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Ennis
NOW
The Community Magazine
Serving Ennis and the
Surrounding Area
MAGAZINE

Editor's Note

Dear Ennis,

Welcome to February — a month to affirm your sweetheart, a month to rejoice in the cultural diversity of our community, and a time to reflect on what black history means in Ennis and in America. This year's Black History Month marks an event never before seen, as we all salute a new president.

It is my pleasure to say that, in our own city, we have African-American citizens whose achievements are also moving and notable. I found my visit with Coach Jerry Mason eye-opening and rewarding. He is a man who faces reality head-on and offers positive solutions to today's youth.

The promise of the future is shining on Ennis mascot Tia Frazier, and her infectious grin will brighten your day. Another Ennis mascot, Briana Treadaway, has a warm heart that will pave the way for her future success.

Kelly Kovar

EnnisNOW Editor

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Samson *and* Delilah

— By Kelly Kovar

What do mascots do? Tia Frazier and Briana Treadaway, Ennis Lions mascots, have spent their senior year bringing their mascot characters (or personas), Samson and Delilah, to life. “We go to all the varsity football games,” Tia said. “You really have to have a big personality to be mascot. You can’t be shy because everything is like big and crazy. It is the one time that you can act goofy and silly for school, and not get in trouble for it or look stupid, because it is your job to do that.”

Being a mascot is not all fun and games. There is a lot of work involved. “Sometimes

Samson is hard for me, because I will start to act silly, and I remember I am playing Samson and I need to act macho,” Tia said. “When the season first starts, you want to quit almost — it is so hot in the costume. After that, you kind of get used to it. We only have to wear it first and third quarter, so we get a long break — time to cool off.” When fall comes, on the other hand, the girls are eager to go and get into their suits to keep warm. “When it gets cooler, you are going to see Samson and Delilah pretty much the whole game.”

During basketball season, the mascots



go to the varsity district games. “We do volleyball sometimes,” Tia mentioned. “That is pretty cool because

during a volleyball game, we are pretty much in the stands the whole time and we interact a lot with the kids.”

The process of becoming a mascot begins in the spring of each school year. “I didn’t know anything about being a mascot before I auditioned,” Tia said. “But anyone who knows me knows I am silly. I have a goofy personality, and I thought if I was a mascot, I could act stupid and not get in trouble for it. At

the same time, it is cool to be mascot.” Mascot tryouts are held at the same time as cheerleader tryouts. All the cheerleaders go first, and then whoever is trying out for mascot puts on a skit. “At the last minute, I was thinking, *What can I do? What can I do?*” Tia recalled. “I knew I had to make it interesting and get the judges’ attention at the same time. I had to be big and crazy and make them laugh. At the last minute — I mean the very last minute — I decided to do a spirit competition. Since Waxahachie is our rival, I got one of my friends and made her an Indian costume. I had the battle music playing, and I had on a shirt that said on the front, ‘Hachie’s gonna win’ and on the back it said, ‘I’m lion.’”

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Briana Treadaway tried out for Delilah. "I had a friend, Ricky Scott, who was a mascot before," she said. Briana stepped in to substitute as Delilah at one school event. "It was fun." She decided to audition for the next year. "For my skit, I was having a slumber party with my best friend, with the song 'Best Friends' playing. Then, 'The Lion Sleeps Tonight'



played and the (Waxahachie) Indians came and got my friend." As Delilah, Briana rescued her friend from the Indians, while 'Kung Fu Fighting' played. Four candidates tried out and Briana got the job of being Delilah, while Tia became Samson.

Last summer, Briana and Tia attended mascot class at Tarleton State University. "We had to bring our costumes with us," Tia remembered. "We met mascots from all different schools. If someone had put a tape recorder in there it [would have been] so funny. They would hear things like, 'Hey, can I try on your head?' Or 'Can you take my head off now? I like your wings — can you take them off?' That has to be the funniest thing about mascot class."

"There were hawks and Indians and all kinds of mascots. All of us were saying things like, 'Oh, let me see your feet!'" Briana remembered. The mascots learned how to make the alphabet with hand and body motions, and how to do jumps in their costumes. "We learned to make letters and we learned a dance. Everything is about movement."

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what we want to do at games," Tia said. "I turn cartwheels and dance around." At school pep rallies, Tia and Briana dance behind the cheerleaders, tease them and interact with them. "We mess with the band kids and the Lionettes."

Everyone at a sporting event is fair game for Samson and Delilah's antics. "A reporter will be out there taking notes, and I will take his pen and write on his notepad," Briana said with a grin. If the photographers are taking pictures of the football players, the mascots may go and lie down in front of the camera. "People come up and want us to pose for pictures with their babies."

Once, the mascots even made an appearance at a children's birthday party. "That was fun," Briana recalled. "The kids love us. At Halloween, Samson dressed as a chef, and I was a fairy in the first quarter and a hula girl in the third quarter. We threw candy to the kids. That was my favorite mascot memory."

"Somebody donated a heavy maroon and white 'old-school' bicycle," Tia said. "It has a basket and everything. We were learning to ride it, and we had to practice with our costume feet and head and gloves." Samson never mastered the art of not running over people with the bike. "You have tunnel vision with your lion head on, so now I stay away from the bike," Tia explained, laughing. "I let Delilah ride it."

"Being a mascot has been fun," Briana added. "I have enjoyed it." Next year, Briana is going to study business and premed. She wants to be an ophthalmologist.

"I want to major in nursing," Tia added. "This year has gone by so fast. June is going to be here, and they are going to be calling 'Tia Frazier' and I will walk across the stage [for graduation]. It will be great." This year's experience, as Samson and Delilah, has given Tia and Briana a lot of happy memories to take with them. "It is really fun interacting with the kids," Tia said. "Making people laugh is pretty cool." **NOW**



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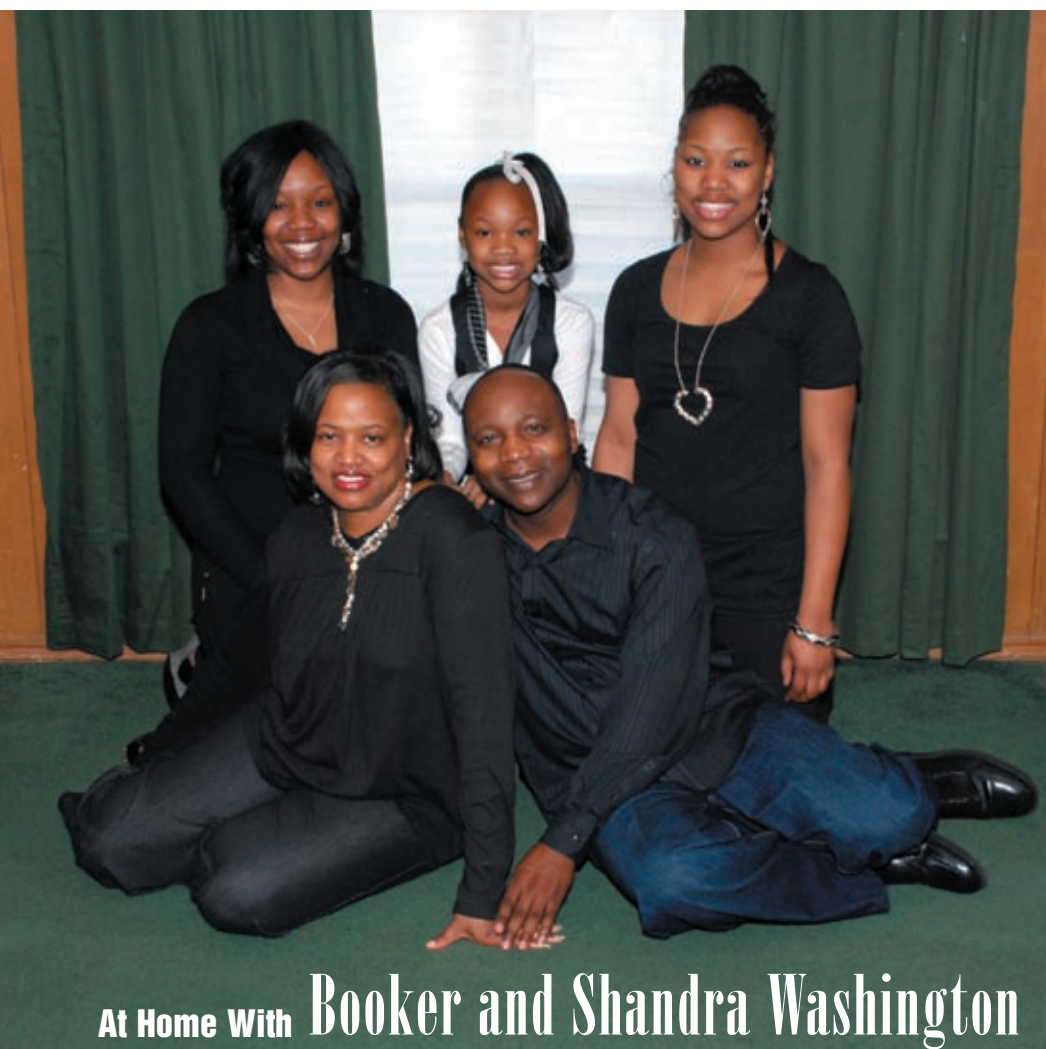
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The Bond of Peace

— By Sandra McIntosh

Booker and Shandra Washington find that a peaceful home is a happy, well-rounded home. “It’s the most important thing,” Shandra said, as Booker nodded his head in agreement. Even the couple’s three children, Whitney, Brittney and Miah, ages 22, 18 and 10 respectively, have grown up learning the importance of peace within their home. “The family bond is so important,” Whitney interjected, as Brittney added, “Yeah, we’re a very tight family.”


At Home With **Booker and Shandra Washington**



Both Booker and Shandra were born and reared in Ennis. Their families attended the same church, and their parents still live in the same homes Booker and Shandra remember from their childhoods. They saw each other on a regular basis, but did not make the "all-encompassing eye contact" until one particular Sunday following a church service. "Shandra asked me if I'd called her," Booker explained. "I said, 'No, but I will,'" Booker confessed. "I went home and called her that same day."

"We were high school sweethearts," Shandra said, as Miah began to giggle. "We've been together ever since that phone call."

The couple exchanged their wedding vows on September 29, 1984, and one could easily say the rest is just Washington family history. It is, however, history well worth sharing. Until nine years ago, the couple had traveled wherever Booker's military job took them. "I was a cook in the Navy," he said, still proud of the contribution he was able to extend to his country. "I served five consecutive tours. I even saw some action during



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the Persian Gulf War.”

Shandra and the girls came back to Ennis in July of 1999. As they worked diligently to get their new traditional-style, three-bedroom, two-bath home in order, Booker remained behind in Florida until he was able to be transferred to the Dallas area. Finally in 2001, after 20 years of dedicated service, Booker retired from his naval position. He went from feeding an army to serving those needing to be spiritually fed, serving as the pastor of Galilee Missionary Baptist Church, his home church from childhood. “The pastor, who had been ministering in the church for 37 years, was retiring,” Booker explained. “I just happened to be in the right place at the right time.” He and Shandra both feel the position was God-appointed and God-ordained.

With three children of their own to rear, Booker and Shandra have stressed the importance of education. Not only does Booker serve as a pastor, he also works at Ennis High School (EHS) as a paraprofessional in the Special Education

Department, he drives a school bus and also finds the spare time needed to attend classes in the evening at Paul Quinn University in Dallas. Following Booker’s retirement, Shandra returned to the college classroom herself, where she earned her bachelor’s degree, also at Paul Quinn University. She also works at the high school as the ISS (in-school suspension) instructor.

Right before the Christmas holidays, Whitney returned home from Atlanta, Georgia, where she earned her certification in medical billing and coding from Atlanta High Tech Institute. She came home to find a full-time job and reinsert herself into the family unit. “It really is good to be home,” she added.

Brittney is a senior at EHS. Her claim to fame thus far is found in the natural ability she possesses to play basketball. “I want to go to college,” she noted, “and be a basketball coach one day.” All visitors need to do is read the newspaper clippings displayed on Brittney’s bedroom walls to know she

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will most assuredly reach her goals, thanks to a lot of hard work, dedication and determination. Miah looks up to both her sisters. "I love to read chapter books and play basketball," she said, with a shy smile, which mirrored the smiles of both her parents.

The family loves coming home each afternoon to the abode with which they feel God has blessed them. "This is the only home we've lived in since moving back to Ennis," Shandra said. "We bought it on faith. We were hoping that Booker would be stationed close to home and he was." It is commonplace for the family to share their day, sit down to a family meal as schedules allow and to have family game nights as often as possible. "We try to have family night at least once a week," Shandra said, explaining that Sunday nights have proven to be good since there is no church service

on that evening.

The living room is where the family spends most of their "at home" time. The brick fireplace and warm neutral colors make it easy and relaxing to curl up on the sofas and spend a lazy afternoon just watching the Lifetime Movie Network. "We love to watch movies," Shandra said, as the other four made comments in total agreement. The apple-inspired kitchen is where the home-cooked meals are prepared. Some might think that Booker is the cook, but that is not the case. "Shandra cooks most all the meals," Booker noted. "I cook sometimes on special occasions." Miah, still shyly smiling added, "I make Oreo pudding and chocolate covered strawberries," which evoked laughter all around.

Shandra has been collecting snow globes since she and Booker were first married. Globes from every place they have

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lived and every port Booker visited while in the Navy are represented in Shandra's collection, which are packed away for safekeeping. Her favorite pastime is photography. Shandra loves taking and displaying candid snapshots for all to see. She loves the family history represented in the photos that she takes, as well as those taken by Whitney.

As the first African-American was sworn into the U.S. presidential office, the Washington family watched history

being made. They are hopeful that a deeper education on black history will soon follow. As African-American parents and teachers, they both understand the importance of knowing about all of history. "So many before us missed out on some good history," Shandra stated, referring to the African-Americans who invented the cotton gin, the telegraph and the phonograph. "We finally have a voice," Booker said, also adding that the new president represents another

image; an image of success and pride.

Education is quite significant to the Washington family, but even more important is their spiritual foundation. "All my girls will be successful in whatever they choose to do," Booker stated, "but what's even more important is their relationship with the Lord." It may sound cliché, but a family that prays together stays together — at least that is the case with the Washington family. **ENNISNOW**

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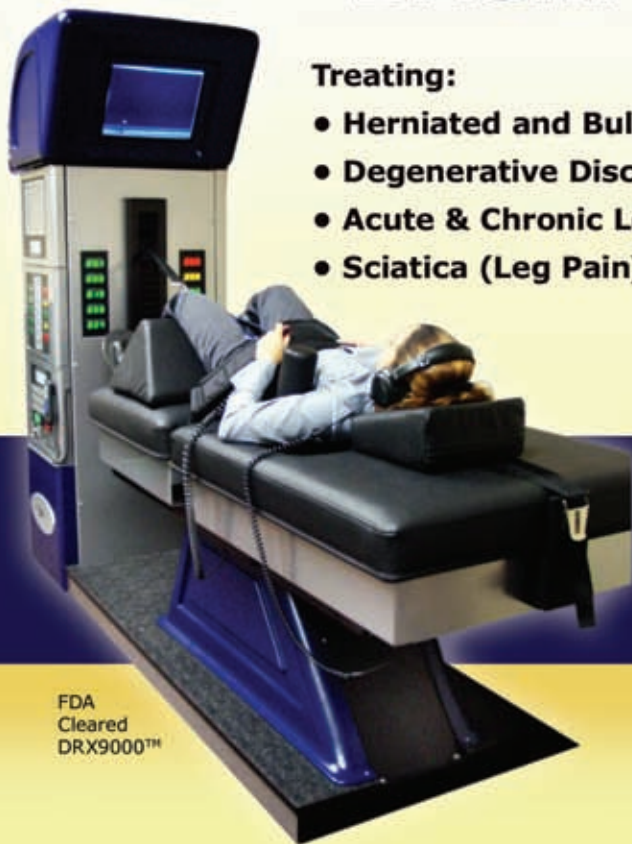
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Band of Brothers

— By Kelly Kovar



Ken, Andy and Nick Mikula have been playing music together since childhood.

The Jodie Mikula Orchestra is the oldest, still-active band in Ennis. The band is comprised of three brothers: Ken, Nick and Andy Mikula. Since the band was originally helmed by their dad, Jodie Mikula, people often assume that the brothers took over his band after he passed away in 1989. “A lot of people thought Dad had the band first, but we all started at the same time,” Nick said. “We were there from day one.”

“Sometimes, people will say to us, ‘I used to see your dad playing with his band,’ and we will say, ‘That was us,’” Andy added. From the time the brothers were just boys, they were already interested in music.

“In the very beginning, Dad never dreamed of his own band,” eldest son, Ken, said. “He had played the accordion since he was a teenager, and he just wanted all us guys to learn to play something, whatever we wanted. Nick and I were always interested in horns. Dad knew Raymond (Zapletal) and Raymond agreed to give us some trumpet lessons. Andy always seemed to like drums. We would be playing music, and he would be banging on a box with sticks in time to the music.”

“Nick was 10, Andy was 12 and Ken was 16 when the boys got started,” their mother, Rose Mikula, explained. Then, the unexpected happened. At an extended family celebration, the family played a song together. Rose had joined them on

the drums and their Uncle Frank also played. Jodie played the accordion.

“It was an informal thing, but somebody heard us playing. They wanted us to come play for some little party,” Ken remembered. “It was kind of scary.”

“When the Music Masters played at the old SPJST Lodge [*Slovanska Podporujici Jednota Statu Texas*, or Slavonic Benevolent Order of the State of Texas], they took their break; we got up there and played during their intermission a few times,” Andy said. “I was scared to death. My foot was already going, and we weren’t even playing yet.”

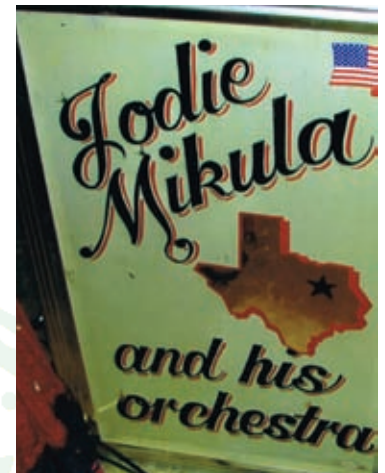
They officially began playing as the Jodie Mikula Orchestra in 1967. “All of a sudden, we were playing here and here and here,” Ken said. Within about a year Rose had stopped playing drums, and soon Uncle Frank also retired from the band. However, Jodie and the three boys continued. At various times, musicians Everette

Gilmore, Daniel Barto, James Zalkovsky, Joe Marusak, Frank Kubena, John Graves and Larry Prda played with the band.

“We would practice during the weeknights,” Nick said. “We were going to school and it was hard. We would get out our horns and try to add to our repertoire of songs.” They had Andy play tuba, as well as drums, until they found a tuba player.

Before long, Nick and Ken learned the saxophone also, in order to get the different sounds that they wanted. “We have a big band, brass sound,” said Ken, who plays lead cornet, tenor sax, baritone horn, trombone and clarinet, and does vocals.

Raymond Zapletal’s wife, Pat, plays piano with the band, while Mike Marek plays electric bass, bass horn and sometimes accordion. Charlie Patak followed Jodie as the lead accordion player, and also does vocals, as well as playing sax, guitar,



trombone, cornet and baritone horn.

Nick plays second cornet, alto sax, lead guitar, alto horn, does vocals and acts as the booking manager. "We kind of adapt our own style of music," Nick said. "We don't want to sound like other bands; we want people to say, 'That is the Mikulas playing!'"

In February, they will be playing in Ennis at the Third Annual Ennis Czech Fest. "It is a pretty good festival," Andy said. "It is getting bigger and bigger." Charlie's wife, Jeannette; Mike's wife, Janice; Nick's wife, Patty; Andy's wife, Sandra and Ken's wife, Becky, will no doubt be there to listen. "If it wasn't for their support, then we wouldn't have been able to do what we have done all these years."

"They have pulled us through a lot of stuff," Ken agreed. "They have taken up the slack so we could go and do our thing. We also appreciate our children for their support."

Throughout the 42 years they have been playing, the brothers have weathered driving to gigs through ice and snow, as they have traveled all over Texas. "But, we've never missed a job, and it was always fun," Andy said. "It is still fun. We think about all the people we have met and all the places we have been." They have marked several of their band anniversaries with dances and cruises. "I don't know what we'll do on our 45th — maybe go to the moon!" Andy joked.

One of their most memorable trips took them to Branson, Missouri, where they tied for first place at the Lawrence Welk Polka Festival, which was judged by the cast of *The Lawrence Welk Show*, including the Lennon Sisters. "We got to meet all of them — Peggy, Kathy, Janet, Dianne," Ken said. The Jodie Mikula Orchestra has played at Six Flags, West Fest, Oktoberfest, Wurstfest, as well as polka festivals in several states and even in Las Vegas. "We go wherever the music takes us." **ARTS NOW**



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Life Coaching

— By Kelly Kovar

Basketball is a complicated sport with dozens of plays; it demands a lot of head knowledge and dedication. “Basketball requires a high art of thinking,” said Jerry Mason, Ennis High School’s varsity basketball coach. “We probably have 30 offensive plays. You want the boys to get to where they hear the name of a play and they snap to it. It keeps the mind sharp to retain and understand the plays.”

“This is my first year of being head coach, and I am excited about it,” Jerry said. He holds basketball class every day, and the boys work on stretching, weight lifting and getting in shape. “I always try to touch on the three fundamentals: Shooting, dribbling and passing to give them a good foundation. We shoot every day; we dribble; we pass. I’m here to help them understand who they are now, where they go from here and how they get there.”

This year’s team has only one athlete who has played varsity ball before, so the boys are getting to be a part of a whole new team. “That is unusual. It is a young, new team, but with several players who have potential for great careers,” Jerry mentioned proudly. “I hope to be in the top four teams in district this year, which will enable us to go to the playoffs.”

“For many students, basketball can provide a college scholarship opportunity. I would like to win 1,000 games, but if I get 25 kids to go to college and get an education, I will have met one of my goals. Some of these kids have hard times, but I try to let them know that if you pray, you never know what God has in store for you.”

“Basketball is a good opportunity, but it is not everything. I tell the boys, ‘If you don’t make it in basketball, then realize that rejection is a part of life; but you have fight in you, you have perseverance in you. Work hard and be the best you can



be, and good will come of it. God will bless you with another opportunity somewhere else if basketball doesn’t work out.”

One of Coach Mason’s favorite words is accountability. “When my players say, ‘What is accountability?’ I tell them ‘Look it up and write about it and remember it because, with that word, you will always be humble.’” He encourages them not to look for someone to blame for their performance on the court or for their life circumstances. “Instead, I teach them to look at themselves in the mirror and ask themselves, ‘What can I do to make things better?’ I tell them they can’t do it by themselves, but with God’s help and hard work they can do what it takes to improve their life. I teach the boys to take responsibility for their own actions, to help their mothers and to work for what they want. I can be hard on them, but they learn to face the consequences for their actions; to look at life head-on. My whole objective is to make these kids better men.”

Jerry’s mother and his dad have both traveled from

A Passion for Homes

— By Kelly Kovar

Linda Rudd, a Keller Williams Realty agent, has been selling real estate since 2002. “I love real estate. I have always heard that if you have a passion for what you are selling, you can do it, and I have a passion for homes.” She has been a multi-million-dollar producer for the last four years.

“Now is a time to buy, because interest rates are low and there are so many houses on the market,” Linda said. “It is a buyer’s market. It is still the American Dream to own your own piece of property,” Linda furthered explained. She handles residential and commercial real estate, as well as land, farms and ranches.

Today, savvy home buyers and sellers are on the Internet, checking out houses. When a seller comes to Linda with a listing, they can expect their home to be marketed on the Internet. “I put descriptions and pictures online at Realtor.com, which is the top site. I keep up with the market. Once a month, I do a search and look at my competitors for each listing. I e-mail that report to my clients.” Linda keeps a check on her listed property and can recommend contractors, if necessary, to tend the property. “I am service-oriented. I return phone calls and I return e-mails,” she said.

“With buyers, I meet them, interview them and show them some houses that are in their price range.” Linda gives buyers a pen with her name on it and a clipboard with a sheet on each house so they can make notes about things they like or dislike about each property they view. Linda wants to know the goal and expectations of her buyers and sellers. “I am proactive. I ask a lot of questions, so I can lead them or guide them about what can happen with lenders.”

Prospective buyers receive contact information for two or three mortgage lenders so they can call and get prequalified. “If you have good credit, there is still money to be had, but you have to have money to put down. I don’t want to get



them into something they cannot afford." Next, buyers are put on a prospect list and entered in a data base, which generates an e-mail to Linda and the client when a potential home comes on the market. "I'm not a pushy salesperson, so I let them call me if they see one they are interested in."

"I like working with buyers because I love showing property. People say, 'We didn't get just a real estate agent when we got you,' because I am a visual person and I can see how to overcome obstacles in a house. I can help the sellers know how to arrange the furniture."

"I tell them, 'If this doesn't just knock your socks off, then we aren't buying it.'"

"If people are trying to pick between two houses, I can help them see which one has better resell value. Every seven years, you need to update your house; you will always be competing with the new homes. You need new colors, new countertops."

"Most agents will pull five to 10 homes to show a client," Linda said. "I love going and looking at houses, and I will show you homes until the cows come home." She wants her buyers to be completely satisfied with their new home. "I tell them, 'If this doesn't just knock your socks off, then we aren't buying it.' They need to say, 'I love this.' It is obvious when they have found the right house. You can sense it. I get a lot of joy out of selling a property and seeing someone who is just ecstatic to get into their own home." To contact Linda Rudd about listing or buying a property, visit www.lindaruddhomes.com or call (214) 796-8197. **NOW**

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Coming Full Circle

— By Patricia Anthony

graduated in 1991. Both girls attended Navarro College for two years, but since there was a year's difference, they rarely saw one another. After Navarro, the girls moved on to different senior colleges to obtain teaching degrees. Sandra attended East Texas State in Commerce; Lori attended the University of Texas at Tyler (UT Tyler).

Sandra did student teaching in the Kaufman Independent School District, while working part time at Kentucky Fried Chicken, and finished her degree in 1994. "Near the end of my student teaching assignment," Sandra explained, "the principal offered me a job. My plan was to accept once I completed student teaching."

Lori did student teaching at Travis Elementary under Cecilia Cameron, who at that time taught fifth grade. "She now teaches kindergarten and actually taught my son, Michael. I still look to her as my mentor, and she's also a very good friend," Lori beamed.


While in high school, Lori had worked part-time for the Ennis Independent School District (EISD) as an aide in the superintendent's office, which at the time was located on Martin Luther King Drive. This allowed her to develop a friendship with Don Walker, assistant superintendent and director of personnel, and his wife, Janet Walker, the school's counselor. Both Don and Janet encouraged Lori to

study education. "As college graduation approached," Lori shared, "Don contacted me to inform me of two open positions [in the EISD] and asked if I knew of anyone who would be interested in the other position."

Don also remembered Sandra. When Lori mentioned that she was graduating also, Don told Lori to go find Sandra. "He asked me if I knew where she was," Lori remembered. "I told him that she was working at Kentucky Fried Chicken." Don told Lori to contact Sandra. "They told me to have her come over to talk with them," Lori said. "It was late at night, but I immediately drove over to her workplace." When Lori told Sandra of the open teaching position, Sandra replied, "Oh, do you think I have a chance for it?" Lori enthusiastically replied, "Of course you do. Don told me to come find you."

Both Sandra and Lori started working at Sam Houston Elementary the same day in January 1995. Lori started by teaching prekindergarten, but later transferred to first grade, which she has now taught for 10 years. Sandra accepted a third-grade, bilingual teaching position.

Sandra shared that she has been interested in teaching since she was a little girl. "When I was in Houston, I was one of the top kids, but when I moved to Ennis, it was hard for me to



Sandra Noblett and Lori Aguilar have both been recognized as outstanding EISD teachers.

Most classmates go their separate ways after graduating from high school and do not see each other again until a class reunion. This certainly is not the case for Lori Aguilar and Sandra Noblett.

Sandra started attending Sam Houston Elementary in the fourth grade, when her family moved to Ennis from Houston. Lori started there in kindergarten. However, the girls did not get to know each other until they took band together in high school. They both played the flute and wound up sitting by each other during practice. By going on band trips and to football games together, their friendship quickly bonded.

Because Sandra and Lori were a grade apart, Sandra graduated from Ennis High School in 1990, and Lori

Education **NOW**

transition here," she confessed. "I didn't want my students to feel that way." She is now living her dream by making that difference in their lives.

Both women have been recognized as outstanding teachers within the EISD. Sandra has been nominated for the Kinzie Foundation Award three times: 2002-2003, 2004-2005 and 2007-2008. "It is quite an honor to receive this," Sandra explained, "because we are nominated by the other teachers. Two teachers are nominated from each campus within the district, but only one wins the big prize. Of course, each nominee receives a nice plaque and letter from Dr. Kinzie, along with the recognition that goes with being nominated."

Lori was nominated this school year by her principal, Linda Southard, for the Outstanding Teacher of the Year Award for Region 10, which is the educational services area that services different districts within the region. "I was the sole nominee from our region," Lori shared. "It's a very big honor to get nominated." Lori has also been nominated for Who's Who four times and serves as a mentor teacher through Texas A&M Commerce at Navarro, which means she usually has an intern teacher under her.

Sandra and Lori each have a son attending Sam Houston Elementary, and Sandra's son, Matthew, is one year younger than Lori's son, Michael. Additionally, Lori was Matthew's first grade teacher. "He did very well under her," Sandra said.

Both teachers mentioned they get a warm feeling when they see their children walking the same halls and going to the same gym they did as children. "I remember how long those halls were and how large the gym was, and I can't help but wonder if my son feels the same way," Lori commented. "Even some of the same teachers are still here. We've come full circle." **NOW**

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This pretty-in-pink ballerina, top left, attended the Goblins and Ghosts Bash with her parents. Zack and Evan Colvin and their cousin Cassie Snow, top center, were in good spirits during a recent downtown Ennis outing. Even parents joined the fun as a darling "Captainess" Hook, top right, smiled for the camera. Two classy little ladies, second row left, won high marks for gorgeous costumes. Gary Hayden of Hayden Financial Partners, second row center, offered an informative seminar for women at the Ennis Public Library. Several blocks of games, vendors, food and fun, second row right, brought smiles to bright-eyed youngsters. Patches the Clown and Charlene Ballard, bottom left, showed up to entertain at Family Fun Night at the Ennis Public Library. CiGi's stylists, bottom right, were bewitching in their pink feather boas as they handed out candy during the Goblins and Ghosts Bash sponsored by the Downtown Merchants.



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Food and snacks, top left, were on hand for those attending the Travis Elementary School Carnival. A group from Ennis, top center, traveled to Palestine, Texas, to ride on the Polar Express train. Larry Candy, top right, teaches chess at the Ennis Public Library on Thursday evenings. EISD teachers who were nominated for Teacher of the Year 2008, second row right, gathered for a reception in their honor. Parents and teachers, bottom left, pooled their efforts to make the Travis Carnival a success. Susan Slovak and her daughter, Megan Gould, second row center, spent the day at First Monday Trade Days in Canton, Texas. Hometown Chiropractic, bottom center, presented Joan Johnson with the \$1,000 prize for winning their Teacher of the Year award. Travis Carnival booths, bottom right, included games for the children such as the floating duck game.



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Look Who's Cooking

— By Faith Browning

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Prep time: 10 minutes; total time: 45 min.
Serves 8: one apple each.

8 medium baking apples
1 cup apple or orange juice
1/4 cup brown sugar, firmly packed
1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
1 cup shredded Cracker Barrel 2% Milk
Reduced Fat Sharp Cheddar Cheese
1/4 cup raisins
1/4 cup Planters pecans, toasted and chopped

Preheat oven to 350 F. Remove cores from apples to within 1/2 inch of bottoms of apples; pierce the skins with a sharp knife. Place apples in shallow baking dish. Combine juice, sugar and cinnamon; pour over apples. Bake 30 to 35 minutes, or until apples are tender, basting occasionally with the juice mixture. Remove apples

from oven. Combine cheese, raisins and pecans; spoon evenly into centers of apples. Let stand 1 minute. (Can substitute Grape-Nuts Cereal for pecans.)

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1 1/2 cups sugar
8 oz. sour cream
24 oz. frozen coconut (must use frozen)
1 box Duncan Hines white cake mix
1 large container Cool Whip

On first day, combine sugar, sour cream, 3/4 of coconut to make icing; store in the refrigerator overnight. On day two, prepare cake per directions on box; bake in two 9-inch pans. After layers cool, completely split layers into four thin layers. Put icing between each layer and on top. On the

sides and top put on Cool Whip. Sprinkle the coconut on cake. Cover and store in the refrigerator for two days. This cake freezes well.

PAT'S WORLD FAMOUS CRANBERRY CHUTNEY

My family loves this recipe and insists on having it for every holiday dinner.

4 cups fresh cranberries
1 cup fresh orange sections
1/4 cup orange juice
2 cups sugar
1 cup chopped, unpeeled apple
1/2 cup raisins
1/4 cup chopped walnuts
1 Tbsp. vinegar
1/2 tsp. ground ginger
1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon

In a large saucepan, combine cranberries, orange sections, juice, sugar, apple, raisins,

Enjoying simple pleasures and bringing laughter to others are a few of Rev. Janice's valuable qualities. She humbly claims not to be a great cook, but placing first in a chili cook-off and placing second in three other cook-offs, provides clear proof of the contrary. "My family and friends love my chili," she stated. "But I can't give out that recipe, because I make it up as I go."

Janice also enjoys knitting and spending time with friends. "I love to play bridge and am a very mediocre (at best) player, but I really enjoy it," she expressed. "Of course, I truly enjoy preaching. There's something wonderful that happens when you study God's word and attempt to share it with others — scary but wonderful!" **XXX**

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walnuts, vinegar, ginger and cinnamon. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat and simmer 5 minutes or until berries begin to pop. Chill until serving time. Serve with poultry, ham or pork. Makes 5.5 cups.

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1 lb. ground sausage
2 cups bread, cubed
6 eggs
2 cups milk
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. dry mustard
1 cup grated cheese,

Cook and drain the sausage well. Put bread in 9 x 12-inch dish. Mix eggs, milk, salt and dry mustard. Spread sausage over the bread; pour egg mixture over sausage; spread cheese evenly over the other ingredients. Cover and refrigerate overnight. Bake 45 minutes at 350 F. Serve hot. For a healthier version, which tastes just as good, use Egg Beaters, turkey sausage and my sister, Pat's, World Famous Cranberry Chutney.

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Changing Jobs or Retiring?

Consider IRA Rollover — *By Bob Irish*

In the near future, are you going to change jobs or retire? If so, then you'll have a lot of things to think about. And one of the most important considerations is what to do with the money you've accumulated in your employer's 401(k) plan. While you have a few options, your best choice may be to roll over your 401(k) money into an IRA — so you'll want to know, in advance, what's involved in this move.

By rolling over the taxable portion of your 401(k) — your pre-tax contributions, employer contributions and all earnings — into a new or existing IRA, you'll gain some key advantages. First, you'll avoid all immediate taxes and penalties. Second, you'll continue to benefit from tax deferral. And third, IRAs offer you a wide variety of investment options.

Eventually, though, you'll have to decide what to do with your IRA. You can start taking withdrawals at age 59 1/2 without having to pay a 10 percent penalty tax. But suppose you've built up a considerable balance in your traditional IRA, and you don't think you'll need to use it all to help pay for your retirement? Can you pass on your IRA's tax deferral to your children?

Yes, you can — through the concept of the “stretch” or “multigenerational” IRA. To understand how the stretch IRA works, you need to know one of the rules governing

traditional IRAs — specifically, you have to start taking “required minimum distributions” at age 70 1/2. In recent years, the IRS changed the life expectancy factors used to determine your required minimum distribution calculations. Consequently, you can now take out smaller amounts of money from your IRA, which allows you to extend the number of years your IRA money has the potential to grow tax-deferred.

Obviously, the revised life expectancy rules will positively affect how much of your IRA money you can leave to your children. But the rule changes also permit your children, once they inherit your IRA, to base their minimum required distributions on their life expectancies. So, if they are in their early middle-aged years when they receive your IRA, they can take out relatively small amounts, thereby avoiding big tax hits. And, if their situation allows, they can then leave the IRA to their children, who can continue to enjoy the benefits of tax deferral.

Rollover to Roth IRA

Until recently, you couldn't roll over a 401(k) directly to a Roth IRA. First, you had to roll over the 401(k) to a traditional IRA and then convert the traditional IRA to a

IF YOU'RE NOT AT YOUR LAST JOB, YOUR 401(k) SHOULDN'T BE EITHER.

Leaving a 401(k) behind could mean leaving it with no one to watch over it.

We can explain your options, and if you'd like to roll your 401(k) over into an Edward Jones IRA, we can help you do it with no taxes or penalties. We'll look out for you.

To find out about 401(k) options that make sense, call or visit your local financial advisor today.

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Roth and pay tax on the conversion. But new tax laws allow you to make direct rollovers to a Roth IRA, starting in 2008. You'll still have to pay taxes on the converted amount, but you — and your children or grandchildren — might come out ahead in the long run, because Roth IRA earnings have the potential to grow tax-free, provided certain requirements are met. You'll need to consult with your tax advisor to make sure you are eligible to open a Roth IRA.

Keep Your 401(k) Working for You

Before you change jobs or retire, consult with your financial advisor and tax professional on whether an IRA rollover makes sense for you. You worked hard for your 401(k) funds — so keep them working for you. **NOW**

Bob Irish is an Edward Jones representative based in Ennis.

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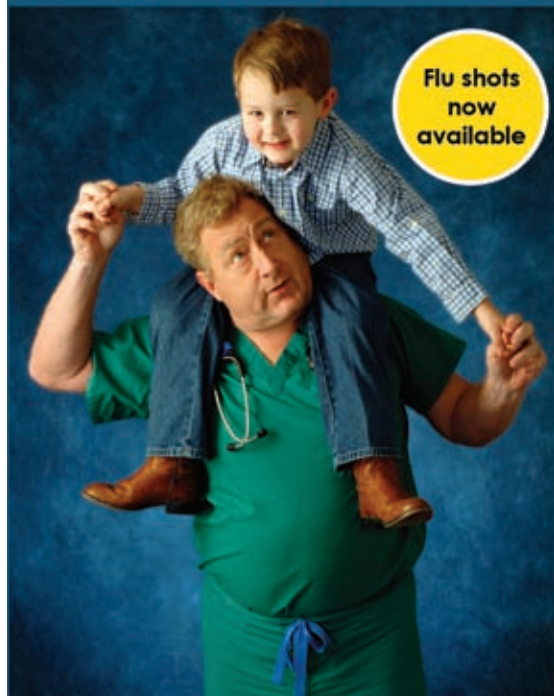
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Boosters *for* Boomers

— By Deepak Patel, M.D.

Americans are constantly redefining what is considered “old.” Sixty is the new 50; 70 is the new 60 and we all live longer than ever before.

As we age, however, we become more susceptible to illness and disease. For adults over the age of 60, these illnesses can be very serious. The good news is that many illnesses can be prevented through proper immunization.

In fact, adults over the age of 60 can lower their risk of developing influenza, pneumonia, shingles and tetanus through a simple injection. For older adults, vaccines are a preventative measure toward a healthier future.

Influenza

During flu season, it is important for older adults to make getting the flu vaccine a top priority. A flu shot is the best

prevention against contracting the flu. According to the National Institute on Aging, the flu vaccine reduces hospitalizations by about 70 percent and death by about 85 percent among older adults. The flu vaccine is recommended for adults age 65 and older, as well as persons of any age with chronic medical conditions, such as chronic heart, lung and kidney diseases.

Pneumonia

Pneumonia is a severe infection or inflammation of the lungs that, when combined with the flu, is the seventh leading cause of death in our country. Many pneumonias are caused by bacteria, and a vaccine is available that prevents pneumonia from 23 types of pneumococcus bacteria. According to the National Foundation of Infectious Diseases, more than half of pneumococcal cases, and nearly all deaths in adults, could have been prevented with the vaccine. The shot can also

prevent some of the serious complications of pneumonia, such as infection in the bloodstream and throughout the body. The pneumococcal vaccine is usually given only once in a person's lifetime and can be administered at the same time as the flu shot.

Shingles

Shingles is a painful skin rash caused by the varicella-zoster virus, the same virus that causes chicken pox. For people who have had chicken pox, the virus remains dormant in the nerve tissues and reactivates when the body's immune system is weakened by age or physical or emotional stress. The shingles vaccine, which

was approved in 2006, is recommended for anyone over the age of 60 and for patients who have had shingles in the past.





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Tetanus

When we think of tetanus, we often think of rusty nails. However, tetanus is much more than that. Tetanus is caused by bacteria that enter the body through wounds or cuts exposed to soil. Most people who develop tetanus infections are over the age of 65. It is recommended that children and adults receive the tetanus vaccine every 10 years.

Vaccinations are the best defense against illness. To receive additional information on available vaccinations, or to schedule an appointment to update your immunization, please contact your primary care provider. **NOW**

*Dr. Deepak Patel, M.D.
Navarro Regional Hospital*

Sources:
National Foundation for Infectious Diseases
www.nfid.org
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.org
National Institute on Aging www.nia.nih.org

Lenten Series on Cancer

If you have cancer, this Lenten series may help you. Our goal is to give you an appreciation of the potential for your immune system to assist your medical team in this battle.

Date	Discussion Topic
Tuesday, March 3:	How your immune system fights cancer – 100 years of research
Tuesday, March 10:	How stress can weaken your immune system
Tuesday, March 17:	Diet, exercise, and meditation - everyday tools to reduce stress and activate the immune system.
Tuesday, March 24:	The most important thing is probably the hardest. Forgiving.
Tuesday, March 31:	Cancer and your family.
Tuesday, April 7:	Coping with fears of recurrence and death
Tuesday, April 14:	Setting your goals for living

Each session will include biblically based exercises which have been developed over the last 30 years, and which are designed to stimulate the immune system, and to draw you closer to God. Prayer is integral to this series; attendees will be prayed for every day throughout Lent by our team.

Tuesdays during Lent: 6:30 – 8:30pm at St. Thomas Episcopal Church, 901 Park St., Ennis

For details, call Kathy Muncaster (972.878.6927) or John Muncaster (214.697.4435)



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Time to Cut Back

— By Nancy Fenton

It is time to begin to think about cutting back. I am not talking about the cash you are spending or the food you are eating, but the plants and trees around your landscape! There are some good and some better times to reduce the size of trees and plants. Most plants can take a bit of pruning almost anytime, but for trees, the best time is early spring (mid-to-late February or early March). Dead wood can come out anytime, but cuts into living wood will stimulate new growth which you want, but not if there is a possibility of a freeze within the following six weeks. After you eliminate the dead wood, it is time to take a good look at the branches, taking off any that are rubbing on others. (The places where they rub are ideal sites for fungus and disease to get a foothold.) No pruning paint is needed if you cut back to the source (trunk or larger limb) and angle the cut to make sure that it will be flush and no water will stand in it.

Tree cuts can be made to train the plant in the growth pattern you desire. (For me, that means pruning them so no branches will hit me in the face when I mow!) I like to take out as many of the small, one-inch thick or smaller branches (called water spouts) which grow off the large limbs as I can reach so the sun will be able to filter through a bit more. This is called opening up the canopy, and it makes a big difference to the grass and flowers trying to grow under the trees. My Christmas gift of an electric pole saw should really extend my reach this year!

Please do not crawl up in your trees to do your pruning! Heights and sharp objects do not mix! Do what you can from the ground, remembering there is

always another year. Our big trees tend to get shocked when more than a third of their leaf coverage bites the dust, so plan carefully what you want to do and please do it safely! **NOW**

Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener in Ellis County.



February 2009

Community Calendar

February 5

Ennis Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours: 5:15 p.m., Knights of Columbus Hall.

Valentine's Crafts, led by Alica Glenn at Moms Connected: 9:30-11:30 a.m., Tabernacle Baptist Church sixth grade room, 1200 Country Club Rd. Bible study and speaker. Everyone is welcome. For more information, contact ennismoms@sbcglobal.net.

February 6

Pre-party and jam session for Ennis Czech Music Festival: 7:00-11:00 p.m., Sokol clubroom. Free admission.

February 7

3rd Annual Ennis Czech Music Festival: 2:00-11:30 p.m., Sokol Activity Center, 2622 E. Hwy. 34. Listen and dance to five bands. Czech & Then Some: 2:00 p.m. Ennis Czech Boys: 4:00 p.m. Jak Se Do: 6:00 p.m. Czech Harvesters: 8:00 p.m. Jodie Mikula Orchestra: 10:00 p.m. Admission: \$5 a person. Ages 14 and under free. Door prizes. Kitchen will be open. Dress casual or *kroj*. www.ennisczechmusicfestival.com.

February 10

Friends of the Library meeting: noon, Ennis Public Library Learning Center. New members welcome.

February 18

Ellis County Christian Women's Connection, affiliated with Stonecroft Ministries, monthly luncheon: Waxahachie Country Club, 1920 W. Hwy. 287 at I-35 East, Exit 401B, Waxahachie. All women are welcome for lunch and a speaker. \$13. Nursery vouchers available. Walk-ins welcome. Contact either Kay at (972) 937-2807 or Mary at (972) 937-9984 or e-mail Kay at windchime423@yahoo.com by February 15.

February 19

Moms Connected: 9:30 - 11:30 a.m., Tabernacle Baptist Church sixth grade room, 1200 Country Club Rd. Gina Gilmore-Struggs will share advice on managing family financing and living on less than you make. ennismoms@sbcglobal.net.

February 21

6th Annual College Street Pub Mardi Gras Parade: 3:00 p.m., 210 N. College St., Waxahachie. \$10 entry fee for floats. (972) 938-2062.

3rd Annual Waxahachie IOOF Lodge #80 Mardi Gras Charity Ball: 7:00 p.m., The Loft in downtown Waxahachie. Tickets: \$35 for a Cajun-style dinner, refreshments and live music. The event benefits the Waxahachie High School Scholarship Fund, Hope Clinic and Waxahachie CARE. (972) 938-2062.

February 23

Friends of the Ennis Public Library Adult Read group meeting: 7:00 p.m., Presbyterian Church. (972) 875-5360.

February 24

Friends of the Ennis Public Library Adult Read group meeting: noon, Ennis Public Library. (972) 875-5360.

For more community events,
visit our online calendar at
www.nowmagazines.com.

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