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p. 26

Christmas Combination

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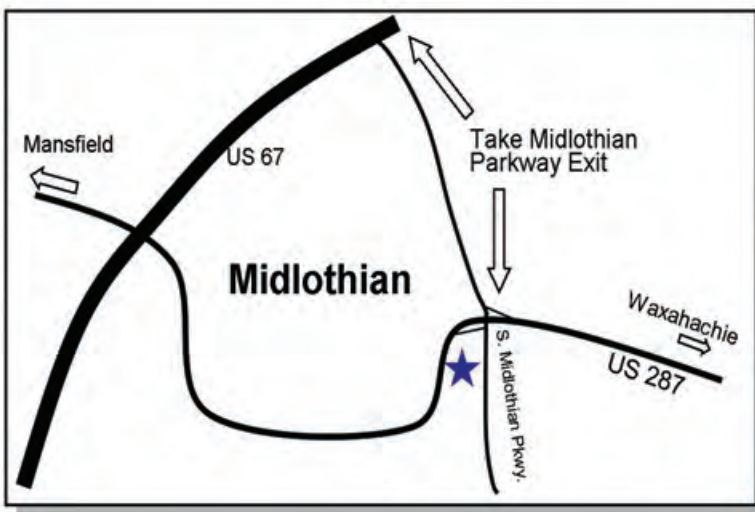
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Santa is right at home during Christmas with Tom and Linda Clark.

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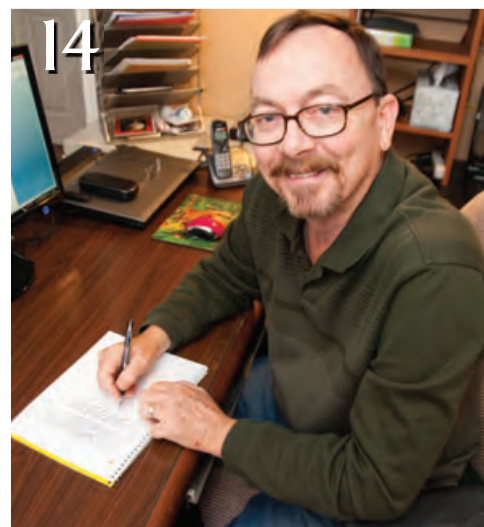
CONTENTS

December 2012 • Volume 8, Issue 12



8 Thinking Futuristically
The Midlothian High School Problem Solvers create a new teaching and learning environment.

14 Becoming Reality
R.C. Waggoner has found fulfillment by putting pen to paper.



20 Christmas Combination
At Home With Tom and Linda Clark.

30 Princess on Ice
Kelby Buchanan skated on a healing fracture and ended up standing on the podium.

38 The Art of Learning
Ann Witherspoon won a trip to learn educational apps in London at the Google Teacher Academy.

44 BusinessNOW

46 Around TownNOW

52 CookingNOW

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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) 937-8447 or visit www.nowmagazines.com.



Editor's Note

Hello, Midlothian!

Designer Christmas trees can be breathtakingly beautiful, but I have never owned one. It is just too much fun to take that trip down memory lane with our Christmas decorations while trimming the tree. They are an archival mélange of our lives. From the engraved sterling silver ornaments to the overly glittered handcrafted treasures, all the years rush back in a torrent of memories. I don't want to miss touching the plastic ornaments I purchased as a newlywed, the many gifts made by my children through the years, a handmade ornament from a favorite student when I was the school nurse, etc. Memories have a place in our lives.

Christmas is a time to remember the sacred gift given over two thousand years ago as a babe in a manger. I rejoice in that gift and treasure it most of all.

Merry Christmas Midlothian!

Betty

Betty Tryon
MidlothianNOW Editor
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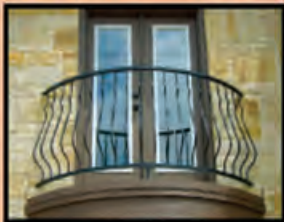
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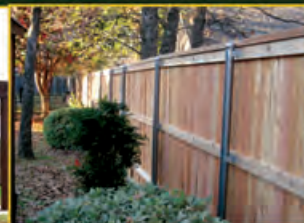
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THINKING

Futuristically

— By Betty Tryon



Midlothian would be a different community today if not for the industriousness, creativity and hard work given to it by a certain group of students called the Problem Solvers. Manna House, the Senior Citizens Activity Center and the town's storm sirens, which warn the community of approaching danger, have all had their genesis in the Midlothian ISD Problem Solvers classes. "This program is so precious to this community, because it is literally changing it," stated Christina McDaniel, current instructor of Future Problem Solvers for sixth-graders and Community Problem Solvers at both middle schools and the high school.



This is Christina's eleventh year of teaching, and the Problem Solvers program fits her teaching style perfectly. "This program just fits me. My goal with the community kids is service first. I tell them, 'That's why you are here — to put other people before yourself.' It's challenging to find something that is a need and not a want." In keeping with that spirit, the group has successfully completed many projects for the improvement of Midlothian. One of their missions was Project Play, in which they helped make the Hawkins Spring Park playground area more accommodating for kids of all abilities. The playground was modified by putting in special needs swings, learning boards all around the park and talking tubes on the playground. They also took out the pebbles and replaced them with wood chips, so wheelchairs could maneuver better on them. "We raised \$27,000 for Hawkins Park. That was the most money we've ever raised," Christina said.

The group finds a need, follows through the process of identifying challenges and comes up with appropriate solutions. "To be successful, you have to complete the project — see it through to the end. If you don't complete it, then you didn't finish servicing the need you identified," Christina stated.

The Problem Solvers concept begins in the sixth grade. "Sixth-graders have futuristic stories. They are given certain topics to study for the year, and then they are given a charge or a task. When they get in the seventh and eighth grades, they move to the Community Problem Solvers class. I teach the process to sixth-graders, and the students take that knowledge and put it into real life from seventh grade through high school," Christina explained. She uses a very systematic approach to problem solving that the students practice on a future problem. Starting in seventh grade, the problem-solving skills are put to use solving life problems.

"When you go through the problem-solving process, you always run into something that isn't working the way you thought it would work, and that is where problem-solving skills come into play," Christina said. "You've anticipated certain problems, so once they come up, you've already thought about potential solutions. That is what I start teaching them at a younger age. They can use that skill in other classes and throughout their experiences. If you are able to anticipate something that could be a challenge for you, you are much more prepared than if you are hit with it unprepared. So, teaching them how to think futuristically in a critical way is one of the goals for the classes



"Students take that knowledge & put it into real life from seventh grade through high school."

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"Our goal was to get the students and teachers outside of the classroom to learn in a different way."

— to think beyond today and tomorrow."

A current project for the class at Walnut Grove is to give backpacks of food on Fridays to students in need. The latest completed project is Divergent Outdoor Teaching, known as DOT, a new teaching/learning area that is located outside at the high school. "Our goal was to get the students and teachers outside of the classroom to learn in a different way," Christina stated. "Students did research at the beginning of the project by polling teachers and students to try to find out how people learn best. Many of them said hands-on learning and being outside the confines of the walls of the classroom would interest them more, and would capture their attention."

That led to having a designated outdoor area for teaching at the high school. To heighten the learning experience, the team designated certain sections for different topics or classes. The sections are Social Studies, The Arts, Life Studies, Language Arts, Psychology and Biology, with the name of the class painted on the outdoor wall. In addition to the learning experience, the group painted the United States map and a



world map on the ground. "We drew the outlines of the map but did not label or color it. It makes a better teaching moment if it's blank. You can write on it and, for example, draw the original colonies or name the states."

The maps on the ground are part of the Social Studies teaching station. The Math and Science area has a long vertical and horizontal ruler affixed to the wall. There is also a portable putting green, with a putter and balls available to talk about physics. There are picnic tables around the area for the students to use. One picnic table is very special. "We have a periodic table. This is a pride and joy of my students," explained Christina. The actual periodic table is drawn onto the top and seat of the picnic table.

The Fine Arts section has paintings of theater masks on the wall as well as musical notes and a color wheel. The Life Studies area sports a pyramid that could be used as a food pyramid. "Because this is Life Studies," Christina said, "it

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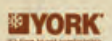
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could be the different classifications of animals. The students were the ones who did the work of drawing and painting. They identified what things they wanted in each area, so in the Psychology and Biology area, they chose the skin diagram. The students chose this because it is something the teachers can use. A teacher can come out and expand on it. They can write on the walls with chalk, and it comes right off." There is also a painting of the parts of the brain and the structures of the eye. The Divergent Outdoor Teaching is now completed and in full use by students and teachers.

Whatever future project or task is chosen by this select group, the community will certainly benefit. The students benefit personally by giving back to the community with their service, and even Christina benefits. "I really enjoy helping people," she shared. "That's why I teach. I like to see that transformation of a person. I can see it in their eyes when something clicks. Then I know I've helped someone or taken a load or stress off of them. It makes me feel better. It takes a special person to wrap their mind around this type of thinking, and it just fits me." **NOW**



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BECOMING REALITY

— By Rick Hope

Everyone has a story. Everyone has a dream. For R.C. Waggoner, his dream was a story. In fact, one could say his dream is several stories. All of his life, R.C. wanted to write a book, and although life had its detours and bends in the road, he has achieved his goal of becoming an author.



As the 17-year-old son of an Ohio preacher, R.C. decided he wanted something different. An opportunity arose allowing him to have a United States Air Force physical. His father gave him permission to get the physical, and as a result, he spent eight years in the military as a journalist. "I figured the only way out of Ohio was to join the military," he said. During that time, R.C. felt the same calling as his father and surrendered to ministry. He took a nine-month break from the Air Force, and then signed back on for the next 25 years in the Reserves.

At this time, R.C. also obtained his first pastorate at First Baptist Church of Ladonia, Texas. When this pastorate was over, he headed back to Ohio, but before too long, he felt drawn to return to Ladonia, where he started Grace Community Church. This was a church start with very little money, so R.C. needed another job to supplement his income. He began working with ICI Fiberite, a composite materials manufacturing company, at \$5.50 an hour. Before long, he was teaching quality and created a company newsletter. It didn't take long for his work to impress the president of the company, and soon his salary was doubled.

In spite of all the success, R.C. couldn't help but feel that something was missing. The question that kept coming to his mind was, "Why am I here?" During this time, he was also attending chaplaincy school, where he wrote a paper entitled, "Quality in the Chapel." After reading the paper, the commandant of the school offered him a chance to work part time in the resource division of the chaplaincy. "I wrote 21 pamphlets and manuals for the USAF chaplaincy over a five-year period," R.C. said with a smile. In early 2007, R.C. retired with his last assignment being at Hurlburt Field in Florida.

During all this time, R.C. remained with Fiberite, surviving two rounds of layoffs. After the second round of layoffs, R.C. visited Web Industries to pick up some supplies. As he waited in the conference room, he visited with an executive about quality control. The executive turned out to be the president of the company, and R.C. was soon hired

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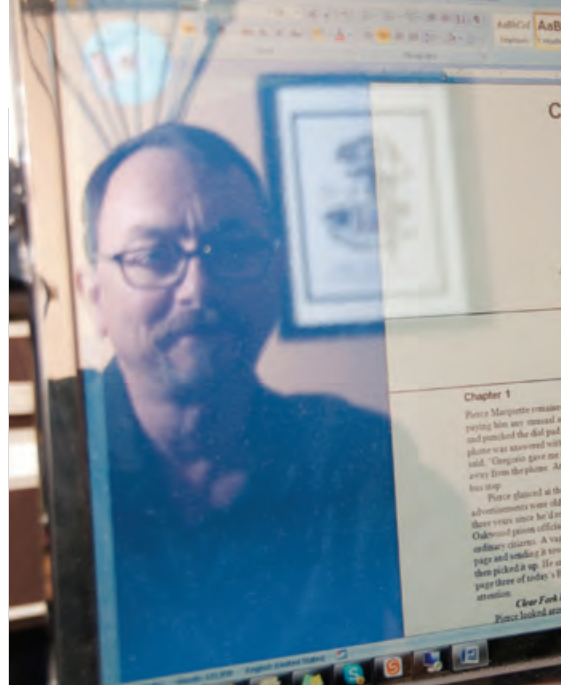
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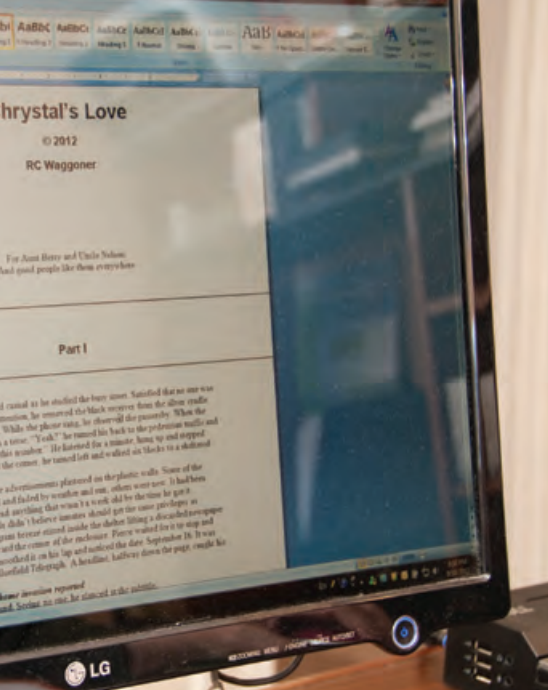
as the director of training, where he still maintains his employment today.

In spite of many successes in both the secular and ministerial fields, R.C. still felt there was something incomplete. “All my life, I’ve wanted to write a book,” he confessed. “In fact, I have probably started about 10,000 books, but I’ve never followed them through to completion.”

R.C. decided it was time to break that chain, and his first book, *The Orchid*, was finished in late 2007. The story is about a young man by the name of Jimmy Turner who is confined to a wheelchair. He soon encounters Lindsey, a young girl who helps him find himself. “Now that the goal of writing my first book was complete,” R.C. said, “I wanted to keep the momentum going.”

Not long after *The Orchid* was complete, R.C. got a call from his Aunt Betty. “She told me she had just read my book and loved it,” he beamed. “I was so excited by her reaction that I asked her to be my proofreader.”

The next book was called *Saving Chrystal*. The storyline of this book centers on George Grant, a man who has lived the last 10 years of his life



in isolation after having seen his wife murdered in front of him in a grocery store parking lot. George has lost contact with his children and has no real friends left. He encounters a mysterious new neighbor named Chrystal, a young girl who softens his heart. George, in return, teaches her how to read and write. The sequel to *Saving Chrystal* is titled *Chrystal's Story*. This book, which goes backward in time to when Chrystal was young, has just been published. Currently, R.C. is working on the third book in this series. "*Chrystal's Love* tells the story of young love. Chrystal enters into a romance that R.C. describes in the book as "fraught with danger." This book is in the proofreading stage.

"Writing helps you understand God," R.C. said. "You can create the characters, but you really don't control them. You may have one idea in mind, but as you start writing, the characters take on a

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life of their own. They're going to do whatever they're going to do."

Although his characters are fictional, R.C. will often insert the names of real friends and relatives into the story. One future project he has in mind revolves around him and his siblings. "The story is about my family leaving Minnesota and settling in Lima, Ohio, in 1969," he explained. "It was a very interesting time in history in that part of the country. I've sent my family the parts I've already



**"The story just
needs to be told."**

written, and they have written back that it definitely brings back some memories."

R.C. has an upcoming project about his first pastorate position, as well. He indicated that he may change the names and places in that book. "There were just too many interesting stories and interesting characters in that small community," he remembered. "The story just needs to be told."

For each book jacket, R.C. poses with one of his grandchildren. His goal is to have a different grandchild featured with him in the author's biographical section. Still working for Web Industries, R.C. also enjoys his time with his wife, Paula, their children and grandchildren. For now, he plans to continue writing. "I still have so many stories to tell," he said, "and many more characters to create." Every life has a story. And in R.C.'s case, that story is still being told. **NOW**

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Christmas Combination

— By Zachary R. Urquhart

There are endless ways to decorate a house for the holidays. Themes range from nativities to abundant lights, from singing novelties to religious icons. People often have a specific, if not unique, style when adorning their abode for the Christmas season. For Tom and Linda Clark, two things stick out immediately upon entrance into their holiday haven: the color red and Santas from top to bottom.

Tom and Linda met in Cleburne in the early '70s while both attended Cleburne High School. Though they knew each other, they were not allowed to date, as Linda recalled. "He was a senior, but I was a freshman," she said. "I couldn't date yet. So, we started going out around the time I graduated." After graduating in 1971, Tom had moved on to Stephen F. Austin and, later, Tarleton State University, before moving to Midlothian in 1974.

Once he got to Midlothian, Tom started in an essential, though slightly uncommon job. "I had gone to mortuary school, and I was a licensed embalmer," he shared. Tom and Linda had been dating and would eventually be married in 1976, after she attended Hill Junior College. The funeral home offered stability for the couple as they started their new life. "I did it for the steady income, so that we wouldn't starve, so to speak." Tom stayed at the funeral home for a few years, before eventually opening a full-time business in 1978. "I own a historic building restoration company, Leeds Clark, incorporated in 1985."

Meanwhile, Linda worked for Southwestern Bell for several years. "Our oldest son, Tommy, is now 32, and when he was born, I became a homemaker," Linda explained. "It was really important to us for me to be able to stay home with our kids." Tommy, as well as their younger son, Chris, both live in the area and work with Tom in his business. Now that they have an empty nest, Linda does some work for an antique shop in Waxahachie and also runs a booth of her own. "I am a big-time garage and estate sale shopper," she admitted. "I'm always looking for antiques." But, her

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antique shop is not the only reason she goes to secondhand sales. "That is where I've acquired lots of the ornaments and things over the years." Linda decorates extensively inside the house, and many of her items formerly belonged to someone else.

Tom and Linda moved into their house in old-Midlothian in 1981, though the

house has been there since 1959, with the requisite history attached. "The house was built in the '50s, and the brick mason was Buck Oatman," Tom shared. "He did the old Civic Center, and in return, they gave him bricks from the old high school

where Irvin is. So this house was built with bricks from the old Midlothian High School." Really, though, it's what Tom and Linda do inside that makes it such a special place during the holidays.

Linda loves the color red, a fact



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that is immediately evident once inside their quaint home. “You can tell, during Christmas or not, I love red,” she said. From the front entryway, the house splits in two directions. To the right, guests enter a hallway that opens to bedrooms, as well as a casual family room. Throughout the halls and rooms, red-themed decor gives a subtle Christmas feel. Going the other direction, Linda has a slightly formal sitting area that is adorned in red, year-round. It also displays the keen eye Linda has for antiquing. “I found this chair, and I just had it reupholstered so that it would go with the room.” Linda even has filled her kitchen with old jars and gadgets.

In addition to their perennial decoration, Tom and Linda bring out boxes of ornaments and other Christmas embellishment. Or, more accurately, Tom brings out the boxes. “Every year, I have to get box after box,” he said. “We have trees all over the house, and she keeps getting more ornaments, it seems. Sometimes, I wish a tornado would just take off the roof and all the decorations from the attic.” While he jokes about the time involved in his part of the decorating, Tom gives Linda all the credit for the finished product. “She really does all of the work. We do a little on the outside, but her focus is the inside. It’s actually kind of elegant.”

Throughout the house, Tom and Linda include Christmas trees in virtually every room. “My favorite is an aluminum tree from the 1950s,” Linda said. “It reminds me of my childhood.” This tree is complete with a revolving color wheel. Linda has made a habit of collecting Christmas odds and ends over the years, and some of her friends even join in. “I have four good friends that are always



getting things for me. We've been friends for 20 years, so we know each other, and they know what I like."

Old trees and ornaments are just the beginning for Linda, though. Her most impressive collection is of the man in red himself. "I have hundreds from all over the world," she confessed. "I have a cupboard full of Spaghetti Santas from the '50s." One unique Santa in a mirrored buffet that stays out all year can be opened and serves as an antique liquor flagon.

For all their decorating, Christmas is important for much more than that, as Linda expounded. "Christmas, for me, is about family, getting together, celebrating Christ. We used to always have family dinner at 6:00 p.m., so now when the grandkids are here, we do the same with them." Linda further explained they worked together to teach Tommy and Chris important values. "A lot of our success really comes from Tom being so involved. He would always make time, even after a long day of work."

Tom cherishes the fact that their work is being duplicated now. "We instilled values with our boys, and now we see them passing them along to their boys," he said. Tommy is the father of two sons, Will and Griffin. Chris is married to Stacy, and they have one son, Jayden. One of the things being passed on to the next generation is their Christmas tradition. They have the whole family spend the night Christmas Eve. They do a puzzle and just spend time together. In the morning, they read a Christmas story, eat a big breakfast and then get to the gifts. "We did it with the kids," Tom explained, "and now we do it with the grandkids. It's tradition." **NOW**



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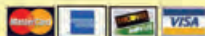
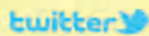
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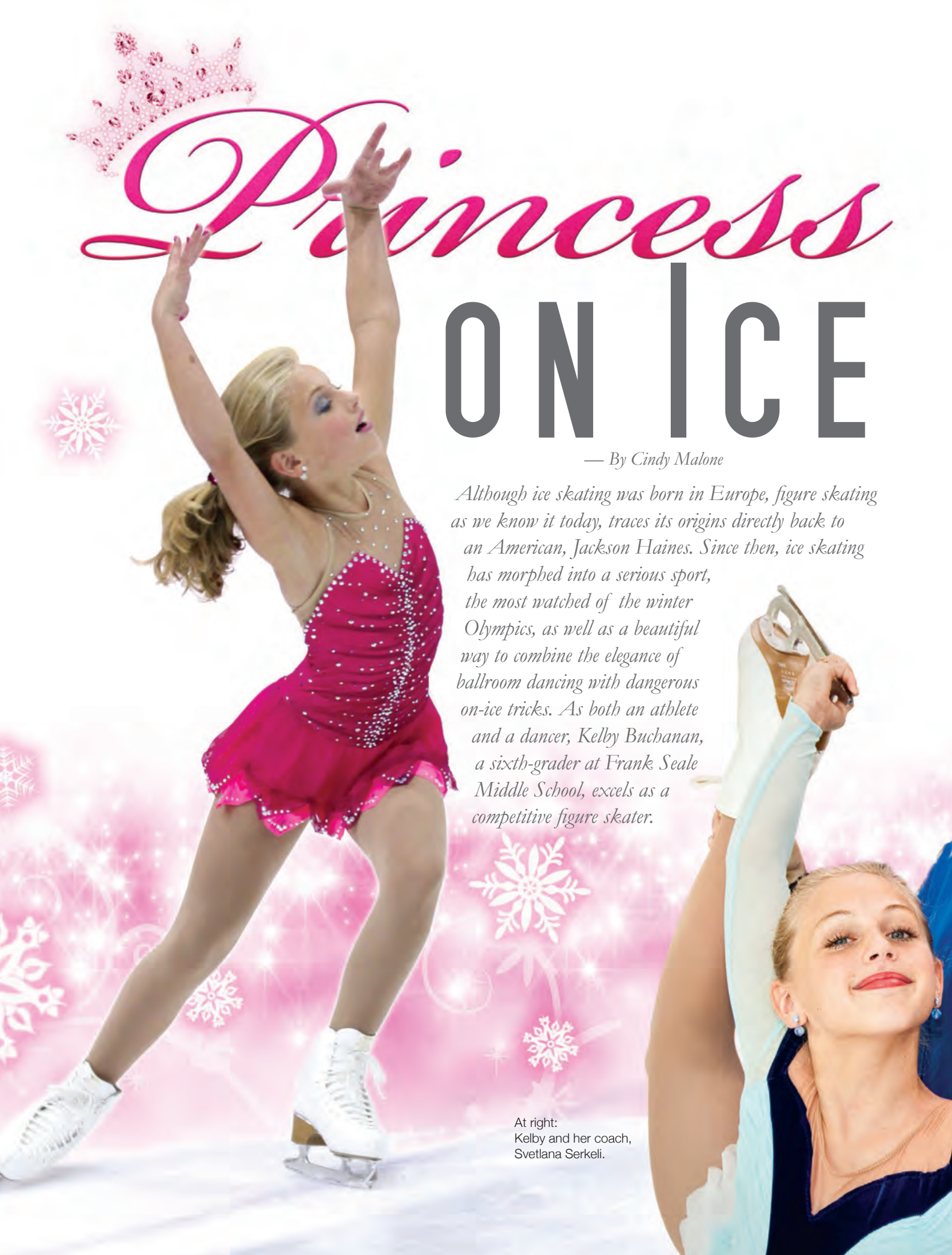
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Princess ON ICE

— By Cindy Malone

Although ice skating was born in Europe, figure skating as we know it today, traces its origins directly back to an American, Jackson Haines. Since then, ice skating has morphed into a serious sport, the most watched of the winter Olympics, as well as a beautiful way to combine the elegance of ballroom dancing with dangerous on-ice tricks. As both an athlete and a dancer, Kelby Buchanan, a sixth-grader at Frank Seale Middle School, excels as a competitive figure skater.

At right:
Kelby and her coach,
Svetlana Serkeli.



Kelby moved to Midlothian with her family six years ago. Her mom, Keisha, is a surgical assistant and her father, Jason, a sales representative. But with two younger siblings who are also involved in sports, the demanding training schedule involved with ice skating is more than two parents can handle. Kelby's grandmother, Jann Cox, helps by running Kelby from school to The Parks at Arlington where she practices, and then back home. "I don't mind," Jann said. "She only has her private lessons twice a week, and she practices after. Her competitions are more of a family affair, so there are lots of people trekking here and there for those."

The competitions are definitely Kelby's favorite part of figure skating. "I love seeing all of my friends that I really only get to see when I ice skate," she said. Kelby is very much a social butterfly. Her professed BFFs are two sisters, Leah and Anna, who both skate in Arlington. Like most kids, practice is Kelby's least

favorite part of the sport. She does, however, really enjoy learning new moves. "I guess the worst part in both





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practice and competitions are the jumps,” Kelby explained. “They’re fun, but kind of scary, especially if it’s a jump where I can’t see where I’m going to land.”

Even though Kelby said she has fallen at competition and is scared of some of the jumps, it is not evident when looking at her wall of medals, earned in more than 14 competitions. In more than half of those competitions, she won first place. Perhaps the reason she worries about the jumps is because of the difficulty in her routines, or as they call it in the skating world, her skating programs. “For her age, she has a pretty high degree of difficulty. It helps with her scores,” Jann explained. “Her Russian, medal-winning coaches, Svetlana Serkeli and Andrei Zharkov, give Kelby no breaks when it comes to the programs they choreograph.”

Her drive, and that of her coaches, led Kelby to what could be described as an awesome come back during the summer of 2012. Like her younger siblings, Kelby thought soccer looked like fun and decided to give it a shot. Being a consummate athlete, she was a natural on the field. Then on March 31, she broke her leg after stealing the ball from the other team. “I broke my tibia at the growth plate near my ankle,” Kelby explained without a grimace.

“She was in a wheelchair for five weeks. She wasn’t allowed to put any weight on it at all,” Jann added with a definite pained look.

Kelby was back at school in three days, after only one night at Children’s Medical Center Dallas. After five weeks in the cast, she began physical therapy



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"April 1, the next day after I broke my leg, I would have had a skills test, so I could move up a level in USFSA [U.S. Figure Skating Association]. Skate Dallas was later in May, and I missed it, but I didn't want to miss the ISI [Ice Skating Institute] Worlds in July," Kelby said. So, the athlete who just happened upon her natural ice-skating talent one day four years ago began a daily, intensive, and often painful, training routine in an effort to be back in shape in time to compete just three-and-a-half months after breaking her leg.

Even with all the physical therapy and training, Kelby was only able to actually put on skates and practice two weeks before the competition, which was held during the later part of July. Her coaches



worked with her daily and never once considered lowering the difficulty of her program. Not only did Kelby make it to the competition, she competed in two events: free skate and footwork, the harder of the two since it requires quick stops and turns on a very fragile ankle.

Surprising everyone, Kelby not only competed well, she placed second in free skate and came in fourth place for the first time ever in footwork. "I was disappointed with fourth," Kelby said with a frown. "But you know, fourth isn't bad for what I had been through."

Even though Kelby was mildly disappointed in the result, her coaches, family and judges were astounded. "Coming in second is always awesome," Jann shared. "So one person had a better day, but second place with recently breaking your leg? That was



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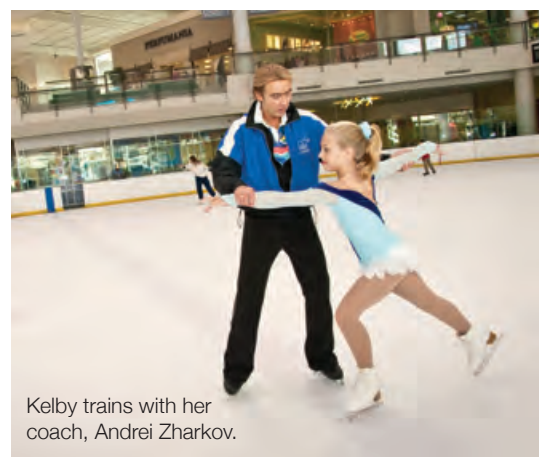
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unbelievable.” Kelby smiled. She knows what she did was amazing, but her young lady charm and her grown-up humbleness won’t let her admit it.

Since school started back this fall, Kelby is back to a twice-a-week practice schedule in preparation for the six or so competitions she will participate in this year, skating for both her skating clubs, ISI and USFSA. Unlike the girls who will get interested in ice skating in two years after the Winter Olympics once again brings ice skating to the headlines, Kelby knows what making it to an Olympic team really means. “It takes practice like every single day for six-eight hours. Most girls are homeschooled and spend their days skating, most days of the week,”



Kelby trains with her coach, Andrei Zharkov.

Kelby explained. “I love skating. But, I have other things I love, too.”

What does she look forward to in her future? Kelby loves science and is starting to participate in theater in school. She thinks volleyball would be fun and plans to play that as soon as it is offered. She thinks she wants to work with animals someday, something her three dogs and turtle are teaching her how to do now. Kelby is lucky to have a supportive and not at all pushy family that allows her to try a little of everything and see what fits. “I always say a prayer for Kelby before each competition, asking God to protect her, keep her safe and help her do her best,” Jann admitted. “He never fails.”

As long as Kelby tries her best, wants to learn, is getting better and, most importantly, is having fun, Jann supports anything she wants to do. And that is good, since Kelby chimed in with her medal-winning smile, “Or maybe an ice skating coach or doctor?” **NOW**



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The Art of Learning

— By Betty Tryon

“Tomorrow’s illiterate will not be the man who can’t read; he will be the man who has not learned how to learn.” The author of this famous quote is in dispute, but the reference to the explosion of technology that is intrinsic in the operation of the world today may be accurate. It is already evident that those who do not understand the Internet or even how to send an e-mail are excluded from a body of information and communication. The world turns and changes, and those who adapt can learn to thrive in a new way.

Ann Witherspoon, Texas history teacher and district technology liaison at Frank Seale Middle School, understands

the need to keep abreast of change and growth in the field of technology. "Five years ago, it was becoming more and more apparent that learners were changing because of the world they were growing up in, and we needed to prepare them for that future," she noted. "That is what drove me back to college for a master's in curriculum and instruction, with an emphasis in technology. It's really just curriculum and how to integrate technology."

Ann has been teaching for 26 years. She spent the last seven in Midlothian. "What I loved about Midlothian was their buy in to Schlechty and the WOW (Working on the Work)." The Schlechty Center is dedicated to students learning by engagement rather than compliance. WOW is an element of that program. "It gave a language to what I saw being utilized in a regular classroom by using gifted teaching strategies," Ann said. "I loved that! Midlothian had adopted a philosophy of learning that says they want these students engaged in their

"The best part of my job is seeing my kids be able to excel at something. I love being able to show them off, and I want them to love learning as much as I do."

learning. I've always had a passion for studying the art of learning, what goes on, what to do to learn better and deeper, how learning transpires, getting the students engaged in their learning and making it more active."

Ann spent nine years at Dallas Christian School in Mesquite, before coming to Midlothian, and taught gifted and talented students (GT). "I found out while working with GT kids that technology was a hook for them, but it is a hook for the general education students as well. I had a student at Dallas Christian who was ridiculously phenomenal. He



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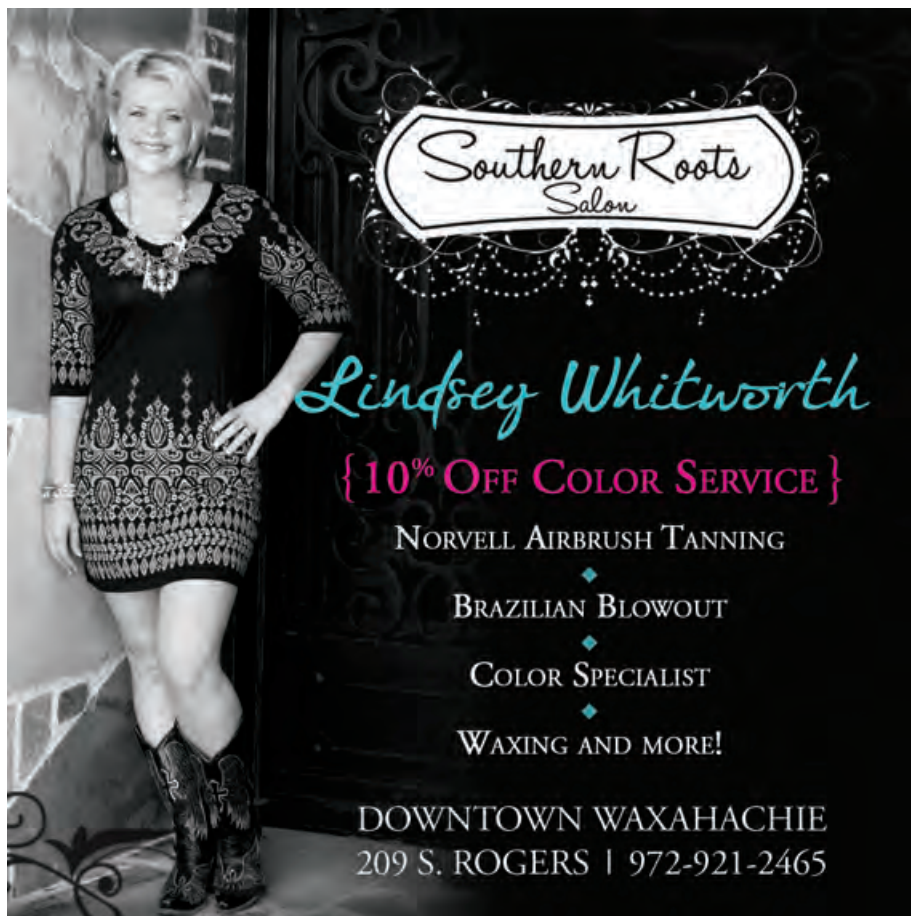
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taught me a lot of the skills I have today in technology that have continued to develop, skills such as working with Photoshop and using the Internet. This was when Web 2.0 tools began to emerge. Using some of these Web sites would bring the lesson to life.

"The kids that we have now have grown up in a digital world. They've always had the Internet and these tools. So, along with my desire to continually study my students and their needs, I've just gotten really involved with learning for the 21st century students. Our learners have changed, because our world has changed. With this rapid development of technology, it has made how we live our lives and how we do our work so much different."

This energy and focus on being up-to-date on the best innovative ways to teach her students earned Ann a trip to London to participate in the exclusive Google Teacher Academy. Google started this event seven years ago, and attendees must be invited. It is very competitive, with only 50 teachers chosen out of a couple thousand applicants. "Half of the people were chosen from the UK, some were from [places such as] Dubai, Japan, Prague and South Africa. Six were from America, but out of that number, three or four were from California," she explained. "A lot of the information centered on the



Google Apps for Education and how you can use those tools.” The word *apps* refers to application software. These applications refer to specific tasks or programs on the Internet for the benefit of the user. Ann was given an in-depth presentation of Google Docs, YouTube EDU, Google Earth, Google Maps and other applications teachers have at their disposal for free. The instruction at the academy provided exposure to the apps and taught participants how to use these tools.

Ann is using her enthusiasm for learning and what she learned with Google to help her students. “I’m revamping my whole classroom this year and have told my students that I’m not the teacher but the lead learner in our classroom. In the past, I’ve been like the sole keeper of the knowledge. They have been like the goldfish, and I feed them the knowledge I have. This year, we’re going to be sharks seeking out information, so learning is taking a more active role in our classroom.”

The class’ first unit of study is Texas geography. Ann improvised a way the students can learn what is needed, be more active participants in the learning process and have fun. “There are three chapters in our book that encompass a lot of cool stuff about geography, in my opinion, but not necessarily in the kids’ opinions. The students are

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placed on teams to develop bids for a fake International Olympic Committee to bring the Olympics to the state of Texas. Before they can develop the list of elements in the bids, they've got to learn about Texas' geography and resources," she explained.

As the students go through the unit, they will see certain aspects of Texas that would be good to showcase the state. They are going to have to learn about Texas to complete this bid. "On first glance, you think Texas geography and Olympics have nothing in common, until you look at what goes into an Olympic bid," Ann stated. "An Olympic bid is just a showcase of what that city has to offer. So this will be what our state has to offer. We will utilize a lot of the Google tools and pilot a set of Google Apps for education. When they walk away at the end of the year, they might not remember minute details of Texas history, but they will have a better appreciation of the great state we live in and how much it has to offer.

"My challenge to students is to do your work better this year than last year. I am doing *my* job better this year. I want them to see that learning is continuous and is forever. The best part of my job is seeing my kids be able to excel at something. I love being able to show them off, and I want them to love learning as much as I do." **NOW**

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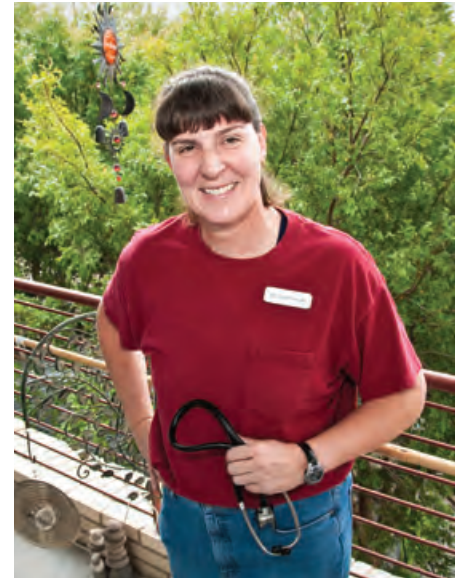


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— By Betty Tryon

Consider the scenario of trying to get your temperamental and usually grumpy cat into a carrier for a trip to the vet. You will no doubt succeed, but not without a great deal of effort on your part. Here is another scenario. The same cat is napping in the sunlight in its favorite spot in the room and only casually blinks an eye as the vet does a gentle examination. Susan Heath, veterinarian of Heath Mobile Veterinary Services, will travel to your home to relieve you and your pet of the stress of traveling to a clinic for necessary examinations. "You have many elderly people where it is too much of a production to get the animal in the car and drive to the vet," she stated. "There are a lot of people with their horse, goats, sheep and cattle in the backyard,

who don't have a trailer to get them in when they need help. So to have a service that comes to the house makes it easier for them and the animals. Also, it is more convenient for parents who have small children to have this service. I realize that not everybody wants to have the mobile vet experience, but it does serve its function."

Susan's most frequent call for a home visit is because of an animal either losing weight and not able to gain it back, or because they cannot lose weight. The pet may be lethargic and not want to engage in its usual activities. Perhaps it does not want to play ball or go on walks like it used to. Then it is up to the professional to figure out what is wrong. "When an animal

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is not its normal self, then you get into the internal medicine aspect, or it may have an intestinal parasite. That is easy to diagnose and treat.”

Sometimes, Susan is called to a home not for a problem, but for a routine physical examination or for vaccination — particularly the rabies vaccination because it is required by Texas law. If the pet owner is going to be boarding the animal, then the animal may need the distemper, parvo, hepatitis and kennel cough vaccine. “My visits run the gamut from general health care with vaccination program all the way to an actual emergency situation. When someone calls, I get as much information

“I realize that not everybody wants to have the mobile vet experience, but it does serve its function.”

as possible over the phone from the client. If it is an emergency, or if I think the animal is going to need care I can’t provide, such as ultrasound or X-ray, I tell them to take the animal to the clinic,” she said.

Susan’s range of service covers part of the Southwest Dallas County area, Southeast Tarrant County, most of Ellis County and a little of Johnson County. As a mobile veterinarian, she gets to see the people and their animals in their normal setting at the house or barn. “It gives you so much more information than just having them show up at the clinic,” she acknowledged. “It’s also easier on the animals to be in their home environment, because they aren’t as tense or scared.”

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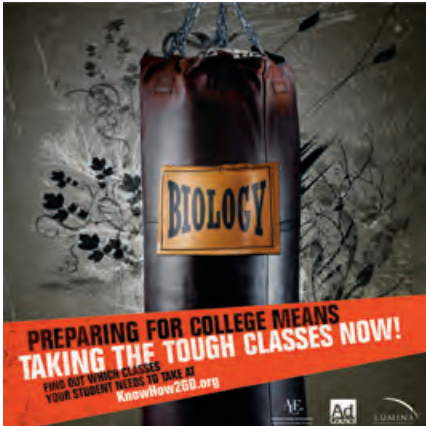
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Ellis County College Showcase: For baseball players 16 to 18 years old, hosted by Gear Up Baseball Academy. For more information, call (972) 845-7053.

December 1

The Southern Star Christmas Celebration: Noon-8:00 p.m., Heritage Park and extending into downtown Midlothian. Christmas Around the World theme. Activities include a vendor fair, petting zoo, face painting, musical entertainment, pictures with Santa (cost is a can food item to be donated to United Way of West Ellis County), community Christmas tree decoration and lighting and multi-denominational Christmas service. The event is a joint effort between the Midlothian Downtown Business Association, the Midlothian Chamber of Commerce, and the Midlothian Rotary Club.

Downtown Midlothian Light Parade: 6:00 p.m., Rain out date is December 8. Parade starts at 8th St. Bridge. www.southernstarchristmas.org

Waxahachie Junior Service League Annual Christmas Market and Gift Show: 10:00

a.m.-5:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center. Information regarding the league's Ellis County charities and for more information, visit www.waxahachiejls.org.

December 3

Annual Reindeer Dash 5K Walk/Race benefiting Midlothian Special Olympics: 6:00 p.m., Midlothian High School Cafeteria, 923 S. 9th St. \$30. The MHS PAL and Partners in PE classes are sponsoring this special event.

December 6

Navarro College Christmas Concert: 6:00 p.m., Dawson Auditorium at Corsicana Campus. For more information, please call (903) 875-7381.

December 9

Gryphons of Ellis County 2012 Annual Toy Run: 11:00 a.m. Parade of motorcycles from Midlothian to Sokol Park in Ennis. Toys will be presented to invited children, ages 3 to 13, at noon, live music performance from 1:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m. Free hot-dogs and refreshments while they last, door prize drawings and auction. \$5 fee to enter Toy Run and canned food donations are welcomed. All proceeds will go to the benefit of the

Midlothian Senior Citizens Center. For more information call (972) 454-0880 or (469) 766-6093.

December 11

MHS Christmas Band Concert: 6:30 p.m., Midlothian High School Auditorium.

December 13

MHS Holiday Choir Concert: 7:00 p.m., Midlothian High School Auditorium.

December 24 – January 4

Winter Break for Midlothian ISD.

January 19

"Free Children's Dance" for Maddie's Sake: 6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m., Midlothian Civic Center, 104 W. Ave. E. Donations accepted. The dance is for children of all ages with or without a disability. There will be refreshments, games, dancing and a photo booth. For more details, visit www.ForMaddiesSake.com.

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

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In The Kitchen With Andrea Frederick

— By Betty Tryon

As a young girl growing up in Port Arthur, Texas, Andrea Frederick's lessons in cooking came in a definite ethnic flavor not from her mom, but her dad. "My cooking comes from my dad's side with Cajun influence," she said. "My mother's family is German, but none of them liked to cook or weren't very good at it! My mom says my daddy taught her how to cook."

In Andrea's family, making an effort to get together is important. And for what better reason than to eat? "On Sundays I cook for my parents, my brother and his family and my family. We rotate cooking on Sundays and meet after church to eat." **NOW**

Seasoned Stuffed Pot Roast With a Cajun Twist

3-4 lbs. eye of round or rump roast
TexJoy Steak Seasoning
1/2 tsp. garlic salt
1/2-1 tsp. red pepper, crushed, or to taste
1/2 tsp. black pepper
1 bell pepper, chopped
1 large onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, minced
Cooking oil
Water
4 Tbsp. Tony Chachere's Creole Brown Gravy Mix (or Roux and Gravy Mix)
2 Tbsp. flour

1. Make several cuts about 1-inch wide and several inches deep into the roast. The number of cuts will depend on how seasoned you want it to be.
2. Mix all seasonings, chopped bell pepper, chopped onion and minced garlic in a cup or bowl.

3. Fill each cut with 1 tsp. of seasoning mixture, pushing it in with your finger to the bottom of the cut.
4. Cover bottom of large heavy pot with cooking oil; heat oil on high temperature. Lay roast in pan and darken on every side. Turn heat down to medium-low. Add enough water to submerge roast by 1/2 to 3/4 of its thickness, depending on amount of gravy desired.
5. Add remaining seasoning mixture; stir and let cook for 2 1/2 to 3 1/2 hours, depending on size of the roast.
6. After cooking, remove roast. Bring liquid to a boil. In a separate bowl, mix brown gravy mix and flour with enough water to thicken. Slowly pour this into broth in pot, stirring constantly to make gravy. Slice roast and serve!

Creole Casserole

1/2 cup celery, chopped
1/2 lb. ground beef
1 1/2 cups rice
1/2 cup onions, chopped

1/2 cup bell pepper, chopped
1 10.5-oz. can cream of chicken soup
1 10.5-oz. can onion soup
1 8-oz. can mushrooms
Black pepper, to taste
Red pepper, crushed, to taste
1 tsp. garlic powder
1 1/2 tsp. salt

1. Mix all ingredients together in 1 1/2- to 2-qt. casserole dish. Bake at 350 F for 2 hours.

Strawberry Pizza

Dough:

2 cups flour
1 tsp. salt
2/3 cup shortening
2-3 Tbsp. water

Topping:

1/2 cup flour
1/2 cup sugar
1 10-oz. container frozen strawberries
(Or make your own sweetened strawberry mixture.)

1. *For Dough:* Mix flour, salt and shortening in a bowl by hand. Add 2-3 Tbsp. water; knead mixture until a dough consistency is reached. Shape into a ball.
2. On a pastry sheet or clean countertop, sprinkle flour. Roll out dough to desired thickness. Use pizza pan to measure size of circle. Lay dough over pizza pan and trim off excess dough around edges with a butter knife.
3. *For Topping:* In a small bowl, mix flour and sugar.
4. Spread flour/sugar mixture over dough. Pour strawberries over top, making sure sugar mixture is covered.
5. The juice from strawberries will thicken with flour/sugar mixture when cooked. Place in 350 F oven for 20 minutes, or until crust starts to turn a light brown color.
6. Let cool and place in fridge. Can be topped with whipped cream or ice cream when served!

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



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Dr. Yaritza Vazquez, Periodontist

Dr. Vazquez obtained a certificate in advanced graduate studies in General Practice Residency at Tufts University School of Dental Medicine in 2006 where she concentrated her training in special needs and medically compromised patients. In June 2009 she completed her residency in Periodontics at Boston University and her Masters Degree in Oral Biology, which was focused in inflammatory processes. During her Periodontology residency she refined her skills in periodontal procedures including Cosmetic surgeries and implant placements.

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July 2013
August 2014

HS #2 Principal Start Date
HS #2 School Opens
**grade configurations to be determined*



MISD bond construction updates, financial reports, photos online at www.midlothian-isd.net/bond.

Naming High School #2

The High School #2 naming committee, chaired by Superintendent Dr. Jerome Stewart, makes recommendations to the Board of Trustees in accordance with Midlothian ISD CW (LOCAL) Naming Facilities Policy. The Board makes the final selection of the name for the new school from the committee's recommendations of no less than five and no more than ten names.

Campus Representatives

Baxter Elementary - Tammie Moore
Irvin Elementary - Jean Ray
Mt. Peak Elementary - Melissa Neal
Longbranch Elementary - Amber Mize
Miller Elementary - Jennifer Campbell
Vitovsky Elementary - Tammy Lowman
Frank Seale Middle School - Joyce Griffith
Walnut Grove Middle School - Tammie Floyd
Midlothian High School - Patti Spillers

Community Representatives

Jerry Ellis
Patricia Middlebrooks

Parent Representatives

Michelle Spradley
Jeff Wofford

Happy Holidays!

MISD Closed - No School

Dec. 24 - Jan. 7, 2013

(Staff Workday Jan. 7)

MISD Winter Holiday Free Entertainment

- Dec. 3 5K Reindeer Dash Run/Race, 6 p.m., MHS parking lot
- Dec. 6-7 MHS Theater 'Pride & Prejudice', 7 p.m., MHS Auditorium
- Dec. 11 MHS Christmas Band Concert, 6:30 p.m., MHS Auditorium
- Dec. 13 MHS Holiday Choir Concert, 7 p.m., MHS Auditorium
- Dec. 17 FSMS Christmas Band Concert, 6:30 p.m., MHS Auditorium
- Dec. 18 WGMS Christmas Band Concert, 6:30 p.m., MHS Auditorium
- Dec. 20-21 MISD Early Release

We are Transparent

MISD has earned this top award for the past three years by clearly the budget, financial reports, check registers, charts and more on the district's financial webpage.



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