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February 2008

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Sights High**

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*Wedding
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Photo by Terri Ozymy.

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MAGAZINE

Editor's Note

Greetings, Southwest Friends!

February is known as the month for expressing and sharing love. Glean inspiration from Joel and Sabrina Porter's version of sharing, not only love, but their home and lives as you read our home feature.

In our main feature, let Barry and Betty Lee from Duncanville introduce you to Asian culture. Learn the challenges involved in rearing five children with a blend of Asian and American cultures and languages!

Up for adventure? Meet Bill Griffith, Formula Vee race car builder, restorer and racer. Experience the vicarious drive of a lifetime in our sports feature.

It is never too early to begin thinking about college. Enjoy your visit to the University of Fairmeadows, cleverly disguised as Fairmeadows Elementary School in Duncanville.

Do not forget to try some of Patrick McGinnis' fireman recipes, and Lovita Irby, in DeSoto, is an artist you will love getting to know.

Speaking of talented artists, we had a beautiful painting of an American Indian on our cover last month. Our sincere apologies to the artist, Lynn LaRose, for inadvertently failing to credit the piece. You can see more of her artwork on her Web site: www.laroseart.com.

I hope you will *love* this issue!

Beverly Shay

SouthwestNOW Editor



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— By Beverly Shay

Eleven cities in Texas boast membership in the Inclusive Community Program (ICP), a program designed to help cities “promote equality and bring attention to issues of diversity and race relations.” Since Duncanville is one of those cities, perhaps all will find it of interest to discover how one Asian couple has addressed their own cultural adjustment as they rear their children here in Duncanville, Texas. Most people would look at Barry and Betty Lee and remain unaware of the cultural differences between them. To the average American, Asians “all look alike.” “China, with its various provinces, is as much a ‘melting pot’ as America,” Barry informed, as he delved into their backgrounds.

Betty, born in Taiwan, speaks Taiwanese and learned Mandarin at age 7. “Taiwan is made up of three main groups — native Taiwanese; those from China, whom we call ‘local Taiwanese’; and nationals, who fled the mainland hoping to return one day, yet have been in Taiwan for 50 plus years. Taiwanese goals and lifestyle are very different from communist China,” Betty explained.

Hong Kong, a British colony until 1997, is now considered “a special administrative region of China.” Barry was reared in Hong Kong, speaking Cantonese. “As we were growing up, neither of us ever dreamed we’d come to America,” Barry stated. Both attended parochial schools for part of their education.

Betty’s Lutheran mission school hosted a group called

American Christian College Alliance during her junior year. She assisted the representative from Texas; he was so impressed with her that they offered her the first full undergraduate

scholarship to Dallas Baptist University (DBU) upon high school graduation. Previously, DBU only offered graduate program scholarships. Betty arrived in Dallas in 1989. “I wanted to learn everything American,” Betty shyly enthused. “First I studied nursing, but changed my major to biology and psychology. I really like people and am very people-oriented,” she explained.

Having completed high school, Barry was looking for something “different.” He, too, met recruiters from

DBU and other secondary American schools. “I filled out an application that went to several schools. I don’t really know



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why I chose to come to Dallas — perhaps it was the television show called *Dallas* I had seen in Hong Kong in my early teens,” Barry confided.

Barry arrived at DBU a few days before turning 18 years of age to study business and finance. “We met at DBU,” Betty explained. “But we really got to know each other in the Chinese student fellowship group led by Mandarin-speaking Professor Kung and some Cantonese-speaking seminarians from Hong Kong attending Dallas Theological Seminary.” They understood how easily Asian young people could be caught up and lost in the “foreign” American culture.

“They were very persistent about inviting us to their Bible study,” Betty remembered. “Even when I ignored them,” Barry added with a smile. “Most people think all Chinese are communists. It is more a political stance than a belief. You have to join the Communist Party in order to be in politics; however, many wealthy people in China are not a member of the Communist Party. Joining the Communist Party doesn’t necessarily mean you are an atheist,” he further explained.

“China has hundreds of years of cultural influences in ancestral beliefs, like reincarnation, animism, theism, Buddhism and pantheism. People very religiously worship at the temples to thousands of gods, although many are very confused about who they worship,” Barry stated. “Tao and Confucius were philosophers, not religious leaders. Many Chinese see Buddha as a genie of sorts; it is better to

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believe there is some god, something supernatural — if it doesn't turn out to be true, then they have lost nothing," Barry continued.

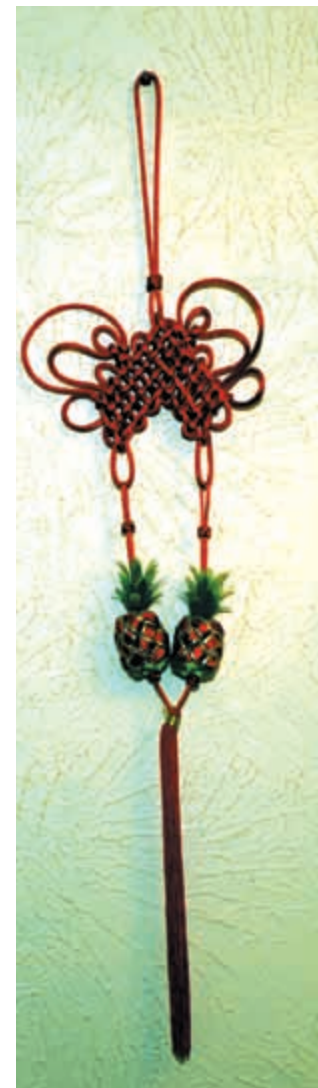
"I learned about the Christian God in seventh grade," Betty said. "I didn't find salvation in Jesus until I attended the fellowship at DBU. I did learn about prayer at a fellowship in junior high and began to pray for my family. I really think God sent me to Dallas. I didn't know I would stay in America," Betty commented.

Following graduation from DBU, Barry went back to Hong Kong for six months, but returned for graduate school and a practical training (OPT) job. He was hired permanently, working

for seven years in financial analysis and business planning, before starting his own investment and consulting business four years ago.

The Lees married in 1998 and have since had five children: Nathan (9), Christine (7 1/2), Anna (6), James (5) and Daniel (4). "We are on a cultural journey with our children," stated Barry, "between the Chinese, American and Christian cultures. Our goal is for them speak Cantonese

and Mandarin, so they can communicate with their grandparents. Betty speaks to them in Taiwanese and Mandarin; I



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speaking in Cantonese. We have taken them to Asia in the summers, so they will know their grandparents and also experience their cultural heritage firsthand."

Of course, American culture is the dominant influence in their lives. "But



"We are trying to achieve a balance between our faith, our heritage and our new homeland."

we seek to implement the 'good' parts of their Asian cultural background: the importance of communication and respect for elders. Many American-Asians find themselves pulled between the differences of Asian and American cultures concerning respect for elders."

There are few Asians in Duncanville, where the Lees live. Those in the Dallas/Fort Worth area are mostly educated professionals, second-generation Americans, who view themselves as more American than Asian/Chinese. In fact, Mayor Joe Chow of Addison is originally from Taiwan.

The Chinese New Year, celebrated on February 7 this year, is the main holiday. "The Chinese calendar is a lunar calendar," explained Barry, "so the New

Year varies from January to February. We celebrate by taking vacation and visiting relatives. The older people give red envelopes containing money to the younger ones and married couples give to singles. It is a big deal."

The Lees homeschool their children — something quite uncommon in both Chinese and American-Chinese cultures. "We are trying to achieve a balance between our faith, our heritage and our new homeland. Betty worked in counseling and volunteered with a crisis pregnancy center before the children came along. She does help me



some with the business," Barry said.

Betty, whose native language is not English, finds phonics a challenge, so their children are tutored in English. "Nathan has already outsmarted me; he has such a love for learning. He was bored in the private school he previously attended. But we may have to find another place to satisfy his appetite for learning," Betty reflected.

Homeschooling allows them the flexibility to include their family's Christian beliefs and cultural diversity. "There is a Chinese saying that roughly translates, 'Better to travel than to read 10,000 books.' We are teaching them in the way we believe God wants them to go," Barry concluded. **NOW**

Editor's Note: Barry and Betty Lee both received their United States citizenship on December 18, 2007.

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Foundation of Friendship

— By Sandra McIntosh

Joel and Sabrina Porter are living, walking, breathing proof that you can have the marriage most couples only dream about. “I have the marriage that society said was not available and would never happen,” Sabrina said, referring to what will be 14 years of wedded bliss on July 2. “Joel is the full package; the real deal. He’s friendly and he knows how to build others up.”

Their whirlwind romance began with a blind date. “Mutual friends brought us together,” Joel said. “The friend was telling me he had someone he wanted me to meet, while his wife was telling Sabrina the same thing.” Deciding it could not hurt, Joel gave Sabrina a call. They chatted for a good long while. For some reason, Sabrina felt as if she needed to tell him about her past. Joel just listened and then to her surprise, asked her on their first date. “We ate at Snuffer’s Restaurant in Upper Greenville [in Dallas],” he said. “That was December 2. I proposed on January 29.” The proposal should

have been enough to let Sabrina know she was in for a lifetime of romance, mixed with understanding, patience and unconditional love. “We ate at Nana’s Grill,” Sabrina grinned. “Then he took me to what once was the sky lobby at the Texas Commerce Bank Building.

on her and listened to what she had to say then, as he still does today. “He wanted to know everything about me,” she remembered. “It was about building a friendship.” Sabrina admitted that she tried many times during the short courtship to sabotage the relationship

with her words. It was difficult for her to understand what Joel saw in her, since he had been reared in the church and she had not. “I knew I was going to marry Joel when my past didn’t matter to him,” she said, looking across the family room at the man she just adores. “I also knew we’d have babies!” Joel



**At Home With
Joel and Sabrina Porter**

He proposed in Spanish and my answer was a simple, yet heartfelt, ‘Sí.’”

From the beginning, Sabrina was infatuated with Joel’s kindness, goodness and honesty. She loved the way he doted

sent a beautiful bouquet of yellow roses to Sabrina’s office the morning following their third date. “I kept pursuing the relationship because I could sense the amazing gift Sabrina



had with people," he said, with pride in his voice. "Speaking and reading the needs of others comes natural for her."

Before relocating to their four-bedroom, three-bath traditional style home, the Porters lived in Richardson. It was where the couple's three children — Rachel, Mason and Caleb, 12, 10 and 9 respectively — were born. Sabrina had been working part-time at Grace Presbyterian Village, a faith-based, continuing-care retirement community, while Joel went to work each morning at TXU. Sabrina's commute to Cedar Hill from Richardson was just a normal part of her daily routine. Following her full-time job offer at the facility, the family seriously began thinking about moving.

Once Joel warmed to the idea of leaving his friends and neighbors behind, Sabrina and Rachel began house hunting on the Internet. "They had looked at over a dozen houses when they came across this one," Joel explained. "This house was actually the last one they looked at, and they almost missed it." Mother and daughter had spent a great deal of time looking

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for the home, when Rachel spotted the For Sale sign. "I turned around and went back," Sabrina said, adding that the owner was just about to back out of his driveway as they pulled in. "He spent over two hours that Saturday afternoon showing Rachel and I around the place."

Joel experienced what many consider a 'wow' moment when he saw the untouched acreage for the first time, noticing how it slopes down from the main road. He wanted a workshop, and Sabrina was looking for the perfect place for her horses. After some time and a bit of persuasion, Joel retired from TXU and moved his family to Cedar Hill in March 2005. "We had

promised one another that we'd always raise the children ourselves. We agreed that one of us would be home with the kids," Joel said, speaking of his new duties as a stay-at-home father. "My job at TXU had changed so much, and her job providing quality of life for her residents, as well as a staff of over 400, is so much more meaningful."

The home, which rests on three-and-one-half acres, is the perfect place for the entertaining Joel and Sabrina enjoy doing. Not only do they host Church of Christ fellowships and Cub Scout meetings, they also go one step further. "Joel opens the workshop to the gentleman who reside at The Village,"

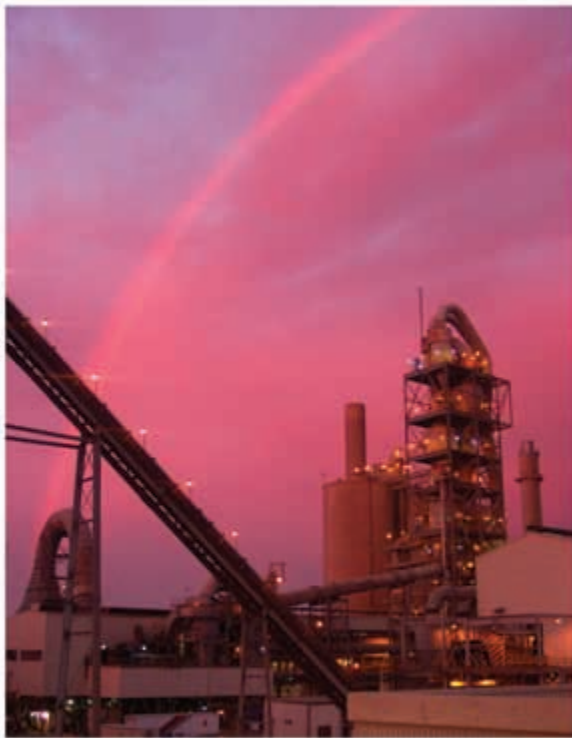
Sabrina said. "In fact, we've given them a name. They're referred to as the 'Woodmen of Grace.'" The workshop gatherings began with a couple of men who wanted to work with their hands

fixing and repairing things; it grew to a group that comes once a month to work on various projects. "The residents at The Village are our extended family," Joel said. "The kids say they have 300 sets of grandparents."

Sabrina is thankful the family enjoys



spending time at The Village, especially since it is her "home away from home." "I guess you could say it's a 24/7 kind of job," she explained. "I'm blessed because my family loves spending time



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here. That's a good thing, otherwise we wouldn't see each other very often." She also wants her children to understand the wisdom they can gain from befriending the elderly. "Yes, the kids can read stories about the past," Sabrina said, "but to know some of the



storytellers one-on-one makes a huge difference in the learning experience."


Lots of remodeling had to be completed once the Porters moved into their new home. Every wall in the house was retextured and repainted

except the walls that are paneled and those found in Rachel's bedroom. The galley kitchen was totally redone in shades that are complementary to the new colors incorporated throughout the home's interior. In time, Joel plans on adding cedar woodwork to the home's interior and extending the patio to accommodate the addition of a screened-in back porch.

They have a wonderful place they share with friends and extended family. The children have plenty of space to run and play. They are close to everything important. "My job is 12 miles down the road," Sabrina said. "Our church is right across the street and Home Depot and Braum's are just down the road." Looking back, Joel and Sabrina can honestly say the move to Cedar Hill was definitely the right thing to do. **NOW**



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4 Know the best fit for your body type.

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5 Custom or pre-made?

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6 Ask for a reference.

If you are having trouble deciding where to buy your gown, ask a recent bride where she purchased her dress.



7 Keep the season in mind.

Before selecting a gown, keep the time of year you are getting married in mind. If it is cold, you will want to purchase a wrap for that sleeveless gown.

8 Take a friend (or two) with you.

Taking friends with you to try on a dress will make the decision process easier.

9 Try something different.

Worried you will have the same dress as every other bride? Try something different ... perhaps a red dress?



10 Keep it fun.

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Wedding Directory



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Every Flower Has Its Place

Create an intimate setting by adding flowers to each place setting. Begin by tying a ribbon around each napkin. Next, place a single flower under the ribbons or sprinkle rose petals on top of the napkins. As an added bonus, you can also use these as place card holders. Write the names of your guests on small slips of paper, punch a hole in each piece of paper and slide the ribbons through. Your guests will feel special knowing you took the time to make their table look beautiful.

Gifts for the Guests

To create a table piece that is stunning and can serve as a thank you gift for your guests, place flowers in small bud vases and set them in front of each plate or wine glass at the table. Not only will you achieve the same effect as a larger arrangement, but you will give your guests a dinner favor with which to remember their experience.

Fit to be Tied

Tie a ribbon around a bunch of flowers, and place it in the middle of a round table. If you have a longer table, place three bunches along the middle of the table to give the illusion of a bigger centerpiece. Use vases (found at local craft stores) to add height to the table and create a dramatic feel. Remember not to have too much height or too many vases, or your guests may feel that they cannot speak to one another across the table.

Around Town Cedar Hill

NOW



The Cedar Hill Chamber welcomed several new members, top left, at a recent meeting. The Chamber honored William Ballengee, middle left, as Bray Elementary's student of the month. They also honored Shannon Sheely, bottom left, as the student of the month for Lake Ridge Elementary. Golfers were ready for the shotgun start at the Tangle Ridge Golf Course, top right. Dwight Bosworth, middle center, guest of Texas Trust Credit Union, arrived at the Tangle Ridge Golf Course via helicopter. The Wal-Mart team, middle right, was last but not least at the Chamber's annual golf tournament held at Tangle Ridge Golf Course. During Business on the Hill, bottom right, Judge Mike Petty talked with Sherry Kennedy of Proforma A-Z Specialists, while attorney David Vedral looked on.




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Around Town DeSoto

NOW



Mayor Bobby Waddle and James Farmer III, top left, attended the Kwanza Celebration. James read his Kwanza essay during the celebration. Mr. and Mrs. Scott Livingston, bottom left, posed with Chamber director Cammy Henderson. Miss Texas, top center, was recently on hand for photos. Several people attended the Town Center groundbreaking ceremony, top right. The Honorable Thelma Clardy and Roy Orr, middle right, also attended the Kwanza celebration. Curtestine McCowan and Virgil Helm, bottom left, braved the cooler temperatures to attend the long-awaited Town Center groundbreaking ceremony. The Chamber of Commerce, bottom right, held a groundbreaking ceremony for Town Center.



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Around Town Duncanville

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Duncanville held their annual Christmas parade, top left. Members of the Bat Zion Messianic Congregation, top center, celebrate the church's 10th anniversary. Dorothy Wolverton as Mother Nature, Bobby Hill as Miss Buttercup and Keep Duncanville Beautiful board member Claudia Zakutney, top right, posed for photos during a visit to the senior center where they spoke on the four Rs of recycling. Parks and Recreation Director Shane Gravens, second row left, served lunch to his employees to thank them for all their hard work in 2007. Beverly Shay, *SouthwestNOW* community editor, middle center, interviewed a student for an upcoming feature article. Messianic praise and worship artist Ted Pearce and his sons, middle right, joined the Bat Zion congregation in giving thanks for 10 successful years of ministry. Family Community Careers Leadership of America members NaTosha Fisher, Whitney Ford and Alyssa Dotson, bottom left, performed at the Duncanville Public Library. A girl, bottom right, waves at the Duncanville annual Christmas parade.

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ARTS NOW

Painting a Lifetime

— By Alex Allred

If the saying holds true that a picture is worth a thousand words, artist Lovita Irby could not possibly fill enough canvasses to tell her life story. An artist in the truest form, hers has been a life filled with extreme highs and lows. She has reached the pinnacle of success in her profession, owning and operating her own art gallery, and she has experienced the most devastating grief after the loss of both of her sons.

She has hobnobbed with celebrities, attended private dinner parties outside Hollywood, served as an expert witness on the JFK movie set with Oliver Stone and Kevin Costner; and committed the most heinous of crimes in the Dallas metroplex when she befriended former Dallas Cowboy Charlie Waters and did not know who he was. "I am not a football person," Lovita said, explaining that when the legendary safety called her in need of art lessons, she had no idea who he was. "He wanted to do a painting for the cover of his book. We'd been talking for a while when he said he needed to go to a personal appearance." Lovita was surprised. "I asked him if he was famous or something." When Charlie responded that he had once been, Lovita promptly put him on hold. "I asked my husband if he'd ever

heard of Charlie Waters. He said, '*The Charlie Waters?*'"

As the story goes, Lovita got back on the phone and said, "My husband says he loves you." To which Charlie replied, "A lot of men do." It was the beginning of what was to become a very special relationship. Charlie was there for Lovita and Ken Irby when both of their sons died (both in freak accidents, occurring years apart from each other.) He was also there when the Irbys adopted their beautiful children, Terri, 17, and Dalton, 13. Today, Charlie often drops by Lovita's art gallery to toss the old pigskin with Dalton. While Charlie once joked, "Lovita doesn't know a Super Bowl from a toilet bowl!" She does know her art.

By the age of 6, Lovita discovered her passion for painting. Sweeping landscapes, rolling hills and meadows filled with bluebonnets were her inspiration. Her parents, however, were her true motivation. "My parents had an art gallery," Lovita said. It quickly



turned into a framing business as her father worked hard to create frames for each of her paintings. With each stroke of the paintbrush, her parents encouraged her artistic nature and unwittingly helped create one of today's best-known Texan artists.

She began showing her work at local art shows, paying small fees for a display area. Then, in 1972, a representative approached her from the Texas State Fair. Within weeks, Lovita went from an unknown to an official State Fair artist. "I was the guest feature at the State Fair," Lovita said shyly. "It was a pretty big deal. The first day, I sold out."

In fact, she had to go "buy back" her own paintings from friends and family just to fill her booth the following day. Lovita remained an artist at the State Fair for another 30 years, saying the entire experience was life altering. Today she serves as an art judge at the State Fair.

Perhaps the greatest gift she received



ARTS NOW

from that experience was the relationship she developed with actor and artist Buck Taylor. Best known for his role as "Newly" on *Gunsmoke*, he is an amazing artist who worked alongside Lovita. "I can't say enough about Lovita," Buck said. "She is an incredible woman."

Rather than be intimidated or threatened by a fellow artist, Lovita embraced him and instantly wanted to help. "He used to do all his own framing," she recalled. "All white mats with metal frames." No colors, no creative license. Lovita could not stand it, so she made him a deal. "Just let me select the mats and frames," she said. "If it sells, you can pay me later." Suddenly, his pictures began selling before Buck could even hang them on the walls.

In turn, Buck continues to pay Lovita back for her kindness. Since their meeting, Lovita has sponsored an art show for Buck's work at her Bluebonnet Art Gallery and Custom Framing studio every two years with tremendous success, and Buck has remained the most devoted of friends. After the death of her second son, Buck stayed at her side. "He said, 'You will make it through this,' and 'You will talk to me.' I just thought I didn't want to live anymore." Then, "God provided these two children for us," Lovita added. Bright, inquisitive, beautiful children, Terri and Dalton became an inspiration to the artist. "I'd stopped painting. I just couldn't anymore," she said. "But last year, I started to paint again."

So many years ago when she began painting at her grandmother's farm, while the scenery was certainly important, Lovita always painted from the heart. She paints as she lives life: enjoying everyone and everything around her. There is nothing abstract about her work, and she is as colorful, vibrant and inviting as the pictures she has painted on canvass. **NOW**



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Sports
NOW

Get a Bigger Hammer

— By Beverly Shay

Not everybody wants 14 cars in their garage, but it does not bother Bill Griffith one little bit. All are Formula Vee racing cars, and each one has a history. “I have driven every one of these cars but one,” he stated contentedly. “I have been racing since 1973. Formula Vees, built since 1963, are designed to run on European-type road-racing (non-oval) courses, such as Watkins Glen in New York, the oldest road-racing track in the country. Based on a VW [Volkswagen] bug, they have a VW front end, suspension, wheels, engine and transmission and custom-built frames,” Bill elaborated.

Essentially, Bill has a classic museum, depicting the evolution of Formula Vee racecars from rounded Porsche-type bodies to sleeker, faster ones — including some Bill custom-designed himself. He does not own all these cars, but he does drive them. Bill researches each car he works on and rebuilds it to the original specs, while adding higher roll bars, six-point harnesses and fuel cells, all meeting today’s fire-resistant safety standards.

“My father was stationed as a squadron commander in England when I was a child. One day, we watched cars racing on a closed airport runway. I can still see the cars going by in a big pack. It was thrilling; I knew I wanted to do that. I went to 12 different schools in 12 years; at every one, I went to the library and read every book I could find on racing. When I was 9 years of age, I told my grandma that I would be a racecar driver. That didn’t go over very well; I’m not sure my dad has accepted it yet,” Bill stated.

Bill pursued a career in health insurance, and his wife’s job enabled them to save money. When the insurance business hit a slump, they decided it was time for Bill to pursue more than just building cars out of his garage, so he opened a shop. “Mechanics have a saying, ‘If a piece won’t fit, get a bigger hammer.’ The logo on my cars, designed by a team member’s wife, combines that kind of mechanic’s humor with my personality. The logo features a claw hammer with wheels, a windshield and helmet; together it looks like a racecar. That logo lets you know you are driving a Bigger Hammer Racing car,” Bill matter-of-factly stated.

Some of the cars were factory-built and others were hand-built from kits. Over the years, they have all been modified for maximum speed and performance and brought up to current safety standards, but Bill keeps them as original in design as possible. Each car draws out a story of wins at tracks all over the country, along with the history of how tracks have changed and endless facts.

Bill is actually a driving coach. “People usually rent a racecar before they buy one. What I do is get the car competitive-ready; when everything is right mechanically, then the bodywork is done. I go anywhere the

Sports NOW

customer will pay me to go, bringing the cars to the track in my trailer that can hold up to six cars. Drivers have to go through a two- to three-day school; their cars are marked with an X on the side to let other drivers know they are novices. Coaching involves taking them out on the tracks where they apply the techniques they have learned (when to brake, shift and throttle). They also have to learn when to slow down. Together we assess what they have done right and what they haven't. They learn from other drivers as well, as they see them handle their cars on inclines and declines, right and left turns and curves.

"Skill is something acquired; it can take years to learn to keep your car flat on hills and turns. Tracks have non-camber turns, where the corners are intentionally tilted to add challenge, but they can throw you off the track," Bill informed. Camber has to do with the tilt of the tire and the amount of tread on the track.

"I have an advantage in skill because I get to drive so many different cars. At my age, with as much racing as I have done, speed is irrelevant now. It's not about going fast anymore; it's about winning," Bill stated. "This can get very violent, very fast," he replied in answer to the question of whether he had ever been injured. "Because these cars are designed so low to the ground, they will not flip without help; they slide rather than flip. But if another driver hooks their front wheels under your rear wheel, you flip. I have only been upside down once in all the years I have raced. And that is how it happened. I was bruised and sore, but uninjured — nothing broke. That's because all the safety features worked as they had been designed to work.

"To race, you have to have a deep drive, determination and intense want-to in order to be good. You have to learn to put frustration aside," Bill stated. "And it doesn't hurt to have a lot of money, because this is an expensive hobby."

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Business NOW



Go for the Green — By Beverly Shay

Anita Howe, owner of the DeSoto Curves, is proud to provide a safe, women-only workout environment.

Most people are familiar with Curves, the largest fitness organization in the world with 10,000 locations and their famous 30-minute total workout routine. Now they are even smarter. Their new Curves Smart Personal Coaching System keeps track of your heart rate and evaluates your muscle power against your targeted personal performance index to determine resistance. When the machine's light is green, that lets you know if you are achieving your personal goals. The program's motto is "Go for the Green!"

"I know what it's like to try to change your lifestyle. In 1996, I had three children and needed to resolve some health issues. I knew there were 'a few things' I needed to do so God could give me health and healing," explained Anita Howe, DeSoto Curves owner. "I followed a Christian-based health plan, lost 50 pounds and continued working with other women in the same weight-loss ministry. I first heard about Curves when looking for a franchise opportunity in June 2003. We opened in September '03. Curves just meshed with my desire to help women achieve

weight loss and better general health by providing a safe, women-only environment for concise workouts," Anita intoned.

"Curves is a community of women connected by more than exercise," Anita stated. "The Smart System provides



proven results, while allowing women to know each other and what is going on in their lives. Better health involves so much more than weight loss. Many who come in here have given up on themselves, or their families have given up. The success of the women working out next to them gives them courage to believe they, too, can lose weight



Jackie Holmes, owner of the Cedar Hill Curves, is ready to help you achieve your goals.

and regain physical and emotional health. They begin to feel better mentally, spiritually and physically," Anita commented.

The average clientele falls in the 40- to 60-year-old range, yet mother/daughter and grandmother/granddaughter teams



exercise along with 30-somethings and young mothers getting back in shape following pregnancies. Area women come in three times weekly for a 30-minute, total-body workout, which includes strength training, aerobics and flexibility. DeSoto's youngest member is 11 and their oldest, 84. Cedar Hill has one 81-year-old woman who just completed

Business NOW

her 900th workout.

What does it involve to get started? First, a fitness coach completes a one-on-one figure analysis, recording weight and body fat, then determines a plan to work for the 'optimum numbers,' addressing exercise and diet. Each member is taught to use each exercise machine.

On their Web site, Gary Haven, founder of Curves, gives a detailed description of the different levels of resistance in workouts — for those with health concerns to those looking for the maximum challenge. "Feedback," Gary said, "is the most powerful human motivator." Workout machines monitor output, providing daily and monthly reports for accountability and encouragement.

Both Cedar Hill and DeSoto Curves feature the 30-minute, 24-station circuit of 12 hydraulic, million-dollar-researched weight machines interspersed with 12 aerobic recovery stations to workout opposing muscle groups. Each machine's "smart coach" monitors range of motion, matching resistance to speed. New owner of the Cedar Hill Curves, Jackie Holmes, has updated the facility by adding a new stretching circuit and 12 ceiling fans.

"It's a safe environment: no men, no mirrors and no need to 'look cute' or 'be seen.' For a \$34/monthly membership fee and a one-time service fee (look for our discounts), you can begin achieving your weight loss and total health goals," Anita stated.

"For the entire month of March, Curves offers a national food promotion to support local food pantries. Existing members donate, and new members can join for only \$30 with a bag of nonperishable food items," Jackie enthusiastically added.

Contact Anita at (972) 224-2221 or www.curveslocal.com/248/ for more information about DeSoto Curves located at 900 N. Polk, Suite 104. For the Cedar Hill Curves, located at 108 Beltline Rd., Suite 1, call Jackie at (972) 291-0249. **NOW**

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Setting Their Sights High



By Beverly Shay

High school juniors and seniors often begin investigating higher education by visiting universities or colleges to see what it would be like to attend school there. Occasionally, far-thinking younger students pursue learning about college earlier. Seldom do you find grade school students thinking about what they will study in college — unless those grade school students attend the University of Fairmeadows, cleverly disguised most days as Fairmeadows Elementary School.

"We want to give the students an opportunity to see what college is like and plant the seeds in their minds that they *can* go to college," explained Robbie Rushing, principal at Fairmeadows Elementary for the past six years. She is the one who has dreamed up, thought through and implemented this project. In two-hour blocks on five different days of the school year, the elementary school is transformed into a university, complete with entrance applications, course catalogs, professors (aka their regular teachers), class choices and a transcript to take home to mom and dad.

"We are always being challenged by the district to create classroom environments and lesson plans that will creatively engage the students' hearts and minds, challenging them to think about attending college. This idea began to form in my mind and I thought, *Why not show them what college is like? Why not show them they can do this?* After much consideration, I presented my ideas to my teachers, and they have taken it on as their own and run with it," Robbie enthused.

Cautioned that the transformation (from grade school to college) was imminent, guests vacated halls that soon filled

with a mixture of students, formerly K-fourth grade, now scurrying to their university classes. The 570 students had been divided into five groups; each group had a choice of six different courses, for which they must register by listing their first through fourth choices, one of which they will attend. Each course involves math and/or science, as well as featuring a possible future career choice. "The teachers worked really hard to create engaging electives. We have such a wonderful group of diverse and creative teachers. They love our university days and the students do, too!" Robbie proudly intoned.



Salvador Vega, a 9 year old in the fourth grade, was busily occupied with adding fractions, converting temperatures and determining whether he was engaged in a chemical or physical process. Yet as one of the school's designated self-managers, Salvador had time to explain his college experiences so far this year: "On our last university day, I went to an exciting farm. We learned all about eggs; we used a beam scale to measure if they

were small, medium or large. We candled them and studied what you can use eggs for: ice cream, cookies, cake. We learned they are a good source of protein for energy. It's not good to eat raw eggs," informed the budding professor, "you can get infections or diseases from eating improperly prepared food."

Salvador was eager to get back in his group and see if their ice cream had frozen. That is right — the class was making ice cream to learn science and math. Mrs. Villanueva was explaining that once they added salt to the ice, it would lower the temperature causing the liquid ice cream mixture to freeze.

Education NOW

"Salt and ice makes our mixture colder, so the ice cream freezes and then we can eat it," Salvador explained. "We're making chocolate ice cream, but pistachio is my favorite flavor," he added.

Meanwhile, other university students learned the relative height of dinosaurs by finding out how many students lying toe to head in the hallway measured the same length as a T-Rex and other dinosaurs. (A T-Rex was nine students long.) Still others toured New York City with a native New Yorker as their guide (Ms. Nieves). They were given a tourist guide book, varying amounts of money from which they paid for taxis, sightseeing (the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, the Empire State Building) and the purchase of a New York hot dog from a street vendor. Would they have enough money to do it all?

Some created art (Van Gogh, Picasso and mosaic math), while others studied bird migration routes and made bird feeders to aid birds in transit. They learned what various birds prefer as travel snacks and measured out ingredients, which included sunflower seeds harvested from large blooms grown in the school's garden plot.

Financial planning and budgeting mingled with hospitality as students planned a theme party on a fixed budget and shopped for everything they would need ... and decided the items they would have to leave at the store. Nearby, body doubles were created as teams of students traced each other's life-size silhouettes for later measurement in studying anatomy, metric and standard measures.

Is this vision to inspire students to go on to college working? "I am planning on going to college, when I finish high school," commented Salvador, who had spent the morning earning a medal in a geography tournament. He had prepared by reading seven geography books in two weeks. "I want to study chemistry in college," he said. **NOW**

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IN THE KITCHEN WITH PATRICK MCGINNIS

Patrick McGinnis, 30-year veteran of the Duncanville Fire Department, found that he was the chosen one when it came to cooking for the firehouse. “We used the guys as guinea pigs; now I know what works and what doesn’t,” Patrick said. He was recommended and taught by his captain, who still to this day says, “He can’t boil water.” “It came as a surprise to me,” Patrick said.

Patrick most enjoys the chili and barbecue cook-offs. They won second place in the 2006 Terrell Texas Heritage Jubilee Festival. He has to his credit several ribbons ranging from first to third place. “I think it’s because the guys are so easy to please, or maybe because none of them can boil water either,” Patrick added. **NOW**

ANGEL BISCUITS

- 1 pkg. (envelope) dry yeast mix
- 2 Tbsp. warm water
- 5 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 Tbsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 cup shortening
- 2 cups buttermilk

Dissolve yeast in warm water and set aside. Combine dry ingredients; cut in shortening until mixture resembles coarse meal. Add yeast mixture and buttermilk to dry ingredients. Mix well and turn out on floured surface. Knead about 1 minute, roll out and cut into biscuits. Bake in preheated oven at 400 F for 15 minutes.

BUFFALO CHICKEN TENDERS

- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves
- 1/2 tsp. celery salt
- 1/4 tsp. garlic powder
- 2 tsp. butter
- 2 Tbsp. red wine vinegar
- 1/2 tsp. cayenne pepper
- 1/4 cup sour cream
- 1 Tbsp. mayonnaise

- 1/4 cup crumbled blue cheese
- 1 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce

Cut each breast into four tenders, mix celery salt and garlic powder and sprinkle half over chicken. Pan fry chicken with cooking spray. Remove from heat. In a bowl, stir together butter, vinegar and cayenne pepper. Add to pan and stir. Toss to coat chicken evenly. Place chicken on a platter. Combine sour cream, mayonnaise, blue cheese, remaining celery salt and Worcestershire sauce in medium bowl to make dipping sauce.

CHEESY CHICKEN AND RICE CASSEROLE

- 1 10 3/4-oz. can cream of chicken soup
- 1 1/3 cups water
- 3/4 cup uncooked long grain white rice
- 2 cups fresh or frozen vegetables of your choice
- 1/2 tsp. onion powder
- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves
- salt and pepper, to taste
- 1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese

Stir soup, water, rice, vegetables and onion powder in a 12 x 8-inch baking

dish. Top with chicken. Salt and pepper to taste. Bake at 375 F for 45 minutes or until done and top with cheese.

HASHBROWN CASSEROLE

- 2 lb. bag frozen hash browns
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 16-oz. container sour cream
- 1 10 3/4-oz. can cream of chicken soup
- 1/2 cup onions, cut small
- 2 cups shredded sharp cheddar cheese

Butter sides and bottom of a 9 x 11-inch pan; dump frozen hash browns into pan and salt and pepper to taste. Mix sour cream, cream of chicken soup and onions together and spread over frozen hash browns. Dump entire pkg. of cheese over top and bake at 375 F until contents are cooked and cheese is entirely melted.

JAMBALAYA

- 1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breast
- 3/4 lb. smoked sausage
- salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 1 medium bell pepper, chopped

Who's Cooking **NOW**

2 10 3/4-oz. cans chicken broth
1 16-oz. bag white rice
2 Tbsp. cayenne pepper
1 6-oz. can tomato paste
5 green onions, chopped
1 medium tomato, chopped

Cut chicken and sausage into bite-size pieces; salt and pepper chicken and place both meats in Dutch oven. Cook in a small amount of oil until chicken is done. Remove and set aside. Sauté onion, celery and bell pepper until tender. Add chicken broth, rice and cayenne pepper. Heat until broth starts to bubble, then stir the meat back in. Turn heat down to low and simmer for 30 minutes, do not stir during this time. Stir in the tomato paste, green onions and tomatoes and serve.

MEXICAN MEATLOAF

3 shallots (green onions), minced
3 garlic cloves, minced
1 medium bell pepper, chopped
1 tsp. vegetable oil
1 lb. ground beef
4 corn tortillas, finely chopped
3/4 cup Mexican cheese blend, divided use
1/2 cup picante sauce
1 egg, beaten
1 tsp. ground cumin
1 tsp. ground oregano
1 tsp. salt

Heat oven to 350 F. Sauté shallots, garlic and bell pepper in oil in skillet until tender. Combine bell pepper mixture and all remaining ingredients except 1/4 cup of cheese in large bowl. Place in 8 x 4-inch loaf pan and bake 1 hour. Sprinkle with remaining cheese.

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Giving Credit Where Credit is Due

— By Tom Castleberry,
Judy Howell and Gary Rope

During the loan approval process, a couple of questions that customers often raise are, "What do they look for on my credit report?" and "What is a credit report, anyway?" The majority of potential lenders use credit reports to assess your credit worthiness and help determine whether or not to approve your loan. A credit report documents your financial history for the previous seven years and contains personal information such as your name, address and social security number, as well as information about your credit card use and payment



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history, mortgage payment history and installment loan payment history. The report also contains your employment information to give reviewers a sense of your ability to make future payments. There is one exception to the seven-year-rule; if you declare bankruptcy, this will remain on your report for 10 years.

Your credit report may also contain your credit score — a number between

“What is a credit report, anyway?”

300 and 850 — that is used to predict whether you will repay a loan. Your credit score is based on your payment history, total amount you owe, length of your credit history, any newly acquired credit and the types of credit you are using. Many lenders use this number to determine whether or not to approve your loan. Oftentimes, this number also correlates with the interest rate on your loan; a higher credit score will often be granted a lower interest rate on the loan.

A lot of valuable information is contained on your credit report, and lenders rely heavily on this tool. As a customer, you should also give your credit report the attention it deserves. After all, it can affect your ability to build the life you desire.

Effective September 1, 2005, all consumers in the United States are entitled to one free credit report every year from each of the three major credit reporting companies — Equifax, Experian and TransUnion. For more information on ordering your free credit reports, visit www.annualcreditreport.com. **NOW**

Tom Castleberry, Judy Howell and Gary Rope are State Farm agents based in the Southwest area.

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Unlocking the Weight-Loss Puzzle

— By Dr. Lesa Ansell

The weight-loss puzzle has remained a mystery to so many. This leads to frustration and eventually failure of your personal goals. However, this does not have to be true for you. A solid, weight-loss program includes proper nutrition, nutrition counseling, physical activity, goals, a known starting and ending point, motivation and a support system.

One of the biggest pieces of the weight-loss puzzle is physical activity. Notice, I did not say exercise! The word exercise conjures up bad images in many people. However, physical activity does not. There are many forms of physical activity, and the good news is that you can choose any of them to aid you in your success of weight loss. The main objective in trying to develop an effective fitness program is to find something that you enjoy, that you will be able to stick with.

Some examples of physical activity would include: walking, jogging, bike riding, rock climbing, roller blading, kayaking, skiing, sports activities, aerobics, yoga, pilates, bowling, etc. The key is to have your body in motion! Now, the key here is that the more intense the activity, the more calories required to fuel your body through it. This is where you get your “calorie burn.” To have successful weight loss, you must burn more calories than you bring in.

Other components of an effective fitness program include:

1. Set Goals. These should be specific and measurable. They should be realistic and include a deadline. The most successful business people in

the world use this technique. The key, they say, is to write them down and review them often.

2. Exercise Regularly. A little physical activity (20 - 30 minutes) each day is more effective than a power session two - three times per week. It is also easier to fit into your schedule and, therefore, more likely to be completed. You must be consistent to be successful!



3. Plan it! Everyday life has Americans scurrying in every direction. This can make it difficult to “find” time to exercise. Setting a time every day by planning it as part of your daily routine increases your chances of success.

4. Start smart! Start your activity at a moderate (tolerable) level that is comfortable for you. Then gradually increase your activity level, as you are able. By making gradual adjustments to your frequency, duration and level of intensity, you are more likely to stick with it and less likely to get injured.

5. Record it! Keeping track of your accomplishments motivates you to continue. When you are able to see that three weeks have passed and you are now able to walk 15 minutes longer without being short of breath, you will feel a sense of satisfaction and even more motivation to continue!

6. Mix it up! Try a variety of activities to keep it fun and interesting. Even if walking is your chosen activity, you can mix it up by taking a different

route or by adding music to your walking routine.

7. See it! Try visualizing yourself as you want to be. Whether it is your physical being, your career or a goal like running a marathon, see yourself at the end ... successful!

8. Share it! Everything is more fun when done with someone else. Find someone who shares your goal. You can motivate and provide the encouragement for each other. Research proves that when done in partnership, a fitness program is more successful.

9. Rest and Relaxation. When your body feels fatigued, it requires rest. When your mind feels fatigued (a.k.a. stressed) it needs rest or what we refer to as relaxation. If you utilize these techniques, you will feel more energized and ready to get back to your next work out session.

10. Be Your Biggest Fan! It has often been said that whatever you believe, you are right. If you believe you will succeed, you will. The same is said for failure. Every day, you must strive to believe the best of yourself. Your mind, body and spirit are strong. They have carried you through your life to this point and can continue for as long as necessary! **NOW**

Dr. Lesa Ansell is the CEO of Pro-Adjuster Chiropractic Clinic and is a member of the Texas 4 Disaster Medical Team under the direction of the Department of Homeland Security.

February 2008

Community Calendar

Every Monday

Nursery Rhyme Time from 10:15 - 10:45 a.m. at Duncanville Public Library. *Head to Toe*: Feb. 5 - ears; Feb. 11 - eyes; Feb. 18 - noses; Feb. 25 - mouths.

Every Tuesday

Rotary Club of Duncanville meets at the Hilton Garden Inn at 7:00 a.m. www.duncanvillerotary.org.

Homeschool Videos from 2:00 - 2:30 p.m. at Duncanville Public Library. *Plant Life*: Feb. 5 - reproduction; Feb. 12 - plants & people; Feb. 19 - plants & animals; Feb. 26 - farming.

Every Wednesday

Rotary Club of Cedar Hill: 7:00 - 8:00 a.m. at Cedar Hill Recreation Center, 310 East Parkerville Road.

Every Wednesday and Friday

Preschool story time at Cedar Hill Library: 10:30 - 11:45 a.m. (972) 291-7323.

Every Thursday

Story Time from 10:15 - 10:45 a.m. at Duncanville Public Library. Growing up With Books: Feb. 7 - Bye old buddy; Feb. 14 - Somebody loves you; Feb. 21 - Getting to sleep; Feb. 28 - Eat up.

Lectura en Español by Tamara Knapp from 5:30 - 6:00 p.m. at Duncanville Public Library.

Every Saturday

Fun Time Live: 7:00 - 11:00 p.m., Cedar Hill Recreation Center. Exciting entertainment for children (third - eighth grade). Cost is \$10/child. Activities supervised by adults with a police officer on site. Concessions are available for minimal charge. Call (972) 772-6000 or visit www.funlivelive.com.

First Monday

Readers on the Hill Book Club: 7:00 p.m. at the Cedar Hill Library. (972) 291-7323.

First Tuesday

Dad's Night Out With the Family, 7:00-7:40 p.m. at Duncanville Public Library. *Snow Queen* presented by Margaret Clauder.

Fourth Saturday

Cinema on the Square in the Council Chamber

at Cedar Hill City Hall, 502 Cedar St. *Miracle in Harlem* (1948): 1:00 p.m. *Girl in Room 20* (1946): 5:00 p.m. Admission is free; popcorn and bottled water 25¢ each. Visit www.cedrhilltx.com or call (972) 291-5100, ext. 1084.

Second Tuesday

The Dallas Area Writers Group at Cedar Hill Library. Visit dallaswriters.org.

Second and Fourth Tuesdays

Cedar Hill Lions: noon - 1:00 p.m. at Good Shepherd Church, 915 Old Straus Road. (972) 291-0651.

Second Wednesday

Cedar Hill/Duncanville Early Childhood PTA: 10:00 a.m. at Cedar Hill Hope Lutheran Church, 917 N. Straus Road.

February 5

Cedar Hill Ambassadors' Lunch: 11:30 a.m. TBA.

February 5 and 19

Good Morning DeSoto! Morning networking event: 7:30 a.m. at MCM Grande Hotel/Fundome. Call (972) 224-3565 or visit: info@desotochamber.org.

February 9

City of Duncanville's 4th Annual Daddy/Daughter Dance, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m. at D.L. Hopkins Senior Center. Cost: \$25/couple, \$15/additional child; includes dinner, dancing, deejay and photograph. Purchase tickets in advance at the Rec. Center. Call (972) 780-5086. No tickets sold at door.

14th Annual Daddy/Daughter Dance and Red Carpet Event, DeSoto Civic Center. Cost: \$30/couple; \$15/additional child. Includes music, dancing, light refreshments and a 5 x 7 photo. Red Carpet event and photos: 6:00 p.m. Dancing: 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Special guest appearance: Miss Texas Molly Hazlett. Call Parks and Leisure Services Dept. (972) 230-9651.

Daddy/Daughter Dance, Cedar Hill Rec. Center, 310 E. Parkerville Rd. Ages 4 - 8: 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Ages 9 - 12: 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Cost: \$20/couple; \$10/additional child. Includes a live deejay, daddy/daughter photo, pizza, punch and a gift bag for each girl. Deadline for registration: February 2.

Register at Cedar Hill Rec. center or call (972) 293-5288.

February 12

DeSoto ISD Uniform Dress Guidelines Public Forum in the Board Room: 6:30 p.m.

February 13 and 27

Business on the Hill at the Cedar Hill Chamber: 7:30 a.m.

February 14

Cedar Hill Chamber Night Out: 5:30 - 7:00 p.m. at Northwood University.

February 15

Coffee House Comedy Night at the Dream Center, 3505 Fawn Ridge Dr., Dallas. Free admission. Donations accepted. (214) 302-6241.

February 19

Cedar Hill Small Business Council meets at Chamber Office: noon.

February 25

Cedar Hill Education Council meets at Chamber Office: 4:30 p.m.

February 26

Black History Month special presentation between the feature films at Cinema on the Square at 3:00 p.m. in Council Chamber at Cedar Hill City Hall: Rhonda Haugabook presents "It's all about the struggle: we shall overcome through the energizing power of colors." This is a visual arts presentation using symbolic explanations surrounding the energy of colors, biblical numerology and West African Adinkra wisdom symbols; also includes á cappella singing and interpretive dance.

February 27

DeSoto Monthly Membership Luncheon, State the School District: 11:30 a.m.

February 28

Cedar Hill Monthly Chamber Luncheon at Northwood University: 11:30 a.m.

To have your events posted on the community calendar, e-mail us at: bshay.nowmag@sbcglobal.net.



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