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December 2010

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Subscriptions are available at the rate of \$35 per year or \$3.50 per issue. Subscriptions should be sent to: NOW Magazines, P.O. Box 1071, Waxahachie, TX 75168. For advertising rates or editorial correspondence, call (972) 875-3299 or visit www.nowmagazines.com.



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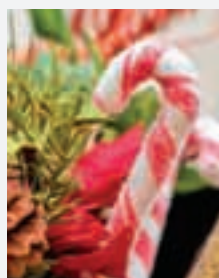
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On The Cover

Christmas means candy canes and holly.

Photo by Amy Ramirez.

Editor's Note

Merry Christmas!

It is Christmastime in the city! Journey downtown and see for yourself as you marvel once again at The Lights of Ennis extravaganza. Each season as the buildings and trees are lit, I am reminded of the past year gone by. Did I treat others with compassion, kindness and love? Did I listen with my ears, as well as my whole heart? I would like to think that the majority of the time I passed along a small portion of the same love God showed so many years ago with the gift of His son, Jesus Christ.

Looking back, it has been somewhat of a tough year, but I find I am only able to count my blessings as I reminisce. My new house finally feels like home. My family and friends are all healthy and doing well. What more could a girl ask for as she looks forward to the coming year?

Sandra Strong
EnnisNOW Editor
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A CENTURY OF CELEBRATIONS

— By Sandra Strong



From left to right: Bessie and her son, Michael.

Things in life change many times in the span of 100 years; just ask Bessie Biscoe. With the help of her son, Michael Biscoe, she took a trip down memory lane, a trip she enjoyed sharing with others. "It's not been so good, but it's not been so bad," Bessie stated in a soft voice. As she looked at her son, she added, "It may have been a mixed-up life, but I'm very proud of my family."

Her story begins where all personal stories begin — at birth. "I was born on October 8, 1910, in Alto, Texas," she remembered. "I attended school up to the eighth grade in Crandall, Texas, and married my first husband when I was 17 years old." Bessie had two children from her union with John Henry Hampton, John Henry Hampton Jr. and Samuel Hampton. In 1942, just a few years after John Henry's passing, Bessie met her second husband while working as a maid in the Highland Park area of Dallas. Roosevelt Biscoe Sr. was a landscaper and farmer. "He was also a member of the Masons," Bessie added, sure to mention her membership as an Eastern Star while they lived in Tyler, Texas, and her church membership at Weaver Chapel in Bristol, Texas. Roosevelt Michael Biscoe Jr. and Gladys Jane Gardner are the two children born from this second union.





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A big part of Bessie's life today, as a resident at Claystone Healthcare Center, is found in her memories. She is a living, breathing testimony of the old adage, "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger." Her memories of outliving both husbands and her two oldest children stir the emotion deep within her soul, but the good memories of a century of living take the forefront when it comes to storytelling, both for Bessie and her son, Michael. Michael flew in from Atlanta, Georgia, especially to hear his mother retell stories of what he considers "a pretty good life." In fact, Michael commutes to Ennis from Atlanta on a regular basis.



Since retiring from a 32-year career at AT&T, his full-time job these days is the overall care and welfare of his mother. "I come up every three to four months and stay three to four months," Michael explained. "The longest I stayed in the area was when mother first came to Claystone. I was here for eight continuous months."

Michael's original plan in 2007 was to move to Ellis County and care for his mom at home. The biggest problem with this arrangement was Bessie's scooter. "She was somewhat of a 'hellcat,'" he said with a smile. "She enjoyed getting on her scooter and riding all over the neighborhood." Unable to keep her at home, Michael and the rest of the family decided it was best if she made a home at Claystone, a facility where special attention is given to a regular routine. "Mom needed the routine," Michael added.

Bessie arrived at the facility in mid 2007 weighing in at only 89 pounds. Fighting depression and learning to live with

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constant back pain did nothing to aid in the transition from home to the skilled-nursing facility. "She wasn't used to being boxed in," Michael also admitted. "In time, she finally settled down and accepted her new home. Now, she's happy and 155 pounds."

Good memories are still being made. Just two months ago, the NAACP recognized October 8, 2010, as Bessie Biscoe Day in Ennis. The day following this wonderful tribute, Bessie was honored by family and friends at the Nelson Family Ranch with a huge celebration, which included a barbecue dinner with all the fixings. "Family came from all directions," Michael said. As only a mom can do, Bessie interrupted her son and happily mentioned, "Don't forget the birthday cake. You know I *love* cake!"

When asked about other favorites, she quickly stated, "My favorite holiday is Christmas." When asked why, she responded without hesitation. "It's so special because it's Christ's birthday. What a wonderful day that was." As they pondered on Christmases past, both Bessie and Michael began to share. "Even though she lives here at Claystone, she still wants holiday decorations in her room," Michael confessed. "She even wants a

Christmas tree." Memories of past trees spring to mind. "We used to take her out in the woods to cut down a fresh Christmas tree every year. She loved these outings." As Michael talked, Bessie looked up at him, shaking her head in agreement as tears began



to form in her eyes. You know, good memories just have that effect on people, and Bessie is no different.

"The trees were at least 6 feet tall. Mom would decorate them with handmade and store-bought ornaments," Michael continued. "They were bright with twinkling lights and fake snow. Mom would cook cakes and pies. We loved to

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lick the pans. She and dad always made Christmas special. We were poor, but we didn't know it."

Bessie stopped Michael once again, adding, "I like pretty things."

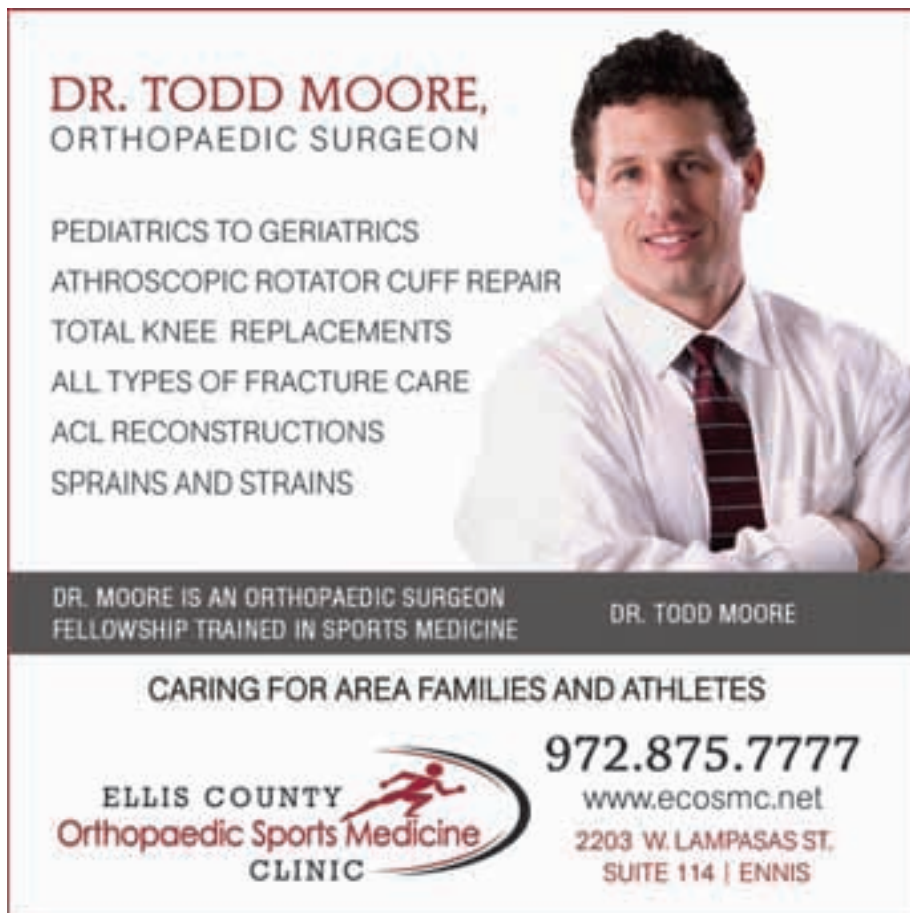
With so many gifts under the tree, the children thought Santa had only visited their house. Michael remembers those early Christmases with "child eyes." "The tree was loaded with presents," he said, also recalling the stockings that were always hung along the fireplace mantel. When the children woke on Christmas morning, Michael recalls the stockings, overflowing with fruit, nuts and candy. He also remembers the ashy footprints.

**"It's so special
because it's
Christ's
birthday."**

"Dad would make footprints on the mantel with fireplace ashes to make us think Santa really had walked across the mantel to fill our stockings." As parents, Bessie and Roosevelt Sr. did all they knew how to do in order to keep their children's imaginations alive. "I was nearly 8 when I realized there wasn't a tooth fairy," Michael laughed.

As a mom, Bessie was sweet, good and she reared her children to always do the right thing. "She practiced that old time tough love," Michael said, as he patted Bessie's arm. "She was a 'no-nonsense' mom who punished us when we needed punishing. She would always tell us why we were being disciplined, but I hated it when she'd say, 'This is going to hurt me more than it's going to hurt you.'" Michael never understood those words until years later when he had children of his own.

A century of birthday and Christmas celebrations, which get bigger each year, are memories that put a smile on Bessie's face during those times she reminisces about the not-so-good times. "We didn't have a lot of money," she said, in a tired whisper, "but we never saw a hungry day. Honestly, it's been a good life!" **NOW**



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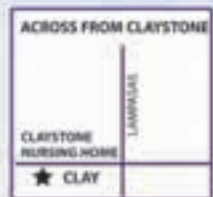
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Shhh! Santa's at Work!

— By Virginia Riddle



At Home With Tom and Donna Cooper

Santa and his elves annually set up shop at Tom and Donna Cooper's Ennis home during the Christmas season. On Thanksgiving evening the excitement begins as Donna and the couple's daughter, Lindsey, and daughter-in-law, Christy, both educators, decorate the family's 9-foot, massive Christmas tree, which is framed within one of the palladium front windows. Lights hung by Tom and his army of helpers, which in past years has included the couple's married son, Brandon, outline the multi-gabled home's front eaves. Magically, in the next two weeks with the help of her mother, Georgie Galetka, candy canes appear along the circular front drive, and Santa and his reindeer prance and dance to a medley of favorite Christmas tunes as sparkling lights in the front hedges blink merrily in time to the music. "One of our neighbors just shakes his head and refers to a shotgun as he says, 'What are you doing to me?' But he and his girls come over every year to help me," Donna said laughingly.

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A wreath, one of many that Donna uses to decorate the doors throughout her home, welcomes family and friends as they enter Santa's domain. Nearly every square inch of the open living, dining and kitchen area are occupied with colorful decorations. The 12-foot ceilings allow for built-in nooks and crannies, as well as the entertainment center, to overflow with Donna's collections of snowmen, soda bottles with hand-painted Christmas scenes, angels and snow globes. Santa's village rises over snowy hills on and under the sofa table.

A collection of Santa Clauses look down from their perches above the kitchen cabinets as festive preparations take place in the



kitchen with its handy work island, bar and adjoining breakfast nook. Donna has collected Christmas dishes, cookie jars and McCoy vases and pottery for years and decorates the island with candy canes, pot holders and towels to match. A special clock plays different Christmas tunes every hour, on the hour.

Donna sets beautiful tables with Christmas china and glassware as the couple hosts their very large families for Christmas dinner. Every table and room sports a Christmas-themed flower arrangement with candles, including prized Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus candles, and food is served everywhere, even as guests spill over into the two-car garage. In the once three-car garage, one side of the garage was converted by the couple into Tom's room, where he can relax when he is not playing Santa's helper. "I wanted a room where I could put Tom," Donna joked.

A hallway leads to the first bedroom, which contains a surprise toy closet where Donna keeps a ready supply of last minute gifts, baby and toddler clothes and special event decorations. Addison, Tom and Donna's 2-year-old granddaughter and frequent visitor, enjoys picking out a new toy on each visit as do other invited "little" guests. "Kids and their moms love it," Donna exclaimed.

The guest bedroom shows off Donna's collection of dolls and Santas that move. One special Santa is dressed for a fishing expedition in waders and carries a fishing pole. A hall bath, with

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and Donna the feeling of living in the country while they enjoy city life.

Donna and Lindsey are always on the lookout for great bargains to enlarge their collection of seasonal decorations, which have even overflowed into Lindsey's nearby home. "My friends make fun of all my wreaths," she stated. Lindsey shares her shopping experiences and expertise with friends when they ask the inevitable question, "Where did you get all these decorations?"

Donna and Lindsey have been regular shoppers at garage sales, flea markets and First Monday at Canton for years. "When we buy something new, Tom finds the batteries and puts everything up," Donna stated. Their Christmas collection spills over to Lindsey's classroom and into both Donna's office with the Environmental



Protection Agency (EPA) and Tom's office at Bell Helicopter in Fort Worth. "I decorate every cubicle in my office at work. I would put up lights if they would

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let me," Donna said. She also shares her spirit by decorating her mother-in-law's room in a nearby assisted living facility. "My mother and aunt are now hooked and want to go shopping every time we go," Donna exclaimed. She quickly whispered conspiratorially, "I never let Tom into the attic. He would have a heart attack."

Tom and Donna, both natives of Ennis, are happy to be back in town after a 20-year country sojourn in nearby Alma. "The kids had both graduated from school, and we just wanted a change. We like Ennis because everyone's friendly.



It's a great place to live," Tom said. The couple met at a dance in Ennis while attending different high schools.

"My girlfriends and I had tickets to see the Rolling Stones in Dallas, but none of us

had a car. Tom bought our tickets, but didn't take us," Donna reminisced.

Married for 34 years, Tom and Donna also enjoy decorating for other major holidays. Halloween is a favorite time since they wear costumes and add scary music to the decorations. "When we moved into town we had a blast the first year handing out candy," Donna remembered. "We had to keep restocking."

Tom and Donna have occasionally had challenges that would test Santa's best efforts, such as the time a water pipe froze on Christmas Eve. "We had to find a plumber fast," Donna stated. However, memories of their granddaughter Addison's Christmases and the joyous time shared with their close families and friends make all the challenges and work worthwhile. **NOW**



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Jack Lummus Intermediate Principal Lori Redning prepares to give out this year's first awards.



Vietnam War veteran, Keith Witherspoon, and fifth-grader, Thomas Davis, fold the flag.



Anna Galetka celebrates her 80th birthday with a Texas Rangers party.



Jeremy Robinson, Valerie McKenzie and Eric Alvarado enjoy a recent Texas Rangers game.



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Kindergartens from Crockett ECC enjoyed a field trip at Country Critters.



Cindy Sanders and Rhea Marshall enjoy a chat over coffee.



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A LIFETIME LOVE

— By *Aleta Penfold*

Carole Hoiem cannot remember a time when she did not draw or sketch. She does remember vividly though, in the third grade, getting into trouble because of it. She laughingly admitted, “As a child, I just loved to sketch, and so in school that’s what I would do instead of my work.”

Her beautiful home is filled with her many talents. She collects antiques, designs and sews window coverings and has a real flair for decorating. However, it is the many incredible pieces of artwork



She also confessed she does not do large paintings any more. “They take too long, and I get bored. The fun for me is in the painting, and I am always anxious to start the next project.”

that really stand out. Her favorite medium is oil, but she also uses pencil, pen, ink and charcoal. “I have gone through many phases of things I enjoy painting or drawing,” she said. “Once I was in a phase of doing animals. I have pictures of dogs, bears, deer, raccoons, chickens, pigs, horses, cattle, birds and foxes. I like American folk art, so I went through a phase of doing just folk art. All I need is a picture or photograph of something I’m interested in, and I will sketch it and then probably paint it or maybe use colored pencils, ink or charcoal.”

Carole only has one rule. “I never, ever paint something twice. There’s no fun in that,” she shuddered. Actually, she has a few other rules.

“I don’t sell my paintings anymore because they are like my children, and it would be too hard to part with them,” she smiled. She has given paintings away though, especially to her own children.

She also enjoys painting only when she is inspired, and does not take requests. “But, of course, I have on occasion painted something one of my kids has asked me to do, but I didn’t enjoy it!” she laughed.

Carole majored in fine arts at Kilgore College, but admitted she did not do much with it at first. “I married and had four kids, so I was pretty busy!” By her mid 30s she was a divorced, working mom and was even more busy. “I needed a break, a night away from the kids,” she explained. “So, every Wednesday night I took art classes. That was my therapy. Those two hours a week were the best counseling or help I could have gotten, and they were also my social life,” she added.

Carole took lessons for 10 years from Ennis’ well-known art teacher, Louise Howell, who has since passed away. Carole had nothing but great things to say about her teacher who taught her so much. “Louise was a fabulous local artist and teacher,” she fondly remembered. “She taught me to paint in oils, which is now my favorite medium, mostly because it’s so forgiving. You can just paint over mistakes when using oils!”

During this time, Carole would bring some of her pictures to her job to show co-workers what she was accomplishing in her art classes. She was able to sell some of her early work, but it made her realize she did not have enough time to paint for a

living. "It gave a whole new meaning or understanding of the phrase, starving artist," she said.

A few years later, Carole met and married Bob Hoiem and soon, Bob's job moved them to Indiana and then Michigan. Even though Bob was not born



and reared in Texas, he loved his time living here. "One day Bob asked me to paint something that reminded him of Texas; he just loved anything to do with Texas," Carole recalled, "so I did. I wasn't working, and the kids were gone, so I had lots of time to paint."

She painted a group of six pictures with a Texas theme, which they hung in their Michigan house, thus starting another phase of painting Texas- or Western-themed, incredibly, handsome paintings. Those six pictures now decorate the entrance of her Ennis home, above a welcoming bench.

Another time Bob was on a skiing vacation and saw a picture of chickens that he liked. "Our lake home in Michigan had a kind of chicken or country theme, and he thought the picture would look good above the fireplace," Carole explained. "So I said, 'Well, take a picture of it, and I'll paint it.' Why should I spend thousands of dollars for a painting when I can paint it and have the fun of doing it?" she asked. Thus, began her chicken painting phase. That beautiful painting also hangs in her Ennis house, above a fireplace.

After Bob's passing, Carole moved back to Ennis to be near family, and she has even more time now to create. "It's just a love of mine, sketching and painting, a life-time love really. You don't plan it; you have a talent and the question is what you do with it? An artist is nothing without the gift, but the gift is nothing without the work, lots of work." **NOW**

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Bunches and Bunches

— By Aleta Penfold

Six-year-old Blayne Martinez is an active little boy who enjoys playing all sports, but when asked why soccer is his favorite he grinned and said, “Cause I like to run a bunch!” Good thing too, because Blayne’s love of running is one of the reasons he earned a spot on a select soccer team, and they certainly do “run a bunch.”

Blayne munched on his after-school snack while sitting with his parents, Brandi Lopez and Billy Martinez, as they talked about soccer. Blayne’s father said, “A typical soccer practice starts with 20 minutes of practicing skills, learning the game and concentrating on getting good control of the ball.”

Blayne piped up, showing off his bright white teeth, especially noticeable around his red-juice stained mouth. “Yes, we first warm up a bunch, running about 13 or 10 minutes, ’cause if the other people don’t want to do it, the coach will add more time!”

“Bunch” seems to be one of this cutie’s favorite words, along with lots of polite “ma’ams” and “yes, ma’ams.”

He talked about some of the other favorite things he enjoys about soccer, such as scoring goals and meeting new friends. Jumping up, he demonstrated different soccer moves called scissors, 360, big toe little toe, left over right, roll zeko, small touches and give and goes. He then grinned again and sat down to finish his snack.

He is a first-grader at James Bowie Elementary School, and his parents emphasized the importance of keeping his grades up. His dad said, “Blayne knows that school has to come first and if he doesn’t get good grades there will be no sports.”

“The first three-week marking period I had all A’s. I like spelling a bunch, and math pretty much,” Blayne explained, “but my favorite subject is going to the gym!”

Blayne’s mom said that he has homework every night, which can be challenging with mandatory soccer practices in Frisco on Monday and Wednesday nights, optional skill sessions on Friday nights and games on Saturdays and Sundays all over north Dallas.

Nonetheless, Blayne manages to keep up with his schoolwork and still have time for other things as well. “He just loves to play soccer and he is so good at it. But if soccer, ever isn’t fun anymore for him, then he won’t be playing,” she added.

He started playing soccer in Waxahachie on a YMCA recreation league at the ripe old age of 4. His talent was obvious from the start, and soon scouts were inviting him to try out for select teams. At only 6 years of age, he has already tried out, won spots and played soccer with two other clubs. Now he is with the Solar Dallas Academy, a very well-known club with 30-plus years of experience coaching children.

Solar Dallas Academy has over 100 teams for boys and girls, ages 4 through 18. The academy’s Web site states their goal is “to introduce the concepts of sound technical skills coupled with team tactical execution ... training with some of the top Division I Solar coaches in weekly clinics and playing in local academy leagues.” Solar’s mission is “soccer excellence through development.”

Blayne's dad added that he appreciates how the academy teaches self-responsibility. The children are encouraged to bring their own snacks, water and equipment, not the parents.

Blayne added that at the end of the season there is a team party at the Main Event with bowling and games. He said, "That was really a bunch of fun!"

Even though Blayne has played baseball, and even football last fall on one of Deion Sander's Truth Select Teams, he will probably stick with soccer full time. One reason being, he can play soccer all

"Cause I like to run a bunch!"

year round in the many indoor facilities.

The plans for this summer are to attend a camp at Southern Methodist University, which is known for its great soccer program. Blayne will have to wait a few years to stay in the dorms though. Only 10 year olds and up have that privilege. Blayne's mom laughed, "Yes, we will be driving back and forth this summer as we do now almost every day, but it's worth doing it for him. Youth Soccer is actually really fun for the parents, too. We meet lots of people and just have a ball."

For now, Blayne and his parents are obviously very busy, but seem to have a good sense of balance in their lives. Blayne loves to go fishing, swimming, ride four-wheelers, use his cell phone, (yes, his own cell phone) and practice shooting his gun. When asked if he had any brothers and sisters to do these things with he said, "No, just a bunch of cousins!"

He loves to watch the Disney Channel and keep up with The University of Texas Longhorns, his favorite football team. He also eats a lot, according to his mom. He said his favorite food is "pretty much" tacos, and he's quite upset that Ennis's Taco Bell has been torn down for reconstruction. "I used to eat bunches of tacos there!" Blayne playfully complained and then grinned again. **NOW**



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From left:

Administrator Alison Hejny, Director of Nursing Candy Morris and Director of Marketing Admissions Pamela Cowan; Julie Kubin exercises with Dr. William Nelson Jones.

A Family Affair

It is the connection that brings a sense of calm. — *By Sandra Strong*

Legend Oaks Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center offers so much more than rehabilitation services and long-term care for your loved one. They offer an atmosphere of family friendliness where staff is focused on one thing — providing the best care possible. “Our mission statement is: Patient first, respect, integrity and stewardship,” Facility Administrator Alison Hejny said. “These are the core values Legend Oaks operates under.”

As marketing admissions director, Pamela Cowan is one of the first staff members families meet when making inquiries about the facility. She came to Ennis with years of experience in long-term care and hospice. “This is so much more than a job. I love working with people and helping them know that they are important,” Pamela said. “We honestly care about our residents.”

Alison nodded in agreement as she added, “Our staff shares a common goal — the welfare and happiness of the residents. This is crucial when you’re striving to be the premier nursing/rehab and long-term care provider in Ellis County.”

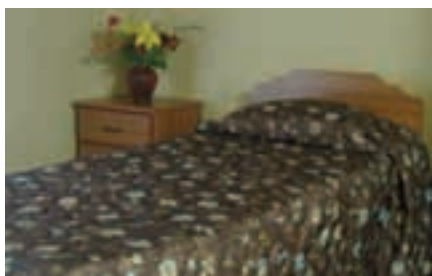
Legend Oaks not only offers the best in long-term care, they are gaining significant ground with their “transitional care,” as well. Transitional care is the time of transition between the hospital and home. Patients are cared for from a clinical perspective, as they successfully master specific healthcare goals, which will allow them to return to their homes, self-sufficient and once again able to care for themselves.

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limited to: CVA/stroke, amputation, COPD, hip fracture, total knee replacement and spinal cord injuries. State-of-the-art equipment is used, including "unweighting" on the Pneumex and vibration therapy to name a few. Outpatient therapy is offered for those needing follow-up care after returning home and for individuals who do not require an in-patient stay.

Covered patios for relaxing, an in-house beauty salon and a menu second to none also lend to the homelike feeling at Legend Oaks. Meals are cooked from scratch and served in a restaurant-style setting, which includes a daily salad bar. Coffee, tea, juices and snacks are available



around the clock. As the first resident of Legend Oaks, Gerry Holubar had a few words to say about her new home. "I think it's one of the most restful, beautiful and caring places I know. The food is excellent. In fact, I've had to cut back because I had gained a few pounds," she added with a smile.

When touring the facility and speaking with staff members, visitors and prospective patients will soon realize many of the background stories are the same. Julie Kubin, rehabilitation director, was born and reared in Ennis. "The residents may not know me personally," she explained, "but they know one or both sets of my grandparents. It is the connection that brings a sense of calm."

Alison also grew up in Ennis and was so happy when she was able to return. "I always wanted to come back home," she said, referring to her career. "I had been working out of town as an administrator for 13 years. When this position opened, it was just what I wanted." Her experience and compassion, as well as her family and community ties, no doubt made Alison the best candidate for the position she now holds. **NOW**

Merry Christmas

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From left to right: Bobby McClain, Idalia Mares, Johnnie Cesar, Eloise Calhoun, Wesley Nash, Mildred Hopkins, Vlasta Knize, Lora Lambert
Below: Eloise Calhoun and Wesley Nash

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Circle of Influence

— By Sandra Strong

After spending nine consecutive years at James Bowie Elementary School as a second- and third-grade looping teacher, Talisha Wolfe decided to make a change. “Before she retired, Kay Weathers asked me if I had ever thought about becoming a librarian,” Talisha remembered. “I went home and seriously thought about it.” Once all the pros and cons had been considered, Talisha ventured back to the classroom at Texas A&M University-Commerce as a student herself. “I already had my master’s,” she explained, “but I had to earn my library certification.”

When Dorie Miller Intermediate School (what used to be the Sixth Grade Center) opened in the fall, Talisha was offered the position of librarian and so far, she has found fulfillment in her new role as an educator. “My circle of influence has grown tremendously,” she stated. “I’m still teaching in this new position, but it’s in a much different capacity.”

As a classroom teacher, Talisha was able to touch the lives of the 20-plus students she had each year. As a librarian, she has found it quite rewarding to be able to have some type of positive contact with every student, as well as every teacher, without the added responsibilities of lesson plans, grading papers and the stress that inevitably comes with TAKS testing. “I incorporated technology in many of my lessons and always shared my ideas with my team,” she admitted, “but I would have loved to have had the time to share with more teachers on my campus.” Now, Talisha is learning how to “teach” teachers, while also gaining the knowledge she needs to be the best librarian she can be.

Since it is Talisha’s first year in the library, she is shadowing Penny Boston, the librarian at Jack Lumus Intermediate

School. “As sister campuses, we should be doing the same thing in both libraries at the same time,” Talisha explained. “We talk to one another several times each day.”

The library has scheduled classes on specific days, which allows for some type of routine. Fourth- and fifth-grade students visit the library once a week with their reading teachers, while sixth graders come biweekly. “Each class gets a presentation every other visit.” In between regularly scheduled classes, the library needs a revolving door. “Students come and go all day, every day,” Talisha added.

Talisha recalled some of her earlier presentations. “Back in early September, I showed a PowerPoint celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month, so students could learn more about the Hispanic culture.”

The last week in September is also a special time in libraries. “This is the time the Texas Bluebonnet Award books for

this year are introduced to students,” she said, also stating that each year there are 20 new titles for students to choose from. “If the student reads at least five of the 20 books, they are eligible to vote for a favorite book from the group in late January. If they read 10 or more, they get to vote and also attend the Bluebonnet Bash.” During the bash, the campus winner, as well as the state winner, will be announced. “It seems the students here in Ennis usually pick a chapter book as the winner, while the state winner is most always a picture book.”

When asked what some of the most popular titles are, Talisha looked to her library assistant, Eleanor VanValkenburg, for the answer. With 14 years of Ennis Independent School District library experience behind her, it is no surprise that the titles roll off Eleanor’s tongue with ease, and she knows exactly where



Education **NOW**

they are located in the library. “The children love the series books,” Eleanor noted. “Some of the most read series are *Captain Underpants* by Dave Pilkey, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* by Jeff Kinney and *The Frog Princess* by E.D. Baker. *Captain Underpants* is a cartoon-style book. We can’t keep *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* on the shelves. *The Frog*



Eleanor Van Valkenburg believes books and children go together.

Princess is actually a witch on her mom’s side of the family.”

As Eleanor mentioned the *Hank Zipper* series about a young boy with learning disabilities written by Henry Winkler, Talisha smiled and shook her head. “I picked up the first book in this series at a book fair I attended,” Eleanor recalled. “After talking to Penny about it, we decided it was one we wanted to have available in the library.”

Talisha continued to shake her head in amazement at Eleanor. “As time goes on, I want to have the same working knowledge of the library that Eleanor has,” Talisha said, knowing this vast knowledge will not come within her first year as a librarian. “I’m used to reading first-, second- and third-grade level books. I want to get better acquainted with this level of reading. I want to learn more about specific authors and titles and where they are located.”

The goal for Talisha and Eleanor is to make the library as fun as possible, while also dispelling the myth that libraries are boring. “We want to make coming to the library enjoyable,” Talisha said.

Eleanor added, “Books allow you to travel the world. Books and kids just go together.” **NOW**

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In The Kitchen With Bobbie Reed

— By Adam Walker

Bobbie Reed, who has enjoyed cooking for 15 years, was inspired by her family to explore the wonderful world of cooking. "We have a lot of very good cooks in my family," she said. She supplements traditional family recipes that have been handed down through the generations with treasures she finds in magazines. Her favorite cooking method is baking, but she also enjoys grilling and making casseroles.

She is the mother of three — her son, Andreas, and daughters Yolonda and Ferressa — who have given her nine grandchildren. During the fall, she loves watching football games and spending time with the grandchildren. When asked about her fondest memory of cooking, Bobbie remembered, "All the nine grandkids and I had a hot dog and hamburger cookout." **NOW**



CHALUPA BEEF AND BEANS

3 1/4 cups refried beans
4 lbs. ground beef
3 cups onion, diced
50 flour tortillas
3 lbs. plus 2 oz. cheddar cheese, shredded
5 bags lettuce, shredded
Picante sauce

1. Heat refried beans.
2. Brown ground beef and onions. Drain excess fat.
3. Fry tortillas until crispy and flat.
4. Assemble tortilla, beans, beef and cheese. Add lettuce and top with picante sauce. Serves 50.

GERMAN CHOCOLATE CAKE

3 lbs. 15 oz. milk chocolate cake mix
1 1/4 qts. plus 1/2 cup water
1 1/2 cups plus 1 Tbsp. evaporated milk
1 cup brown sugar
1 cup liquid eggs (Egg Beaters or another brand)
3/4 cup plus 1 Tbsp. margarine
1 5/8 tsp. vanilla
1 3/4 cups plus 3 Tbsp. shredded coconut
1 1/2 cups plus 1 Tbsp. pecan pieces

1. Grease and flour an 8 x 10-

inch sheet pan.

2. Combine cake mix and water. Mix for 2 minutes more.
3. Spread batter into pan. Bake at 375 F for 32-37 minutes. Let cool.
4. In a saucepan, combine milk, sugar, eggs, margarine and vanilla. Cook over medium heat until mixture thickens, about 12 minutes. Remove from heat. Add coconut and pecans. Pour over cake.
5. Let cool and cut into squares. Serves about 30.

BACON WRAPPED MOCK FILLET

3 lbs. ground beef
10 slices bacon
1 onion
1 bell pepper

1. Form beef into patties.
2. Add onions and bell pepper. Wrap with bacon.
3. Bake at 350 F for 30 minutes.

STUFFED POTATO WITH HAM AND CHEESE

50 potatoes, raw
4 lbs. plus 12 oz. ham
3 lbs. cheese

1 cup margarine solids
1 tsp. black pepper
Sour cream (optional)
Chives (optional)

1. Wash potatoes. Bake at 425 F for 45 minutes. Split lengthwise.
2. Add 1 oz. of ham and 1 oz. of cheese. Drizzle with melted margarine and season with pepper. Top with sour cream and chives, if desired.

PHILLY CHEESESTEAK ON HOT DOG BUN

1 lb. roast beef, thinly sliced
11 1/4 oz. onions, thinly sliced
8 oz. bell peppers
1 to 1 3/4 Tbsp. margarine
Swiss cheese
American cheese
Hot dog buns

1. Grill beef.
2. Sauté onions and bell peppers in margarine. Add beef and stir together.
3. On each bun, place 1 slice of Swiss cheese, 1 slice of American cheese, 1/4 cup of sautéed onions and peppers and 2 oz. of meat.

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Ring in Some New Year's Financial Resolutions — By Angie Juenemann

Now that 2011 is almost here, you may want to make some New Year's resolutions. Planning to volunteer? Go to the gym more often? Learn a new language? All worthy ambitions, of course, but this year, why not add some financial resolutions as well?

Which resolutions should you make? Here are a few ideas to consider:

• Boost your retirement accounts.

No matter how old you'll be in 2011, one thing is certain — you're a year closer to retirement than you were in 2010. And that's why you'll want to increase your contributions to your retirement accounts. If your salary is going up in 2011, boost the amount you defer for your 401(k) or other employer-sponsored retirement plan, such as a 403(b) plan (if you work for a school or other tax-exempt organization) or a 457(b) plan (if you work for a state or local government).

With tax-deductible contributions, tax-deferred growth of earnings and several investment options, these types of plans are tremendous ways to save for retirement. And try to "max out" your traditional or Roth IRA, too.

• Look for opportunities.

With the uncertainties in the economy and the volatility of the financial markets, many people decide to head to the investment "sidelines" for a while. Yet, this environment may actually be a good one for investors with patience, discipline and the ability to look beyond yesterday's headlines. For one thing, many quality securities are now good values. Also, we're still seeing low inflation and low interest rates — factors that may lead to greater economic demand and improved strength in the financial markets.

• Don't overreact to market swings.

Over the past few years, we've seen plenty of sudden, sharp

swings in the financial markets, and you're likely going to see more of them in 2011. Don't overreact to either the "ups" or the "downs" of the market. Overreacting leads to short-term thinking — and successful investors are the ones who can maintain a long-term perspective.

• Rebalance when necessary.

At least once a year, review and rebalance your portfolio, as necessary, to make sure it still reflects your goals, risk tolerance and family situation, all of which can change over time.

• Reduce your debts.

While the sluggish economy of the past couple of years has obviously been a cause of concern for everyone, we have seen one "silver lining" in that many people, concerned about overspending, have shed some of their debt load. The less money you have to spend on your debts, the more you'll have available to invest for your future, so do what you can to cut down on what you owe.

• Maintain adequate cash levels.

As an investor, you've got at least two good reasons for maintaining enough cash in your portfolio. First, having adequate cash available means you'll be ready to act quickly to take advantage of good investment opportunities. And second, by having a cash cushion, you won't be forced to liquidate long-term investments to pay for short-term needs such as a major car repair, a new furnace, a big doctor's bill and so on.

By following these suggestions, you can position yourself to make progress toward your long-term goals in 2011 — and in all the New Years that follow. **NOW**

Angie Juenemann is an Edward Jones representative based in Ennis.

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BREATHING EASIER

— By Betty Tryon R.N.

An elephant is not really sitting on your chest; pneumonia just makes you feel as if one is. The manifestations of pneumonia can indeed make breathing difficult. This infection resides in one or both lungs and usually owes its origin to a viral, fungi or bacterial invasion. Foreign substances such as aspirated vomit can also cause pneumonia. When the lungs are invaded, the air sacs or alveoli fill with mucus, pus and fluids. The exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide occur in the alveoli. If they are full of another substance, the alveoli's function is impaired, and it becomes more difficult for oxygen to reach the cells of the body.

Most of the time when the foreign matter enters the body through the nose, mouth or eyes, our immune system is strong enough to fight off an infection. However, if a person is in a weakened condition, the infection has the opportunity to grow and spread. That is why the elderly, children under the age of 2, a person with pulmonary disease, someone undergoing chemotherapy or anyone with an impaired immune system is at a greater risk for becoming ill. Having an upper respiratory infection, such as the flu or a cold may make you more susceptible to pneumonia. Chronic or long-term conditions, such as heart problems or cancer also make it easier



for the pneumonia germs to take hold.

Several factors determine what symptoms an individual with pneumonia will experience. Some of the symptoms are chest pain, cough that produces mucus or a nonproductive (dry) cough, fever, chills, rapid breathing, racing pulse and extreme weakness. Often older adults experience milder symptoms.

Treatment will depend on the type of pneumonia one has and the severity of the condition. With bacterial pneumonia, your doctor will probably prescribe antibiotics. With viral pneumonia, antibiotics are usually given if you develop a secondary infection. Other palliative treatments for pneumonia which address the symptoms are pain relievers and fever reducers.

Practicing good hygiene, such as washing your hands often can help you avoid getting an infection. Get an influenza and a pneumococcal vaccine on the advice of your health care provider. Try to avoid those who are ill with respiratory illnesses. If you smoke, please stop. Smoking makes you more susceptible to pneumonia. If you do get pneumonia, take care of yourself by drinking lots of fluids, eating properly and taking your medication responsibly. Make sure you keep your follow-up visit with your doctor. Get completely well so you can stay healthy. **NOW**

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

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Master Gardener Photo Contest is currently underway. Deadline for entries is February 15, 2011. Entry categories include "single specimen" and "in the garden." Think about vegetables, summer gardens and fall and winter when taking pictures. There is no cost, and individuals may enter as many as five photos. Prizes will be awarded. Enter online at www.ecmga.com.

All Month

Waxahachie Faith Family Academy is enrolling for a new 3-year-old Pre-K program: 701 Ovilla Road, Waxahachie. Contact the school office at (972) 938-3996 for more information.

Christmas in Ennis: Festival of Lights.

Weekends in December

Ennis Public Theatre presents *Light Sensitive*. December 3, 4, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, 19, 20 at 2705 N. Kaufman Street, Suite C. Friday and Saturday evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m., afternoon matinee performances begin at 2:30 p.m. For information or to order your tickets, call (972) 878-7529.

Mondays and Wednesdays

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

First and Third Tuesdays

Ennis Cancer Support Group: 7:00 p.m., Ennis Regional Medical Center classroom. For more information, call Kathy at (972) 878-6927 or visit www.enniscancersupport.com.

Third Wednesdays

The Ellis County Christian Women's Connection, affiliated with Stonecroft Ministries, monthly luncheon: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. at the Waxahachie Country Club, located at 1920 W. Hwy. 287 at I-35 East (Exit 401B). The cost is \$13, inclusive. Contact Kay at (972) 937-2807 or windchime423@yahoo.com or Margaret at (972) 937-1016 or pmestep@yahoo.com.

Chess for Kids: 6:00-7:30 p.m., Ennis Public Library, 501 W. Ennis Avenue. Elementary age and above. No sign-up required.

First and Third Thursdays

Mom's Connected: 9:30-11:30 a.m., Tabernacle Baptist Church, 1200 Country Club Rd. Free fellowship for moms of all ages. For more information, contact ennismoms@sbcglobal.net.

Saturdays

Improv Comedy Night: 8:00 p.m., After Hours Improv Theater, 100 N. College Street, Waxahachie. Also this month: **December 3**, 8:00 p.m., improv benefiting Global High PTO; **December 4**, 8:00 p.m. Improv Comedy Show; **December 10**, 8:00-11:00 p.m., "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree" dance; **December 11**, 8:00 p.m., Improv Comedy Show; **December 17**, 6:30



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p.m., Children's Theater presents *Odon the Giant* (children's performance) and at 8:00 p.m. the Children's Theater presents *Kelly and the Internet Goblins* (teen performance); **December 18**, 8:00 p.m., Improv Comedy Show. Call (972) 937-9839 or visit www.AfterHoursImprov.com.

Third Saturday

Covenant Treasures Institute College Level Classes: 8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Refiner's Fire Ministries International, 1611 W. Ennis Avenue. Call (972) 765-3530 for more information.

December 8

First State Bank Rice Grand Opening/Open House Celebration: Grand opening, 9:30-10:00 a.m.; open house, 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., First State Bank Rice, 909 South Clay Street, Ennis. For more information, call (972) 878-4040.

December 9

Ennis Chamber of Commerce Christmas Luncheon: Call (972) 878-2625 for more details.

December 11 and 12

Trade Days of Waxahachie: Operating hours are Saturday, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. and Sunday, 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. at the Ellis County Expo Center, 2300 W. U.S. Hwy. 287, Waxahachie. Free parking and admission. For more information, visit www.tradedaysofwaxahachie.com or call Les Clemons at (972) 617-8156, James Scott at (214) 202-1788 or Jean Davis at (972) 816-3644.

December 11

Christmas Toy Drive: 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Citizens National Bank, Uptown Waxahachie. This event, sponsored by the Honda Goldwing Riders GWRRA Chapter W-2, benefits the children served by CASA of Ellis County (Court Appointed Special Advocates). Cash donations and unwrapped toys for children and teens will be greatly appreciated! Make checks payable to CASA of Ellis County and mark for: W-2 Toy Drive. All donations are tax deductible.

December 14

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December 20 through 31

Ennis ISD holiday/winter break.

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She practices general cardiology, including inpatient care, outpatient stress testing, echocardiography, nuclear cardiology, pre-operative assessment, and preventative cardiology.

Dr. Sullivan lives in Ennis with her husband John and their two little boys, Jack and Henry. Her husband has practiced general surgery in Ennis for 7 years. She is looking forward to being closer to home and to her patients after so many years of commuting to Dallas.

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