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ON THE COVER



Just one of many Jim Shore collectibles at the Strong Home.

Photo by Natalie Busch.

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Editor's Note

Merry Christmas!

What's up with my Christmas lights? I know I stored them away so neatly last year. How did they become such a tangled, knotted mess? I can't figure out how this happens year after year. Hmm, I wonder if mischievous little elves aren't wreaking havoc in my attic from one holiday season to the next. I guess it's time to call the elf exterminator!

This year poses another dilemma: How do I keep my grandson from climbing the trees we already have decorated?

He loves shiny objects and those things that reflect the light as they move. I sure hope I don't have to spank his little hands too much. I don't want him to think of me as a Scrooge or the Grinch that ruined his Christmas. My hope is that he'll never forget this Christmas at his Granny's house. I know I'm not going to!

Sandra

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WaxahachieNOW Editor
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Kristi Autrey and Stacie Sipes are avid Waxahachie Junior Service League members.

Holiday Laven

— By Randy Bigham

Another big year for the Waxahachie Junior Service League's Christmas Market, which is always held the first Saturday in December, has come and gone with attendance and proceeds rivaling 2011's phenomenal turn out. The annual event to raise funds for worthy organizations across Ellis County is now in its 26th year, and program committee members, Kristi Autrey and Stacie Sipes, are impressed with the increased support they've witnessed. "Last time, we raised \$20,000 for our charities, and we believe we will top

that," said Kristi, who is in her fourth year with the Service League and third year as a committee member. "We are very thankful for the generous backing we've had from the community and all the great feedback."

Stacie also expressed gratitude to all those who ensured success for the latest installment of the fundraiser. "The 2012 Christmas Market and Gift Show was a huge hit," said Stacie, who is in her third year with the Service League and second year on the program committee. "And we owe it all to the sponsors, vendors, shoppers and volunteers who make it happen."

Making it happen is what the Waxahachie Junior Service League (WJSL) has been doing for 60 years. Founded in 1952 with Mrs. W. H. Getzendaner as its first president, the League encourages volunteerism in a wide variety of community organizations that also receive monetary support through fundraising efforts. "We're proud of the long history of the Waxahachie Junior Service League," Kristi said. "Each of the charities we support is special."

Among the organizations that benefit from League programs like the Christmas Market are Ellis County EXPO, Gingerbread House, Habitat for Humanity, Hope Clinic, Meals on Wheels, the Sims Library, Waxahachie CARE and the Women's Resource Center. "League members volunteer and raise money for over 40 groups," Stacie pointed out. "And the groups are not all based in Waxahachie, but are countywide." In the past, the League has operated an outreach for exceptional children at the American Legion Hall, supplied teacher's aides for special education classes at area elementary schools and taken part in the Tour of Homes. The League has also published a series of cookbooks and for some years accomplished a yeoman's service for the Chamber

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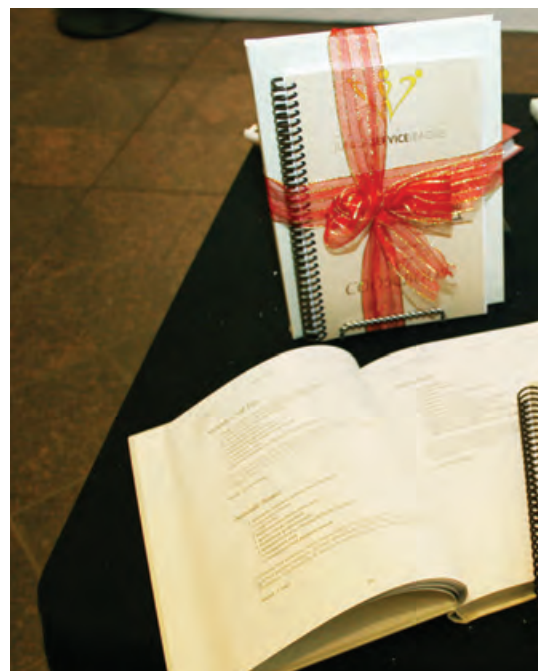
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of Commerce and the Department of Health. In addition, the League sponsors the Sue Stroope Art Scholarship and WJSL Community Service Scholarship.

Today, the greatest philanthropic effort the group carries out is the annual Christmas Market that opens at the Waxahachie Civic Center with a preshow evening mixer. Their guests can enjoy drinks and hors d'oeuvres, as well as participate in a silent auction and raffle.



"At the preview show there are always great gifts available from the vendors, and this year the raffle offered two round-trip tickets on Southwest Airlines," Stacie outlined. "It's always fun for everybody, and really it sort of kicks off the spirit of the season, for us as members and volunteers and for the public."

The next day the main market opens with more than 100 vendors offering their wares at the Waxahachie Civic Center. Apart from the ever-popular Christmas items, some of them one-of-a-kind, the merchandise on display ranges from clothing and accessories to home decor and lawn and garden products. Booths offering custom-painted interior signs and designer handbags were among some of the most popular vendors at the 2011 Christmas Market and were sought after again this year. "We had a packed house last year with over 1,600 attendees," Kristi enthused. And while there's no tally yet, the crowds filling the center this year likely exceeded that record. Aside from the attraction of so many beautiful gift items, the public was entertained by performances by Lone Star Martial Arts and the Gymnastic Zone. Photos with Santa were offered courtesy of Marie Q Photography.

Stacie and Kristi are used to seeing many return visitors to the showcase, which nurtures a sense of family and camaraderie. "I think people want to stay involved in their community, and

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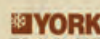
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this is one big way to do that," Stacie said. "It's a great place to start your Christmas shopping and at the same time know the money you spend is going to such good causes."

Kristi concurred. "It's such fun and is a real family outing for a lot of people. We love to see the moms and daughters coming out, and even the moms, daughters and grandmas. But there's stuff here for the guys, too, so it can be a whole family affair."

One regular attendee of the Christmas Market is Jana Martinez. "I come every year," she admitted. "I don't live in Waxahachie anymore, but it's not too far from Dallas to come for some great deals and to catch up with old friends."

Mary Donner, of Rice, also doesn't mind the drive to Waxahachie to jumpstart her Christmas shopping. "I have always found such neat items there, and I just make a day of it."

For Kristi and Stacie the Christmas Market is equally exciting, but it has a deeper meaning, too. "When you see firsthand how the funds we raise actually impact the lives of people," Stacie said with emotion in her voice, "it is so fulfilling and makes you realize God is at work." Kristi was equally moved in discussing the aid provided by the Junior Service League to such organizations as the Campfire Creek Therapeutic Riding Center, an equine assisted therapy outreach geared to children and adults with disabilities and terminal illnesses.

Campfire Creek, currently the League's long-term project, was established in 2004 by Emily Oliver who maintains the 501(c) 3 entity with the help of



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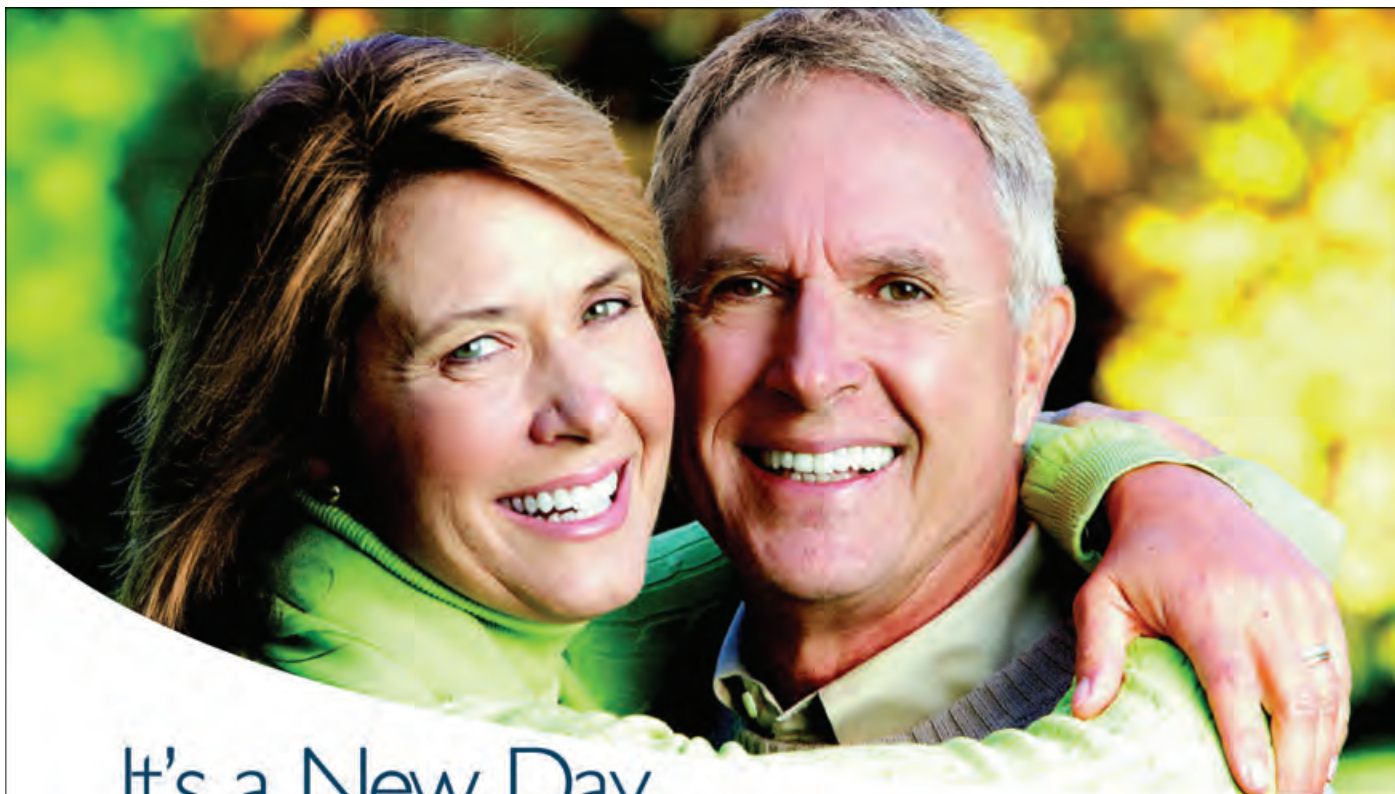
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Kristi and Stacie are already looking forward to the 2013 Christmas Market and Gift Show. They have high hopes for its continued success. "It's just the perfect way to give back to the community," Kristi said. "For us as volunteers it's obviously a blessing, but those who are giving feel the same." Stacie agreed, urging those members of the public who may not attend the Christmas Market to consider making their own direct donations to charities that mean something to them.

"The holidays are a time of giving and our Christmas Market is definitely a great example of one-stop shopping," Stacie added. "But at the end of the day, our goal is to facilitate caring for and giving to others. So, whether you had the chance to come by the market or not, just think of someone and give." **NOW**



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
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CHALLENGES OF LIFE

— By Sandra Strong

It was the spring of 1967. Steve Mitchell remembers hopping on his bike and pedaling as fast as he could to get the loaf of bread his mom, Doris Mitchell, needed for supper that night. He vaguely recalls the sound of metal hitting metal. Once he arrived at the small town hospital, the prognosis wasn't in his favor. In fact, doctors weren't sure he would make it through the night. The brain injuries he sustained when he was hit by a car driving 70 miles



per hour were so severe they left him in a comatose state. Five-and-half weeks following the accident, Steve woke up to questions an 11-year-old boy should never have to ask. "The story I was told was that my dad, Champ Mitchell, had been slapping me to get me to wake up," Steve said, sharing the story as he best remembered it. "The doctors didn't like his method, but look at me today. I'm proof it worked."

Champ, the boxer who once fought Sugar Ray Robinson and Jake Lamotta, wasn't about to let his son wither away. A body atrophy was not an option. A

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week after Steve "woke up," he returned home to continue the recuperation process. "My dad was persistent," Steve confessed. "Dad felt I still had so much to prove to the world. He wasn't about to let me lie in bed and feel sorry for myself."

The road to recovery was filled with many volatile moments. The things which once came naturally to Steve had to be relearned. Steve's mom wanted him to rest while she took care of his needs; his dad wanted him to "hurry up and get better."

"Dad would carry me from the bed to the wall. He would tell me to put my hands on the wall and then put them at my sides. I would do this over and over again until I became too tired to stand any longer," Steve said, explaining the first of many challenges he would have to face in his lifetime. "This exercise taught

me how to balance again. Dad knew what I needed. He knew what was good for his son."

Before the life-changing accident, Steve was in the latter half of the fifth grade. He was an active member of the Flexsteel baseball team. By the time the next school year began, Steve was once again playing little league ball. "I got hit in the head with the ball. My mom was in the stands freaking out," he admitted. "I shook it off and ran the bases. I guess I was a hard-headed young man."

His second challenge came at the age of 13 when Steve began training to be a boxer. His dad had boxing in his blood, so it



seemed Champ wanted Steve to have it in his, too. "I was fighting for me and my dad," Steve shared. "I had something to prove, and my dad didn't know any other way than to push. He pushed me hard to be successful." At the age of 17, Steve competed in the Golden Gloves, where he was crowned the Light Welterweight Champion. "I won with a TKO (technical knockout)," Steve said. "I had the hardest punch in the state as a teenager."

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something he came by on his own. "I just loved what I was doing at the time," Steve added. "I liked being a champion. I knew being a champion meant I had to win, and sometimes I had to hurt my opponent to win."

One three-day tournament came to mind as Steve reminisced about the past. His opponent was a Spanish guy who head-butted Steve in the face as soon as the starting bell rang. "He hit me so hard he broke my nose," Steve said, rubbing his nose for emphasis. "That was on a Thursday. I ended up beating him with a broken nose. On Friday, I fought and won against a guy I'd beaten before. I won again on Saturday night. I won the

TO RISE ABOVE THE ADVERSITY, HE KNEW HE HAD TO REMAIN STRONG AND VIGILANT, ALWAYS CLIMBING HIS WAY TO THE TOP IN WHATEVER HE SET HIS MIND TO.

whole tournament with a broken nose and two black eyes."

Before long, his winning reputation caused his opponents to think twice before meeting him in the boxing ring. "They would gain or lose weight so they could move out of my division," he admitted with a smile. Everyone, including Champ, thought Steve would go "pro." But, he surprised them all at the age of 20, when he came to the ring and announced he was quitting the sport that had taught him so much about life. "During this time, I'd gotten married and had a little girl. My wife left with my baby," he said, describing yet another challenge. "All I did was cry and cry over the loss. My heart wasn't in boxing anymore. It wasn't into anything."

He got over his depression. He learned the art of karate, making it to the level of blue belt before moving on to his next challenge — stock car racing. He shared his love of racing with his second wife, Marla, whom he felt he'd known all his

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life. "When I was in the coma, I spent time in heaven," Steve said. "God showed me the long road ahead. He showed me the hardships, but he also showed me Marla."

Life for Steve has been marred with one roadblock after another, some admittedly of his own making. To rise above the adversity, he knew he had to remain strong and vigilant, always climbing his way to the top in whatever he set his mind to. He survived a tragic



accident when doctors and injuries spoke otherwise. He found great success in boxing, karate and stock car racing.

This same attitude of proving himself has grown to include a book, *No Tears for a Hero*; a documentary, *CHAMP*; and an upcoming movie. Why a movie? "No one has ever done what I've done," he said with a strong conviction. "It's important for me to tell my story, so it can inspire others to be all they can be and to do all they can do. It's important for people to rise above and never give up!"

At the age of 56, Steve continues to learn new things. He is still finding success with the challenges that come his way. He believes in "mastering it and moving on." His mom inspired his tender spirit, while his dad was the driving force that pushed him to a life filled with successes. "If I can do it," he said, "anyone can do it. God will show them the way." **NOW**

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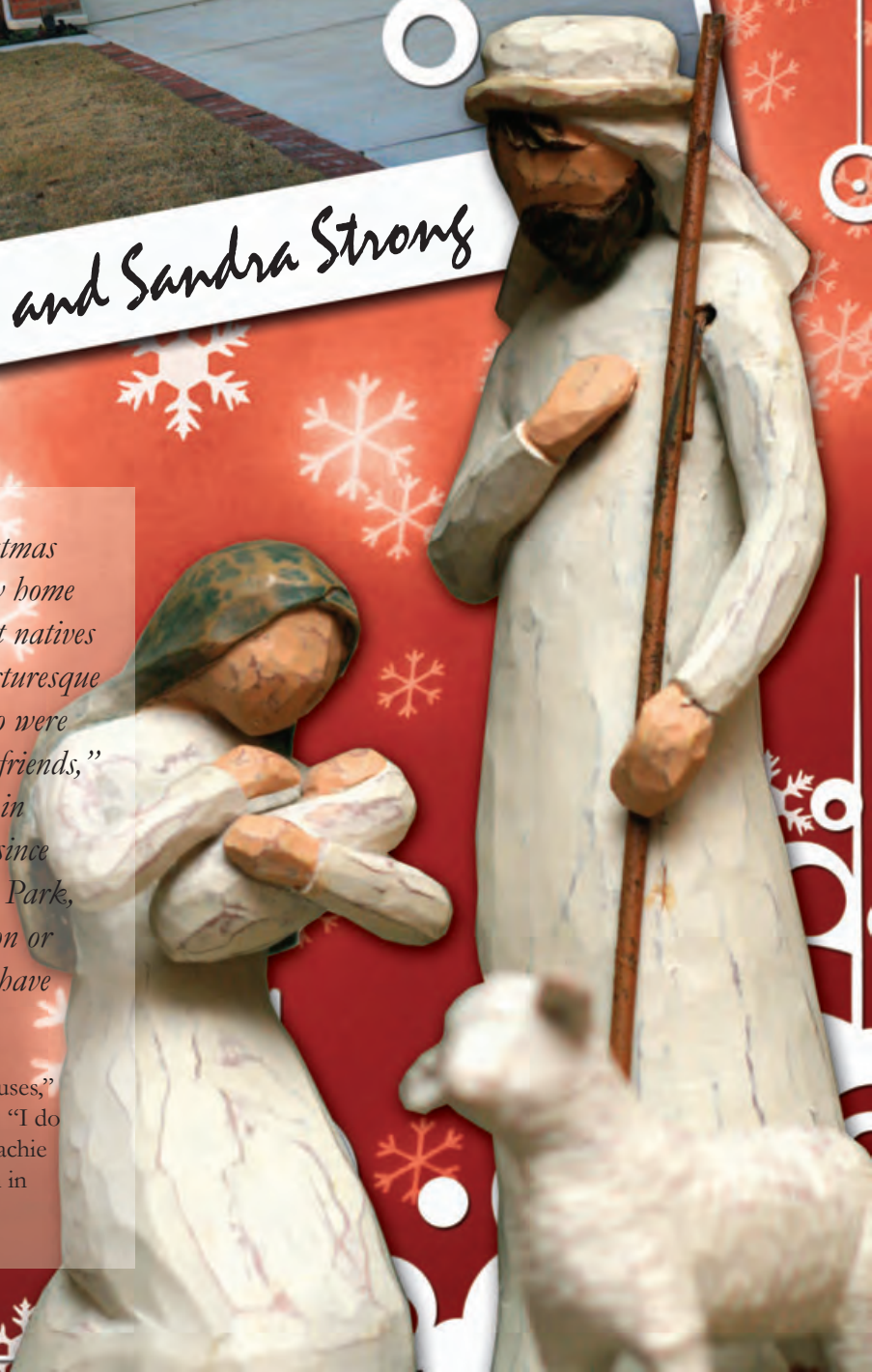




At Home with Kevin and Sandra Strong

A Waxahachie couple is greeting the Christmas season with a fresh take on life — and a new home to go with it. Kevin and Sandra Strong aren't natives of the Gingerbread City, but they love the picturesque capital of Ellis County as much as those who were born in it. "There are no strangers here, just friends," said Kevin, who works for Trinity Industries in Dallas, of the camaraderie he has witnessed since moving here three years ago. At Getzendenan Park, at the annual Chamber of Commerce Auction or anywhere else people gather, those he has met have been warm and welcoming.

"I know everybody loves Waxahachie for its old houses," added Sandra, community editor for WaxahachieNOW. "I do appreciate that, but I'm not into history. I love Waxahachie because of the people and how generous they've been in embracing me."





The Strong's met and fell in love when Sandra was still reeling from a divorce and after Kevin's wife had passed away. Introduced through mutual friends, they soon married and initially planned to live in Mesquite where Nebraska-born Kevin lived at the time. Sandra, born in Dallas, moved to Palmer when she was in elementary school and later lived in Ennis where she reared her sons, Jeremy and Nick. "When I moved to Waxahachie," Sandra admitted, "people just took me in

and loved on me, so I see them as my extended family, and I feel the same way about my readers. I love them. And, of course, I love our house!"

The three-bedroom, two-bath, brick home, nestled in an attractive residential addition near the city, has more than its 1,700-square-feet to recommend it. The home has style, thanks largely to Sandra, whose talents not only include writing, but cooking and decorating. Family and friends alike admire the unfailingly

individual touches Sandra adds to her environment, whether at home or work. She applies the same energy to all aspects of her life. Although Sandra is more talkative than her laidback, better half, the pair share a quirky sense of humor and a penchant for the outdoors. "We love horseback riding, boating and taking road trips," Kevin said. "We've been to Hot Springs, Arkansas, and Ruidoso, New Mexico, recently, and we really enjoyed ourselves."



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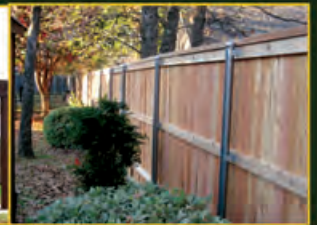
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SAFETY

With Christmas coming up, Kevin and Sandra are looking forward to spending time with family, which includes his son Shaun, daughter-in-law, Christina, and grandchildren, Dillon and Kaitlyn. Also visiting at Christmas will be Sandra's sons and their wives, Valerie and Mickey. It will be an especially poignant time. Kevin's parents have moved out of state, and Sandra's father passed away six months ago. "But we are grateful for so many other things," Sandra pointed out. "Falling in love again at our age, having our health and this beautiful home — it's all worth celebrating. In fact, it's been like starting over. New beginnings can be hard, but there's a lot of happiness, too." One of the bright spots of the last year has been the birth of Sandra's grandchild, Easton Rider, son to Nick and Mickey. "Easton has been such a compensation for the loss of my father," she confessed. "It's sort of like the changing of the guard."

Kevin and Sandra consider themselves big kids when it comes to Christmas. "My fondest memory as a child was watching the *Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer* cartoon on TV," Kevin reminisced. "And I recall our aluminum tree with all the colored lights."

Sandra remembered, with much levity, a Christmas gift she received as a little girl that didn't quite please her. "It was a Crissy doll," she said. "Well, I was a tomboy, so I cut all of the doll's hair off and drew tattoos on her!"

The couple's Yuletide memories have inspired their dedication to decorating for the season. Kevin enjoys the project as much as Sandra, but she leads the charge in choosing new items and arranging them harmoniously. Christmas in the Strong home is a veritable winter wonderland, featuring a combination of religious and mainstream elements to make a seamless, festive whole. From ornaments celebrating the birth of Jesus to throw pillows in the shape of a snowman, the house is a smorgasbord of color and lights. The Christmas tree, in particular, becomes a work of art in Sandra's hands, and her love for this symbol of the season is such that nearly every room has its own, specially dressed tree. There's even a tree on the front porch to greet visitors, complete with presents. "The gifts are actually wrapped cigar boxes," Sandra

explained, "because they're heavy enough not to blow in the wind."

A White Willow manger scene, with tiny, handcrafted figurines, sits atop the entertainment center in the living room. Ornaments bearing messages peek out among the greenery and twinkling lights that surround the group: "Unto you a child is born" and "God so loved the world." Nearby, a mantel, full of cleverly-arranged Santa Clauses, sparkles with lights tucked into pine branches. Dolls, ceramic figures and crafty cutouts, are all assembled against a backdrop of artistically wrapped presents above and hand-embroidered stockings below. In this room, the Christmas tree is hung with hundreds of bright ornaments in the form of balls, bows, snowflakes, Santas, crosses, dolls and angels, topped by a golden star. Sandra's favorite ornament is a cameo suspended from a ribbon, enclosing a portrait of Easton, her "chunky little monkey."

Even the kitchen gets a Christmas makeover, and Kevin and Sandra delight in such festive touches as oven towels with the mottos "Naughty" and "Nice" printed on them. On the window beside the dining table, greeting cards are displayed from the blinds while a secondary set of stockings, one for each of the grandchildren and Max, the dog, are hung from the ledge.

Sandra likes to keep a little bit of Christmas in her home year round – witness a wall of decorative crosses and a painting of the Wise Men arriving by camel to honor the Christ child. But her passion for the season isn't confined to indoor enjoyment. Outside, in the garden that borders her front porch, arise painted wooden figures of Santa, his trusty reindeer Rudolph and a bevy of angels. Wreaths festoon the front door and windows, and swags of ornamented greenery and twinkling lights are strung between the pillars.

Although this year holds bittersweet memories for Kevin and Sandra, they are thankful for the chance to find love again, for the new home they share, for the grandson who brightens their world and for the opportunity to give back to others. "We believe in blessing people because we've been blessed," Sandra said. "Giving is so easy to do, and it's what Christmas is all about." **NOW**



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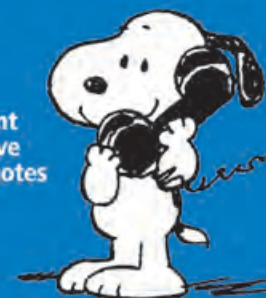
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Seventeen-year-old Elizabeth Lowery abounds with the youthful enthusiasm and energy of her age. But she is very serious about one thing. Elizabeth has already established herself as a very talented artist. “I was about 8 years old when I got interested in drawing,” she said.

“She’s been drawing since she was old enough to hold a pencil,” added her mother, Evelyn Lowery. “I could never find an unused piece of paper when I needed to write something.”

As Elizabeth progressed through school, she was always drawing on her papers when doing assignments. Teachers were unsuccessful in getting her to stop. They finally told her to just draw on the back, not the front of her school work. Elizabeth did not put aside drawing as she grew older. She took art classes all through school and studied with a teacher at the Ellis County Art Museum for nine months. Her paternal grandma, who lives in Grand Prairie, paints as a hobby. Elizabeth credits her, and their common bond, for being an encourager and teacher. Another inspiration is Elizabeth’s favorite artist, Mr. Autrey, who was an art teacher at Palmer High School. “Everything he





does comes from the Bible. He creates pictures from the Scriptures he reads," she said.

Now in her senior year at Palmer, Elizabeth has no interest in extra-curricular activities like sports, clubs and such. However, she is a member of the choir's vocal ensemble. She loves science class, which is evident in some of her drawings, but math is the subject she likes least. Drawing is Elizabeth's main interest in life, and her dedication to it is the kind of drive that produces successful people. She is already being noticed for her remarkable pencil and pad creations. Sometimes she details a drawing with ink. "I use ink when I want to make my art look cartoonish," she said. She also dabbles in watercolor, and although a watercolor angel she painted is one of her favorite works, she finds that medium less satisfying.

She finds ideas for her subjects from people and wildlife. She also finds motivation from music or by going online to deviantart.com. She considers herself shy, but she loves meeting people. Besides the friendships that brings, a new face might become a source for a drawing. Because of her artistic nature, Elizabeth pays more attention to the everyday things in life than the average person. When she meets someone, her creative eye is immediately drawn to their features. She might make a mental note of the mood showing in someone's eyes, the lay of a woman's hair over her shoulder or the curve of a smile or jaw line — anything she can use in a drawing.

Her art falls into the modern genre, which doesn't require perfect form but

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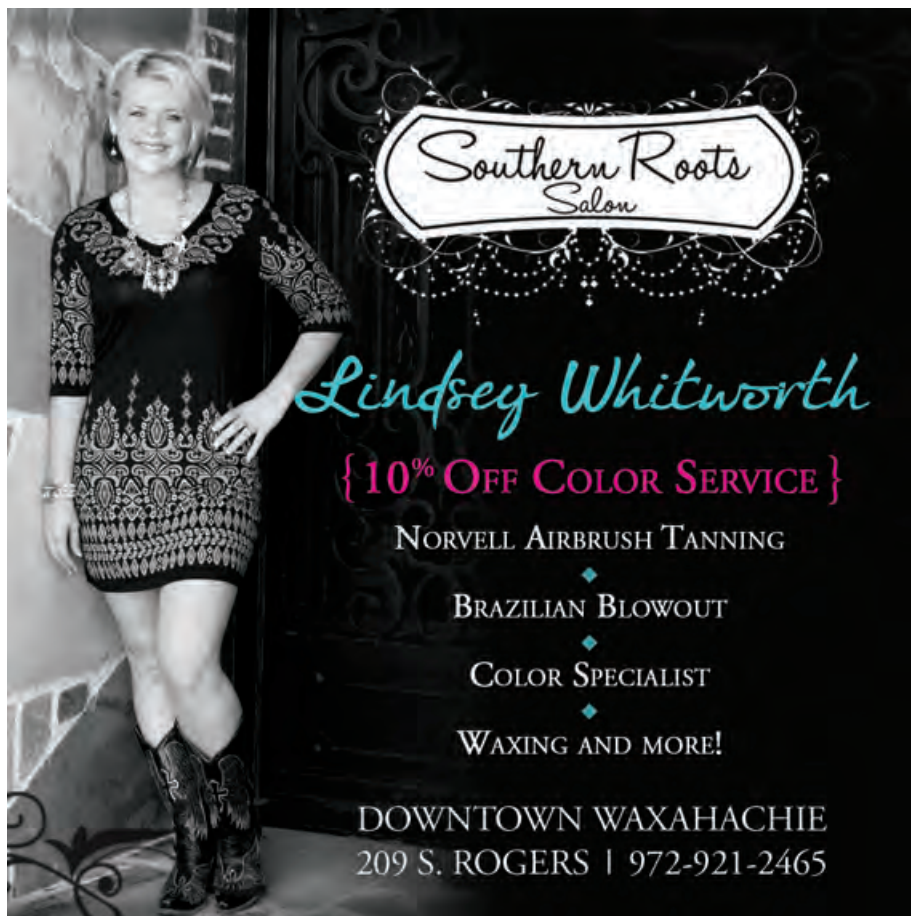
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rather flows freely into unsuspecting shapes and meanings. "I love to work with bubbles and melting objects," she said, as her fingers spread out and her hands glide through the air mimicking the configuration and movement of these two comparisons. She is especially proud of one of her pieces, which is a clear light bulb with a drop of water



falling from it. She sees in her mind what those who are not artistic can't imagine — until she puts it on her drawing pad. There, she captures flowing, uneven forms in artistic perfection. Whether or not viewers fully understand the abstract flavor of her art, they are mesmerized with her attention to detail and the eye-pleasing, emotion-evoking way she blends the elements in her creations. Elizabeth is very talented.

The most exciting thing that has happened to her in regard to her art was having one of her drawings entered in the Ellis County Art Show in 2009 — and winning first place! She also had one of her works entered in the show in 2010 — a lot to accomplish at such a young age.

While drawing is her primary interest, Elizabeth has added a second passion

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in the past three or four years. She now does photography, too. For this venture, she uses a Canon Rebel T3 camera. She enjoys photographing both black-and-white and/or full color photos, depending on the subject. Although she likes capturing still-life, action shots are her favorite. Like her pencil drawings, she prefers to use people and wildlife as subjects for her photos. "Especially birds, I love photographing birds in action," she said.

Although Elizabeth spends a lot of time with her crafts or finding something to draw, when she isn't involved with her hobbies, like most teenagers, she likes to hang out with friends. She is known as Liz to them. "I've known my special friend, Megan, since fifth grade and my other best-friend, Sydney, since sixth grade," she said. "We like to go to movies or the video store, or just wander around the mall."

"She is a people person," Evelyn said. "When she meets someone new they quickly become her friend, even if they don't want to."

With no dad in the house and no siblings to compete with, Elizabeth and her mom are very close, which is obvious to anyone seeing them together. One of their favorite pastimes is watching *The Big*

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Evelyn summed up her feelings concerning her daughter's talent with a vehement

"ENVIOUS!"



Bang Theory on TV. Elizabeth also likes to shop and cook, and all that stuff with her mom.

Evelyn summed up her feelings concerning her daughter's talent with a vehement "Envious!" And then, she proudly touted her daughter's laurels: "She has a natural talent for art and an eye for photography," she said.

Elizabeth flashed a brief look at her mom and smiled in appreciation for the compliments, with a smile as beautiful and sparkling as her personality. But her story doesn't stop here. Unlike many soon-to-be graduates, she already has her future figured out. Upon completing high school, she plans to attend Navarro College in Waxahachie for her basics, and then go on to the four-year program at the Art Institute of Dallas for a degree in art. She is not quite sure how she will use her talent after that, but she is certain she doesn't want to be an art teacher.

All children dream of what they want to be when they grow up and that changes many times. Not so with Elizabeth. The little girl with the busy fingers has become a motivated young lady well on her way to a very competitive, but exciting career. **NOW**

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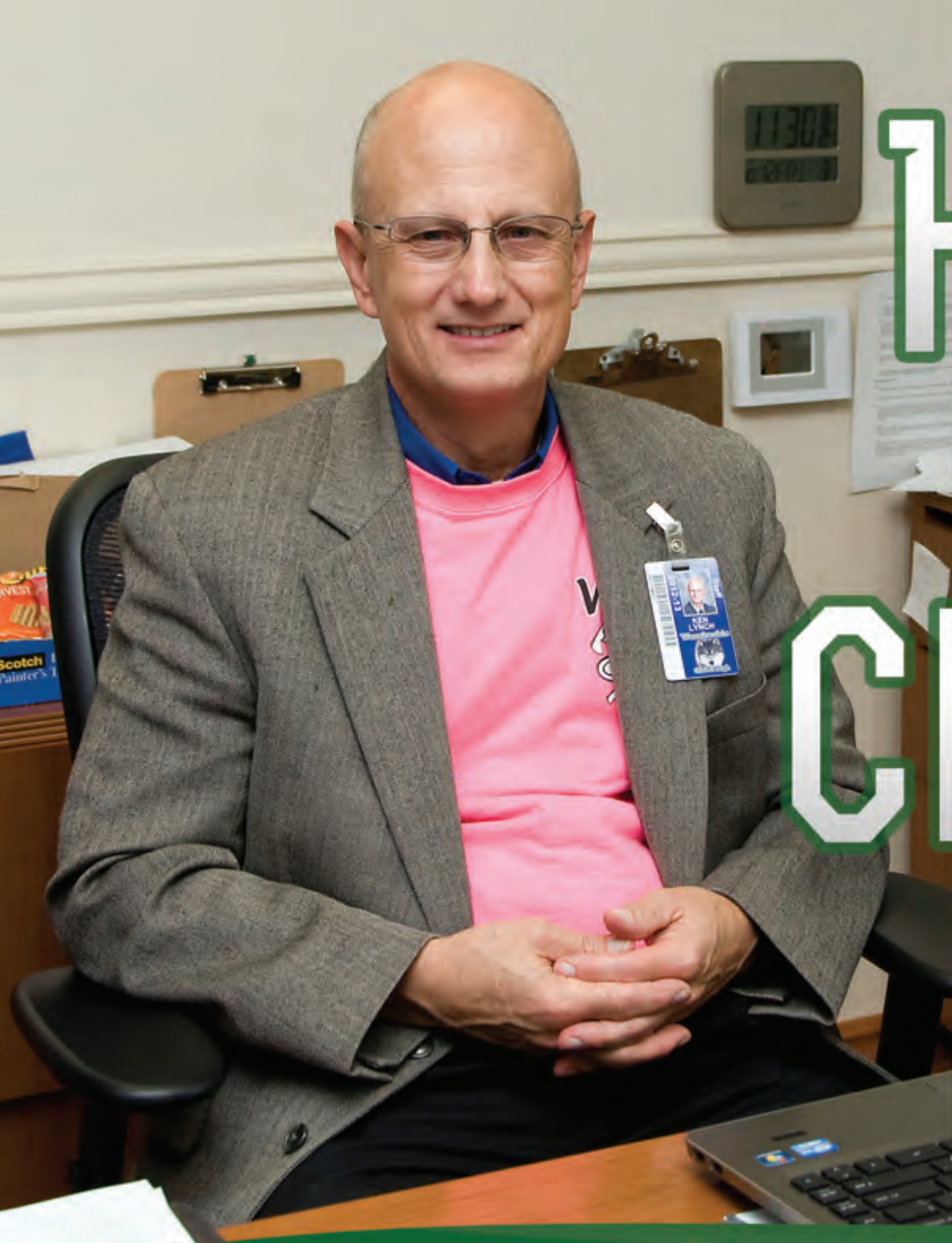
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— By Randy Bigbam

A trailblazing academy, once thought a risky experiment, is celebrating its sixth year as an integral part of the Waxahachie ISD. One of 58 facilities of its kind across Texas, Global High School maximizes the potential of students enrolled in its unique courses in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, subjects collectively known as STEM. Now also designated as an early college high school, Global's students can earn college credits beginning with

their freshman year and even graduate from high school with an associate degree. "All courses here are taught at a rigorous level," explained Don Snook, Global High's principal. "And that's true even during freshman and sophomore years, because our job is to prepare the students for the college classes they will take in their junior and senior years."

The implementation of a science and technology-driven campus that offers preliminary college education has



been a runaway success, and Don and his assistant principal, Ken Lynch, are proud of the strides the school and its students have made. "It is very satisfying to see the progress of our students, who come from all over Ellis County, not just



Waxahachie," Don said. "I tell people in the community that we have ordinary kids doing extraordinary things."

Ken is equally encouraged. "We are currently at capacity with a little over



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400 students," he pointed out. "We expect to have about 60 percent of our seniors graduate high school this year with their associate degree. Next year we expect that number to grow to as much as 75 percent."

The STEM plan was controversial when it was instituted by the district in 2007, but it has since won the public's full support. "At first there was the misconception that we were just a big experiment," Don reflected, "that we were



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so different from the traditional system kids wouldn't get a normal high school experience." That concern has faded as classes grow and students adapt to an environment that is new, and yet not as different as many feared. While there is no athletics program, Global offers most of the same social events and activities, such as prom night, that teenagers enjoy at other high schools.

"There's also the perception we are



only a school for smart kids,” Don continued. “Well, we’re not a school for smart kids, but we do produce smart kids.”

In fact, all Global High graduates have earned college credits and many have gone on to four-year campuses, some to Ivy League schools, some to Texas Tech University, the University of North Texas, The University of Texas at Austin and other leading state schools. Many have chosen to continue their education locally



at Navarro College, which already provides the courses that Global High students take to earn their formative credits and degrees. “We have a great relationship with Navarro,” Don confirmed. “The school waives tuition and Waxahachie ISD buys the books, so our students don’t have to pay for their college classes here.” Moreover, college credit classes at Navarro are carefully worked into the students’ schedule at Global.



One aspect of the facility’s status as an early college high school which helps pupils is that all courses are administered as they would be at a university or community college. This prepares students for the future and enables teachers to maintain more control of curriculum and class structure. For instance, the bell system for ending classes at most high schools is not employed at Global. “Here the teacher starts and ends the classes,” Don said.

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Even physical education (PE) classes are conducted at the college level. "It's not just rolling a ball and playing," Don affirmed. "Students keep a journal of their fitness progress, of what they eat and how they exercise." The PE course is among the first freshmen at Global take, earning them three credit hours (along with their college orientation classes), and it helps set the tone for their academic experience at this exceptional campus.

"We mirror college more than we mirror high school," Don said, although he concedes not every tactic can be based on the university model. A kinder attitude accompanies disciplinary situations, for example. "Teachers don't kick kids out of class here like a professor might do at college for inattentiveness or not

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doing homework,” Don added. “Instead, I’m able to step in and help the student get motivated to finish their college course work.”

Ken is similarly optimistic about the special curriculum and approach to study that Global sponsors. “Without attending an early college high school, a student is normally limited on the number of dual credit hours they are allowed to take,” Ken specified. “But our students can easily get the 63 hours they need for an associate degree.”

Both Don and Ken come to their positions well-seasoned. Don, a science teacher originally from Houston, has spent 15 years as an educator in the Dallas area. His past experience includes teaching and administrative posts in Duncanville, Irving and Mansfield ISDs. “When there was an opening at Global, with its focus on math and science,” Don said, “it seemed a perfect fit.”

In the business world for 10 years before going into education, Ken also has wide experience, serving in two Ellis County school districts — Midlothian and Red Oak — prior to Waxahachie. “I have taught every grade from fifth to 12th,” he admitted. “I’ve served as an assistant principal at both the junior high and high school levels.”

Ken and Don are excited about the future of Global. “Our students continue to be motivated,” Don acceded. “They know coming in the expectations are higher, and they deliver every time.”

Ken agreed, “We’re also expecting to increase the number of students we send to four-year institutions, majoring in some form of engineering. We would like for every student to have at the minimum at least 26 college hours.”

Both men find their jobs fulfilling. “I enjoy almost all aspects of my job,” Ken said, “but I think I most enjoy supporting the teachers to enable them to be successful in teaching the students.”

For Don the most rewarding part of his job is seeing the turnaround in students. “It’s a thrill to see kids who weren’t expected to graduate from high school, not only graduate, but do so with an associate degree in college. Many parents have told me it’s been the answer to their prayers, so it just doesn’t get any better than seeing these young people succeed.” **NOW**

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to a school friend, Wendy Russell Reves, who had left Marshall to become one of New York's top models in the 1930s. At the time the editorial was written, Ms. Reves, living in France, was the widow of a wealthy publisher and art collector. Ms. Reves responded to her friend with a check for \$25,000 to help her childhood



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light and sound show. Thousands enjoy the evening glide across the ice with special exhibition performances scheduled during the festival.

Occasionally, special events, like a marriage proposal, occur on the ice.

Young children can see the elves hard at work (or taking a nap) in their workshop in the North Pole Play Land. Just for children under age 10, an exciting experience includes the snowball hut, giant bounce house package and, of course, the Marshall Express train.

One of last year's most visited attractions was the Wonderland Mountain — a 32-foot tall slide with an exhilarating 10-second ride from top to bottom. Adjacent to the mountain is the Polar Challenge where testing your competition skills against yourself or your friends is always fun.

Snowflake, the giant rocking horse, brings back memories for those who recall hours rocking back and forth as a child. In the Wonderland Village, Snowflake awaits all who want to relive those memories by rocking 12 feet in the sky!

A picture, it has been said, is worth a thousand words, but what is a picture inside a snow globe worth to friends and family? Measuring 16 feet wide, up to six people can have that unusual holiday photo to express their holiday happiness.

Until he prepares to leave for the North Pole, Santa, along with Mrs. Claus, welcomes children to his workshop. Each child can make their train, decorate a cookie and, of course, tell Santa all of their dreams and wishes.

To enjoy seeing the millions of lights that Marshall has, visitors can enjoy a light tour on the old English double decker bus. Decked out with its own lights, a

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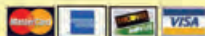
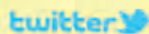
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tour guide welcomes each guest aboard to experience not only the brilliance of the community but to learn more about Marshall's 170-year history. Maps for drivers who want to do their own driving are provided in several locations throughout the Wonderland Village.

Several special events occur during the festival. Celebrity Chef, sponsored by Get Healthy Marshall, explores a healthy food menu. Participants can view the specialty foods as created by invited chefs and then actually enjoy them.

For artists or want-to-be artists, the Holiday Art Party is a fun-filled afternoon of painting one's own masterpiece. Even if you've never painted before, each person will finish with their own holiday masterpiece ready for display. Marshall is also becoming known for its resident artists, and during the festival local artists display their favorite holiday painting or other art form at the Visitors Center located at 301 N. Washington, in the Washington Square District. The art show is free and open daily during the festival. **NOW**

For a complete operating schedule, contact the Marshall Convention and Visitors Bureau at (903) 702-7777 or at www.VisitMarshallTexas.org. Photos by Ron Munden, EastTexasTowns.com.

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Kendall Wiley, the jewelry doctor, can help with any questions you may have about jewelry. His staff have a combined 50 years of experience. Wiley's offers a large variety of custom jewelry selections.



The Jewelry Doctor

The diamond of your dreams is waiting at Wiley's Diamonds & Fine Jewelry.

— By Sandra Strong

As a youngster, Kendall Wiley was a rock collector. As an adult, Kendall has taken his love of collecting rocks to another level as the owner of Wiley's Diamonds & Fine Jewelry. Kendall admits that his career choice was made on somewhat of a whim. When it came time for him to figure out what to do with the rest of his life following high school, he quickly realized that college didn't agree with him. "I had a couple friends who were managers at a jewelry store," Kendall remembered, "so I thought it might be neat to be a jeweler."

At the time of his epiphany, Kendall knew nothing about the rocks found in the jewelry business. He didn't even know what an amethyst was. "I was intrigued by gemstones and diamonds," he said. "I decided to attend Paris Junior College in Paris, Texas,

because it was considered to be one of the best jewelry schools in the world."

Following graduation, Kendall worked for an established jeweler who taught Kendall everything he knew. Now 32 years later, Kendall is still the same boy — he just has a much larger rock collection. "I've been in Waxahachie for the past 18 years," he said. "My philosophy about business is simple. I treat customers the way I want to be treated. I offer great quality merchandise at a great price, while servicing what I sell."

Over the years, Kendall has expanded his knowledge of diamonds. He still gets excited when it comes time to travel abroad for diamonds. "I take two trips a year to Antwerp, Belgium, in October and April," Kendall explained. "It's the

diamond capitol of the world. I have direct contacts that have allowed me to see stones actually being cut. The access to this process is amazing.”

Sixty percent of Wiley’s Diamonds & Fine Jewelry business comes from bridal selections throughout the year. “It’s nice to know people are still getting married,” Kendall smiled. “The diamond of your dreams is waiting for you here.” Wiley’s also offers a large selection of custom designs, including rings, necklaces, bracelets and pendants, as well as a full line of high school class rings.

No longer do customers have to take unwanted jewelry to the Metroplex, since Wiley’s Diamonds & Fine Jewelry also buys jewelry. “People are cleaning out their jewelry boxes. We pay for the

“I take great pride in having selections for everyone’s budget.”

diamonds, as well as the metal.” The money generated from the sale of the jewelry brought in goes directly into marketing — billboards, magazines and the Internet. The company’s Facebook page offers special promotions and jewelry advice, while also introducing new products. “They call me the jewelry doctor,” Kendall said, referring to his more than 1,000 Facebook followers. “I give them updates, and I share some personal stuff. There’s been some good interaction. I’ve seen lots of response, and it’s been a lot of fun.”

Kendall loves coming to work every day. He and his staff have well over 80 years of combined experience. Last year was the best year yet for Wiley’s Diamonds & Fine Jewelry. “This year is shaping up to be even better,” Kendall admitted. “December is a busy month. We have everything — and more. All price ranges are appreciated.” Kendall still enjoys doing business the old-fashioned way. “I enjoy meeting customers face-to-face, and I take great pride in having selections for everyone’s budget.” **NOW**

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Sloan Smith looks at oversized class rings while his mom shops at Wiley's Jewelry.



Helen Skoda and Katie Bean get ready to lift off on their birthday hot air balloon ride.



Martin Peraz easily blows leaves into his truck with his new equipment.



Ruby, Ethan and Tate Simmons take a break from shopping and eating donuts.



Air Evac Lifeteam members pilot Henry Carter, paramedic Haylee Phillips and flight nurse Kim Loflin educate shoppers at Home Depot.



The Southwestern Assemblies of God University Jazz Ensemble performs at the Lighthouse Coffee Bar's art and music festival in Midlothian.



The Waxahachie Chamber of Commerce holds a ribbon cutting for Pizze Inn.



One of the favorite drinks at the Bob Phillips Festival was Chuck Wagon's old fashioned soda.



Bob Phillips, Texas Country Reporter, signs autographs during the festival held in his honor.



Sleeping beauty, Addyson Ponce, takes a nap while her mom shops downtown.

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The Tough Conversation All Couples Should Have

— By Adam Rope

If asked, most couples would say it's important to protect the financial future of their families in the event of a spouse's unexpected death. Yet 74 percent of couples rarely or never discuss the topic of life insurance as part of their financial planning strategy, according to a 2010 life insurance study. A 2011 study from finance research firm LIMRA revealed that 41 percent of U.S. adults don't even have life insurance.

That doesn't mean it's not on their minds. Sixty-two percent of respondents said uncertainty in the economy makes having life insurance even more important than it had previously been.

Bringing up the subject can be difficult. It may be that discussing the unexpected death of a spouse is awkward. Or that one spouse already feels the pressure of being the primary wage earner. Or that a spouse who has recently lost a job will react negatively to the topic. But whatever the obstacles, talking about life insurance is critical to both partners — even if one earns substantially more than the other, or one doesn't earn an income.

To start the discussion, try these tips:

- Talk before you're in a financial crisis. Pick a time when you're not stressed and treat the topic as you would any other aspect of your financial planning.
- Make a plan that incorporates life insurance as a primary component of your overall financial strategy. Having a plan in place can be reassuring if your circumstances change.



- Set a monthly budget and learn what options you can afford. Schedule follow-up evaluations and adjust your coverage as your needs, family situation and income change.
- Consult an insurance expert who can provide an outside perspective and make the discussion less stressful.
- Focus your discussion on the love you have for your family and your desire to protect it from financial burdens, rather than on the possible death of a spouse.

Contact your insurance agent to learn more about the life insurance options that can protect your family's future. **NOW**

Adam Rope is a State Farm agent based in Waxahachie.

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The E Myth

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

It may come as a shock but vitamin E is not the panacea for scars some people thought it would be. Vitamin E is essential and has many necessary functions, but alas, not for scar removal. Hopes have been definitively dashed with a published report from the *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology* (Dec. 2006) that concluded, "The evidence that topical vitamin E alone improves the cosmetic appearance of scars is poor. It is also associated with a high incidence of contact dermatitis. The use of vitamin E should, therefore, be discouraged." So, far from being the cure, it can cause additional problems and dermatologists consider it contraindicated for use for that purpose.

There are many positive functions for vitamin E. It is an antioxidant that protects body tissue from damage caused by free radicals. Free radicals are molecules that cause tissue damage. Free radicals are thought to contribute to visible signs of aging. This vitamin also plays a role in improving our immune system. The first line of defense for the body is the skin, and vitamin E, along with other vitamins, works to keep the skin cells healthy. Another function of vitamin E is helping in the formation and protection of red blood cells.

Vitamin E is a fat soluble vitamin found naturally in many foods and will interact with some medications and with some conditions. You should check with your doctor first before embarking on a campaign to increase intake of any vitamin. Believe it or not, in incorrect doses, some vitamins, particularly

fat soluble ones that stay in your body for a while, can do more harm than good. For example, too much vitamin E can interfere in the functions of vitamin K. If you have taken too much vitamin E, you might experience headaches, diarrhea, nausea, fatigue, muscle weakness and possibly abnormal bleeding.

The total amount of vitamin E required per day is quite small. It is possible to get what you need from your daily diet. It is found in vegetable oils, olive oil, nuts, meats, eggs, vegetables and whole grains. Vitamin E deficiency is actually a rare occurrence and is treated by vitamin E supplements.

Although the news is disappointing regarding vitamin E and its relevance to helping improve the appearance of scars, the vitamin is extremely useful and essential for the proper function of many cells and organs within the body. If you eat properly every day, you will receive what you need for a healthy level of vitamin E. **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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Special Gifts for Special Gardeners

— By Nancy Fenton

It's time to think about those special gifts for your favorite gardener friends. Generally, it's always easy to find gloves and tarps, but special things take some planning ahead! Tools for special tasks must be found and often require ordering. Let's face facts: most large stores put away their gardening things to make room for Christmas items. I use the Internet and garden catalogues for very special gifts. Some of my favorite gifts are hand gardening tools with cushioned, large handles. An easy place to find them is: www.radiusgarden.com, where you can also find long-handled, sharp spades with lots of soft handles. Those little benches on which you can kneel or sit would look good under my tree, since I am still recovering from my back surgery. These can be found on www.gardeners.com, as well as the very light weight, collapsible bags that will hold up to three gallons of leaves or other items. Nearly every gardener I know would love to have some plant stakes of their very own. Kids can personalize plastic knives on a cold dreary day, or you can go the extra mile and snip some metal ones from tin or aluminum. A decent selection can be viewed at www.gardeners.com, and sometimes they can be found at the garden stores.

One of the things on my list is a pair of gloves with extra-long cuffs or gauntlets to protect my arms as I dig and prune. Various pieces of clothing are also available with built-in mosquito repellent. For a quick, easier-to-find gift consider repellent wipes. If the stores no longer carry the summer sprays, try the sporting goods or the hunting sections for the wipes.

Plants and gift certificates are always great, as are books. Books should probably be specific to the area, since each area has things that grow better in them than others. For suggestions and list of books for Texas, try the Texas A&M bookstore online or your local bookstore. Have a great holiday and tune in next month for more plant discussions. Call the Master Gardeners of Ellis County at (972) 825-5175 with questions or for more information. **NOW**

Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener.

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December 7-8

Christmas Music Revue: 7:00 p.m., Texas Theater, 110 W. Main. For more information, call (972) 937-0073.

December 7, 8, 9

Bethlehem Revisited: 6:00-9:00 p.m., Central Presbyterian Church, 402 N. College St. Performances are repeated every 30 minutes. Call (972) 937-2390 for more details.

December 8

Shepherd's Run Holiday Bazaar: 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Covenant Place, 401 Solon Rd. Vendors specialize in handmade crafts, jewelry, home goods, holiday décor and so much more. For more information, call (972) 923-9911

Photos With Santa: Noon-5:00 p.m., Boyce Feed & Grain, 441 S. College St.

December 8-9

2012 Candlelight Home Tour: 2:00-8:00 p.m. Call (972) 937-2390 for more information on featured homes and tickets.

December 15

Arena of Lights: 6:00-9:00 p.m., hayrides begin at Boyce Feed & Grain, \$1 per person/free with donation of a canned good, presented by the Waxahachie Rodeo Complex.

Visit With Santa Claus: Noon-3:00 p.m., Adam Rope State Farm, 1314 W. Hwy 287 Bypass. For photograph details and Toys for Tots donations, call (972) 938-3232.

Ongoing:

Fourth Mondays

Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis County meetings: 6:30-8:30 p.m., Waxahachie Bible Church, 621 Grand Ave.

Third Tuesdays

Veterans Networking Group meetings: 5:00 p.m., Ryan's Steak House, Hwy 287 Bypass and 77. Call Mike Lamb at (214) 763-0378 for more information.

Second Thursdays

Crackpots meetings: 6:30 p.m., Cowboy Church of Ennis. Event offers a meal and entertainment for those who are 55 and older. Call Vicki Bell at (469) 285-4845 or Myra Morrissey at (972) 998-5868 for more information.

Fridays

Business Networking International meetings: 8:00-9:30 a.m., LaQuinta, 311 Stadium Dr. For more information, call (469) 222-9160.

Third Saturdays

Waxahachie Jamboree: 7:00-9:30 p.m., Women's Building, 407 W. Jefferson St. For more information, call Hoyt Patterson at (214) 535-3473 or visit www.waxahachiejamboree.com.

Fourth Saturdays

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

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


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In The Kitchen With Sylvia Sallee

— By Sandra Strong

One day while Sylvia Sallee's mother was at work, her dad asked her to bake him a spice cake. "I was only 13," she remembered. "I had not made anything without my mother's help." Sylvia followed the recipe, and her dad seemed pleased with the outcome. "That's when I started venturing out, trying my hand in the kitchen."

Although her mom is 95, Sylvia still calls on her for cooking advice every now and then. "Mom very seldom followed recipe instructions," Sylvia explained. "She would add a little of this and a little of that or leave something out to make the recipe to her liking. I continue to do the same thing." Sylvia also loves cooking for her family because they are such a blessing to her. **NOW**

Mother's Orange Slice Cake

Cake:

- 1 lb. orange candy slices, cut in small pieces, or candied fruit of your choice**
- 2 pkgs. dates, cut in small pieces**
- 1 or 2 cups pecans, chopped (your choice)**
- 4 cups flour, divided use**
- 1 cup butter or Crisco**
- 2 cups sugar**
- 4 eggs**
- 1 tsp. soda**
- 1 1/2 cups buttermilk**
- 1 tsp. vanilla**
- 1/4 tsp. salt**

Glaze:

- 1/2 cup orange juice**
- 1 cup brown or white sugar**

1. For cake: Mix candy, dates and pecans in

a large bowl. Pour 1 cup of flour over the mixture; set aside.

- 2.** Cream butter and sugar. Add eggs; beating well. Add soda to buttermilk; then add the remaining flour. Add the vanilla and salt. Combine all with candy mixture; stir well.
- 3.** Bake at 250 F in a well-greased and floured Bundt pan or small loaf pans for approximately 2 hours.
- 4.** For glaze: Bring juice and sugar to a boil. Pour over cake.

Bardwell School House Cookies

- 1 cup sugar**
- 1 cup Crisco**
- 1 cup molasses**
- 3 eggs**
- 2 cups flour**
- 3 tsp. baking powder**

- 1 tsp. vanilla**
- 1 tsp. cinnamon**
- 1 tsp. allspice**
- 1 tsp. clove**
- 1 tsp. salt**
- 1 tsp. soda**

1. Mix all ingredients together. Bake at 375 F for 8-10 minutes. You can delete any spice you may not like.

Pecan Creams

- 2 1/2 cups sugar**
- 1/2 cup Eagle brand evaporated milk**
- 1/2 cup Karo syrup**
- 1 stick butter**
- 1/4 tsp. salt**
- 1 cup nuts, chopped**
- 1 tsp. vanilla**

1. Mix the first 5 ingredients in a medium sauce pan; cook over medium heat for 5 minutes. Add nuts and vanilla when mixture begins to boil.

2. Stir until it starts to thicken and begins to lose its shine. Pour into a buttered dish to cool.

Mother's Date Roll

- 2 8-oz. pkgs. dates, chopped**
 - 1 can Eagle brand evaporated milk**
 - 2 or 3 cups pecans, chopped**
 - 1 pkg. miniature marshmallows**
 - 1 tsp. vanilla**
- Graham cracker crumbs**

1. Mix all ingredients, except cracker crumbs, in a large bowl. Wash hands, leaving them wet.

2. With hands, work cracker crumbs in a little bit at a time until mixture holds together. Divide into 5 equal balls.

3. Roll each ball into rolls approximately 8-inches long. Wrap rolls in plastic wrap; then foil.

4. Store in refrigerator; using as needed. May also be frozen.

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


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