972) 937-7730 ext. 181; Cedar Hill: Josh McLerran, (972) 291-5126 ext. 2818; Midlothian: Kathleen Hamilton, (972) 775-7123.

Have a great holiday and enjoy the cooler weather. **NOW**

Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener.

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What's Happening **NOW**

Ongoing

Feed the Children donations are being accepted at Ennis State Bank, account number 37051. Requests for assistance with groceries may be turned in at Ennis Feed the Children boxes at area businesses.

Every Tuesday

Midlothian Rotary Club meeting: noon, Midlothian Civic Center, 224 S. 11th St. (972) 775-7118.

GED Class: 6:00 p.m., Midlothian High School Meadows Library.

Second Tuesday

Midlothian City Council meeting: 6:00 p.m., City Hall, 104 W. Ave. E.

First Thursday

Midlothian Area Historical Society: 7:00 p.m., Midlothian High School Meadows Library. Contact Kathy Robinson at (972) 723-2755 for more information.

ABWA Empowering Women Express Network monthly meeting: 6:00 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center, 1 Community Circle. RSVP at www.abwa-empoweringwomen.org.

First and Third Thursday

Midlothian Lions Club meeting: 7:00 p.m., Midlothian Civic Center, 224 S. 11th St. (972) 775-7118.

December 6 - 31

Festival of the Trees, at the Midlothian Conference Center. Any group or business can decorate a tree. Contact Mary Rustin at (972) 723-7919.

December 7

Midlothian Downtown Business Association's Christmas Parade. For more information or entry forms, call (972) 441-4501.

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What's Happening **NOW**

December 12

America's premier Pops Chorus, Vocal Majority, concert: 8:00 p.m., MISD Auditorium. Benefits the Midlothian Masonic Scholarship Foundation, a Texas 501(c)3 corporation, which provides 20 scholarships per year to high school seniors. Reserved tickets: \$30 and \$40. To purchase tickets online, visit www.msftx.org.

December 14

Christmas festivities: 6:00-8:00 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center. Bring the family and a camera for pictures with Santa, music and refreshments.

14th Annual Hike for Heroes, benefiting Midlothian Special Olympics, 5K walk/run: 6:00 p.m., Midlothian High School Library parking lot.

MISD School Board meeting: 6:30 p.m., Administration Building.

December 16

Ellis County Christian Women's Connection monthly luncheon: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Waxahachie Country Club, 1920 W. Hwy 287 at I-35 East, Exit 401B, Waxahachie. Cost: \$13, inclusive. Nursery vouchers available. Reservations preferred; walk-ins welcome. To make reservations, contact Mary at (972) 937-9984 no later than Friday, December 11.

December 17

Midlothian High School Holiday Choir performance: 7:00 p.m., Midlothian High School auditorium.

December 21 - January 1

MISD winter break.

December 25

Merry Christmas!

January 1

Happy New Year!



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