

Southwest

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M A G A Z I N E

FEBRUARY 2012

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Also Inside:
Art Out of All Odds
A Man and His Dog
A Lasting Venture
In the Kitchen With Holly Horak

A Special Dedication

Sherri Robinson is teaching others all about first place.

House of Devotion
At Home With Eve Williams

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District launches Hall of Honor

DeSoto ISD is establishing the inaugural class of the newly created DeSoto ISD Hall of Honor. The criteria listed below will be used to measure candidates for the Hall for both categories - DHS Alumni Hall of Fame and DeSoto ISD Distinguished Service Award.

DHS Alumni Hall of Fame - DeSoto High School has graduated thousands of people with rewarding careers who touch the lives of others - from artists, elected officials and CEOs, to doctors, lawyers and entrepreneurs. Celebrate their contributions through nomination to the DHS Alumni Hall of Fame. Criteria include 2001 or earlier grad, community service, honors, special achievements and contributions to society.

DeSoto ISD Distinguished Service Award - Thousands of educators, parents, community supporters, business people and elected officials have made significant contributions to the development and improvement of DeSoto ISD. These individuals will be celebrated through the DeSoto ISD Distinguished Service Award. Criteria for consideration include support for DeSoto ISD and education; nominated employees must have worked at least ten (10) years in the district.

Nominations will be available online beginning January 30 and will be due February 24, 2012. The inaugural awards will be presented at the DHS College and Career Academies VIP day this spring and commemorated at DeSoto High School. Due to the nature of the award, the nominee need not be living to receive the award.

Supt. Search

February 3, 5 p.m. -
Application Deadline

February 17 -
Slate presentation to the Board

February 20-21 -
First Round Interviews

February 23-25 -
Final Interviews

February 29-March 1 -
Home district visits by the
Committee and/or designee

March 3 -
DeSoto ISD Board of Trustees
announces Lone Finalist

March 26 -
Board hires Superintendent

More details online at
www.desotoisd.org

DHS College and Career Academies

The DeSoto High School College and Career Academies facility expansion is just two months from completion! With over 80% of the project completed, the construction has moved inside with the final work on classrooms, paint, floors, work surfaces and lights. The 160,000 sq. ft. expansion will complete the development of the five unique Academies that will all be housed within DeSoto High School. The facility expansion, being paid for by 2005 bond monies, is the final part of the \$45M of DHS of renovations and expansions over three phases. The project includes 41% M/WBE participation, far exceeding the goal of 25%.

ALL DeSoto students have the opportunity to explore potential careers with the traditional high school experiences and extra-curricular opportunities while also earning dual credit and preparing for college and beyond. The south expansion will house the Health and Science Academy with labs as well as the culinary arts kitchen, a courtroom, a 911 dispatch area, a banking location and much more. The west performing arts expansion will include a black box theater and choral practice spaces.



DHS College and Career Academies:

Arts and Performance Academy
Business and Technology Academy
Classical Academy
Health and Science Academy
Professional Academy

calendar of events

Monday, February 13, 6:30 p.m. - Board Meeting
Monday, February 20 - Staff Development Day; No School
Monday, February 27, 6:30 p.m. - Board Meeting
March 5, 7-9 - TAKS Testing
March 12-16 - Spring Break
March 26-30 - STAAR Testing



WINGS Graduate Sheterra Gardner celebrates with her family after the January 19 Graduation Ceremony. WINGS is a dropout recovery program in DeSoto ISD.

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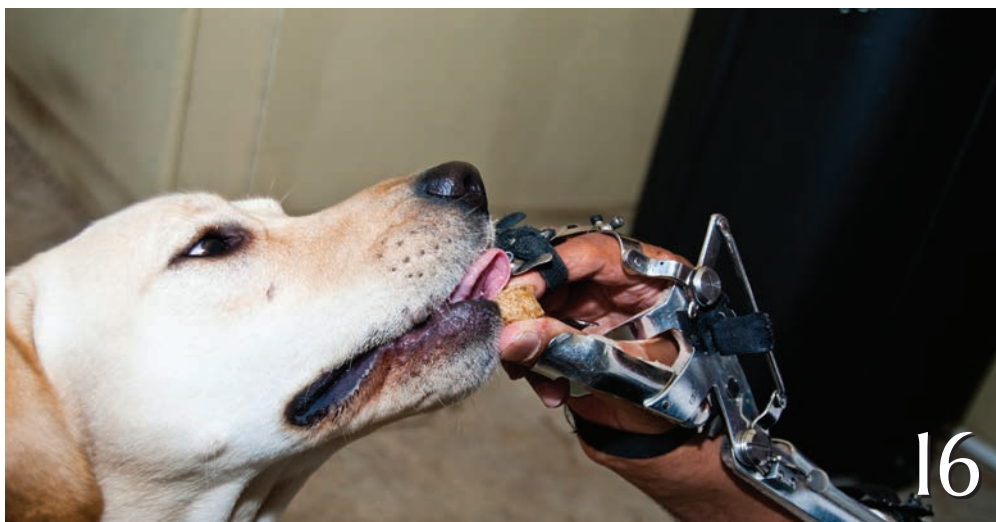


Sherri Robinson
holds her
granddaughter, Abbie.

Photo by Opaque Visuals.

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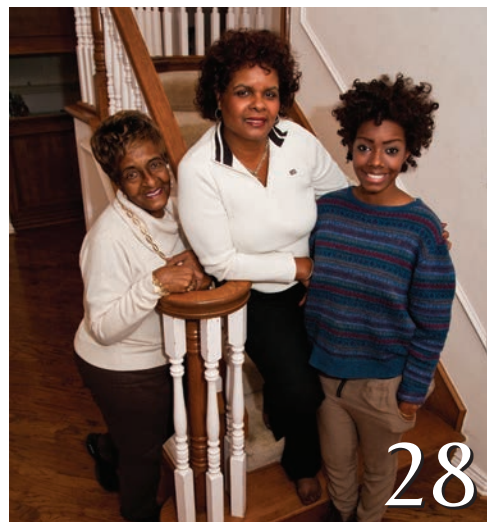
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Editor's Note

Happy Valentine's Day, Southwest Friends,

My father-in-law recently passed away. I am very grateful my daughters joined my husband and me for a trip to see him in Florida at Thanksgiving. Losing someone who has been such a special part of my life for the past 31 years, someone who excelled at showing his love so freely, has me reconsidering what love is truly all about.

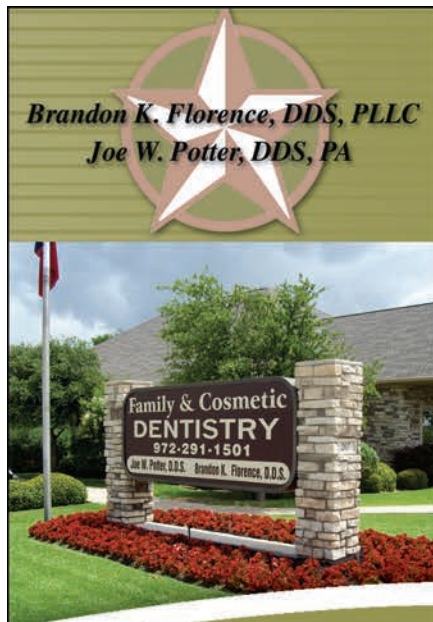
Most movies made in the name of love seem trite and silly, describing love as happily ever after, the result of rubies, pearls, glass slippers and fairy godmothers. Personally, I think kindness, a listening ear and willingness to contentedly spend time doing what your significant other enjoys, simply for the delight of being together, holds a lot more credence. If I were to describe love, I would sum it up like this: enjoying another's presence.

So enjoy those you love this month!



Beverly

Beverly Shay
SouthwestNOW Editor
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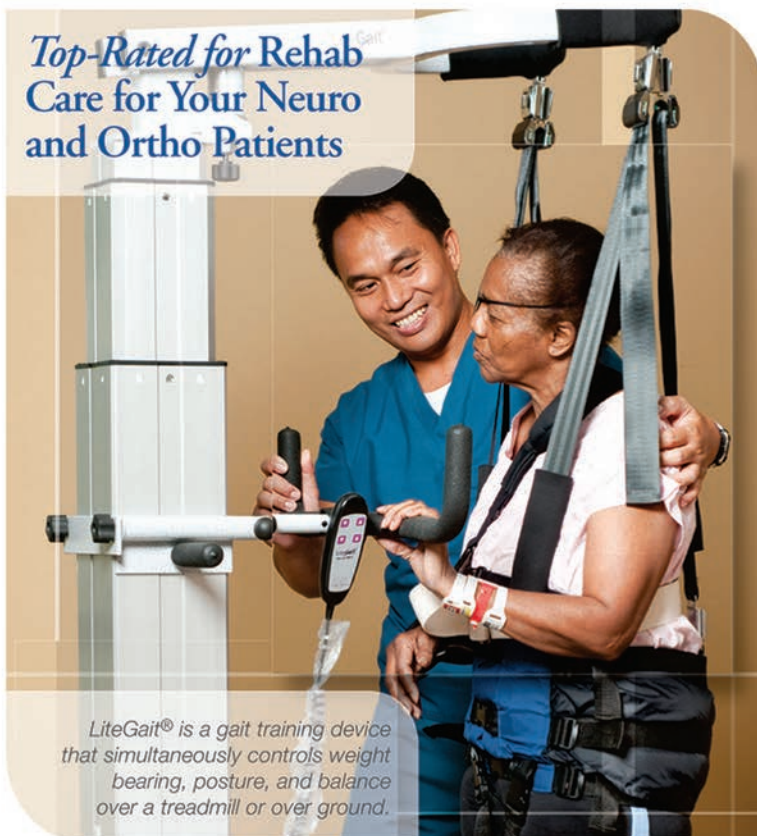
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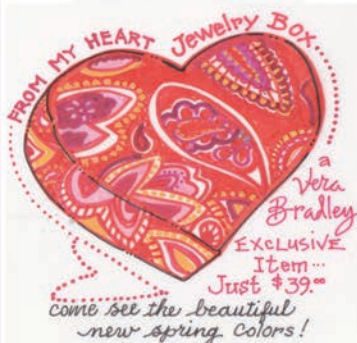




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A woman with dark hair and a black shirt is smiling in her art studio. In the background, there is a painting of fruit on an easel and various art supplies on a table.

Art Out of All Odds

— By Beverly Shay



Some art is learned. Some art is unburied or discovered. Some art is birthed out of joy or tragedy. Some art is an expression of life. For some, art is a reason to live. Most of these thoughts describe Nancy Conant, and her art certainly keeps her going against some strong odds. Her art is absolutely delightful, and



she, as an artist and as a person, is very inspirational. Nancy has only been pursuing art seriously for about three years — not long after she began to battle multiple sclerosis.

Nancy dabbled in art — some sculpting, drawing and painting — from childhood, but she never had any formal training until 2008. “I actually met my husband while painting a wall mural at our church,” Nancy admitted. “He said he was attracted to me

right then!" A mutual friend introduced them. But it took three requests for a date before Nancy would go out with him. "It didn't take us long to know we were right for each other, since we were older," Nancy said. They married in 1994.

Nancy grew up as a bona fide valley girl in Northridge, California. She and her husband were happy there, beginning a family and attending a Vineyard church. But circumstances and somebody else's needs conspired to bring them to the Dallas/Ft. Worth area permanently. "We owned an apartment complex in Dallas as an investment property. It just happened that we had seven units unoccupied and were refurbishing them when Katrina hit. My husband and I decided we wanted to open them up to families needing to relocate after the hurricane. And we felt drawn to this place as we traveled here periodically to oversee things. Our church in California hooked us up with a Vineyard church here — and the rest is history," Nancy explained. They moved here in 2006.

Nancy's husband, who had been designing Web sites and worked with social media and public relations, was able to establish his business here, as well as add an event facility in Cedar Hill called The Heritage House. They did not know at the time it would also become Nancy's art gallery.

Nancy's paintings are inspired by her love of nature. "I love animals and always wanted to be a wildlife artist, like for *National Geographic*. In the '80s, I worked as a volunteer with wild and exotic animals, both from rescues and those that starred in movies," Nancy mentioned. Many of her paintings are renderings of photos she took of the animals.

More recently, her artwork was inspired by the cover of the summer 2009 issue of *World Vision* magazine, which featured an 8-year-old Kenyan girl who struggled daily to find food to eat. Nancy stated, "I could not get that beautiful little face out of my mind." So Nancy painted the cover, titling it with the headline used on the cover, "Haunted by Hunger." The painting was auctioned online in November on eBay to raise

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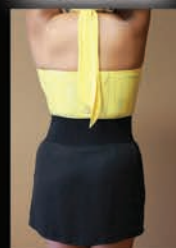
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Nancy's paintings look like photographs. The detail executed with pastels defies imagination. Every hair and whisker, every eye and emotion are depicted in such a lively manner that you are stunned the animal is not moving. Her portraiture of people is equally exquisite. Always wanting to further express her awareness of life, Nancy has a blog addressing her ventures into painting, as well as life in general, including her family and her faith.

"There's still so much I want to explore — sculpting, pottery, advanced oil concepts, painting with palette knives."

At the onset of her multiple sclerosis (MS), Nancy lost her vision for about a month. "My sight gradually tunneled in until it was spinning, and then it faded to just a pinhole. It was very scary," Nancy recalled. Later, her mobility declined, and she was in a wheelchair. The same diligent attention to detail in her artwork marks her pursuit of regaining her health, as she researches new drug therapies and asks her doctors if she qualifies for various drug trials. "The most successful treatment I have used to date is the TYSABRI infusion, which is designed to reduce the number of flare-ups or relapses in relation to MS," Nancy remarked. She has been involved in multiple drug therapy programs since her diagnosis in 2004. Developing healthy

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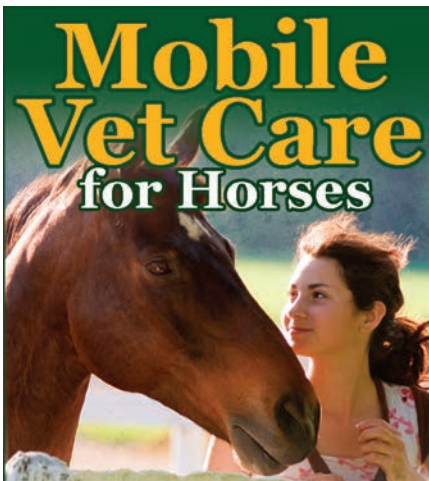
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eating habits and maintaining proper weight is also important for those with MS, as is consistent exercise of the sort which accommodates whatever ability level the person can maintain. For Nancy, that has been water aerobics and weight lifting.

"I take it day by day, month by month, year by year and, sometimes, I have to take it minute by minute! Even though this disease seems to be taking my life away a little at a time, my God is still my God. I trust Him every day of my life, and He is what is getting me through this," she reflected. "I haven't lost the use of my hands — thankfully. I have mostly been affected from the waist down. MS does affect cognitive ability, and it is frustrating to lose my faculties." She has run the gamut of emotions, from being stunned and grieved to angry. "I keep waiting for a miracle. I don't want to be a burden on my family. The hardest thing is probably the fatigue. But I just keep on keeping on."

Art is a great help to Nancy. "I love being creative, and working on my paintings helps keep me focused on the good things in life," she said. "When I began taking lessons at the Visual Expressions Arts Studio in 2008, I discovered that while I had raw skill, I needed to learn fundamentals. I have learned so much, and it shows in my artwork. I have learned things like tone, value, temperature and color. I had never worked with pastels before, but I really love them. Art really gives me a tremendous amount of joy."

Lately, Nancy has ventured more into portraits. She is working on several renditions of her daughter, again capturing such life and revealing her daughter's personality. She also has some amazing still life pictures. Nancy is indebted to those who have taught her, including renowned artists Lesley Harrison, Sally Strand and June Holloway. "I just see beauty and form in so many things around me, the innate beauty of God's creation, and then I want to paint it! I can't imagine not painting," she smiled. **NOW**

Editor's Note: Nancy's art and life can be viewed at nancyonant.com or you can become a fan of hers through Facebook.

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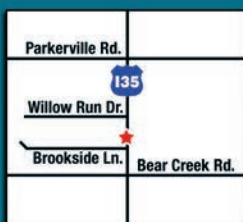
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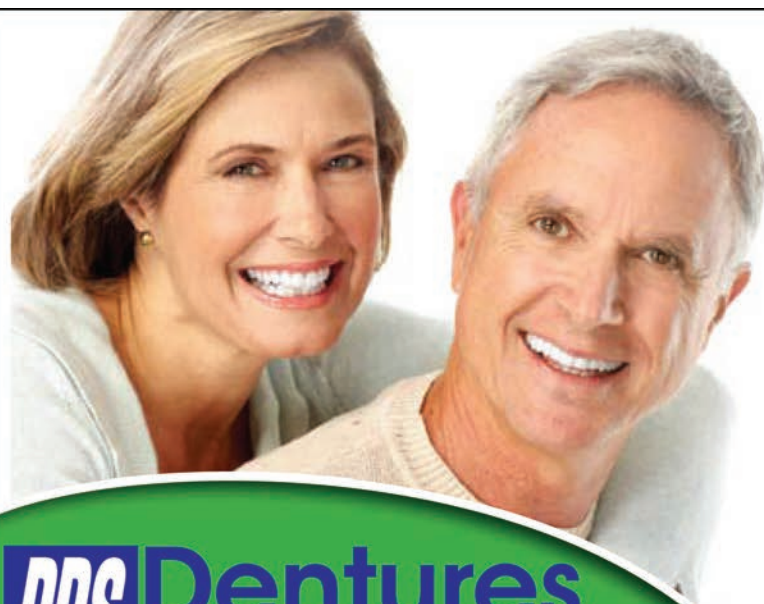


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— By Beverly Shay

One overcast day, not too many months ago, Lowe's was the scene of an unusual fieldtrip. Various autos disgorged their owners, along with several people in polo shirts and khakis and three dogs. One man in a wheelchair worked at backing down the ramp from his van, a woman settled onto a motorized cart, while the other man spoke quietly to his dog. Several dry runs in and out of vehicles attracted curious, yet hastily averted glances from onlookers. The group in polo shirts worked at handing out pamphlets, explaining their affiliation with Patriot Paws, a nonprofit, service dog training organization for military veterans. The whole event was filmed by Mark Birnbaum, who has spent the past two years chronicling an extraordinary story — the story of Marshall Allen, the one with the wheelchair. Marshall's story will be a feature-length documentary.

Marshall has always liked dogs and has owned several. But he never dreamed he would one day be cared for by a dog. By mutual agreement, Marshall and his dog, Wilson, feel they have not only a workable plan, but an enjoyable one as well. Truth be told, Marshall never thought he would need anyone to care for him. He was a strapping Fort Worth firefighter of some renown, until a bicycle accident left him a quadriplegic. After a lot of work, Marshall has regained limited use of his arms and hands with the aid of braces. He continues to work for the Bureau of Fire Prevention Fort Worth Fire Department, where he is in charge of commercial inspections, driving to work in his specially equipped van seated in a motorized wheel chair. But there are some things he can't quite manage. Enter Wilson, a beautiful, two-year-old white Labrador.

"Wilson can open and close doors, pick up things and even bring me drinks from the refrigerator," Marshall explained in the van on the way to Lowe's. "He can identify water, juice or sodas. And best of all, he can help me if I fall, by pressing a panic



button, getting 'his' phone for me or even calling 9-1-1." Once parked, Marshall leaned down to pet Wilson, murmured words of encouragement and gave him treats. While service dogs are trained to certain commands, the owners also customize vocal and hand commands. "Wilson will relieve me of quite a few challenges. Isn't that right, Boy?"

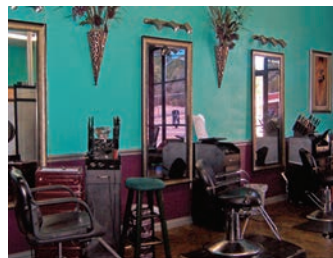
"I thought I knew dogs, but the things Patriot Paws has taught Wilson are really quite impressive," Marshall remarked. Wilson opens or closes doors that have a braided cord hung on them, while ignoring doors without the cord. Following an 18-month to two-year initial training period, four service dogs at a time meet with four potential owners. Within about three months, the dogs learn their owners and know what constitutes



normal behavior for them, as well as their particular needs. Wilson received extra training to familiarize him with the braces Marshall wears. Other dogs may need to be familiarized with prosthetics.

Lori Stevens, who has trained service dogs for over 20 years, founded Patriot Paws specifically to work with veterans at the request of the VA hospital. Patriot Paws provides service dogs free of charge specifically for veterans. "This trip to Lowe's was the first outing for the dogs and their owners. While the dogs already know what to do, the new owners need to be trained," Lori explained. "We teach them all the hand signals and cues, along with nutrition and animal behavior.

"At Lowe's, the owners learned how to indicate which direction they wanted



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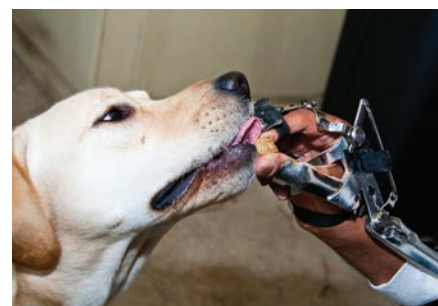


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to go. For Marshall, since he is in a wheelchair, this was even more crucial. Both he and Wilson needed to know on which side of the wheelchair Wilson needed to be."

The outing went well. Even though service dogs are not trained to defend their owners, Wilson did find a cutout cardboard man unsettling. "It's because he can't read the eyes," Lori explained. The store agreed to let the group take the cardboard man with them to use in further training.

The new owners learn to balance work and playtime for their dogs. The dogs know that when they are wearing the service vests, they are "on duty." So during their downtime, the vests are removed. They also wear a Gentle Leader (a guide strap across their face), which affords the owner additional control. Because food is used as a reward for service, their "treats" are part of their daily healthy food intake. They are never allowed to eat food from the table. Each owner wears a fanny pack with treats. Verbal praise and play are also used to reinforce behavior. "We train the owners

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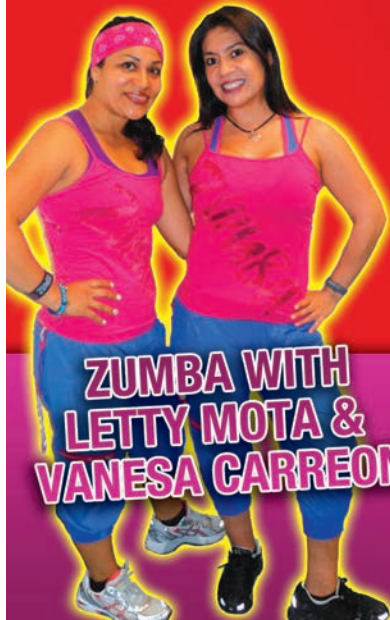
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how to appropriately praise the dogs and how to avoid using any negative reinforcement," Lori remarked.

When Marshall's previous dog passed away in May, his friend, Alex Allred, contacted Lori about Marshall and presented his case. Lori was eager to meet Marshall and find a dog for him. The dogs come from various sources, but mostly from breeders. Labrador Retrievers, other Retriever breeds, Poodles and Labradoodles make great service dogs. Their initial training, begun when they are 9 weeks old, is done by women incarcerated in the Gatesville Christina Melton Crain and Dr. Lane Murray units, with whom Lori has been working since 2008. At the prison, dogs are trained to respond to up to 42 various hand and verbal cues. Then Lori takes them to Patriot Paws, located in Rockwall, for further specific training. All of the dogs learn to work with people in wheelchairs. Once the dogs have "chosen" their new owner, several days are spent together in training, and then they begin training in public places, such as Lowe's or Bass Pro Shop. "It's always interesting to see how the dogs 'pick' the person they can best relate to," Lori said with a smile.

"Patriot Paws, which has a paid staff of six and 40 volunteers, receives 100 percent of their support from the public. We don't receive any financial aid from the government," Lori informed. So far, Patriot Paws has placed 29 dogs with vets who have mobile disabilities and have about 44 on their waiting list. "We don't provide seeing-eye dogs," she said. "Our motto is 'service for those who have served.'"

One of Patriot Paws' most unique trainers is their cat, Eli. "It's important for the dogs to know they can't take off and chase a cat or squirrel, so Eli really is a dog trainer," Lori laughed. "We find that caring for a service dog that is also caring for them, gives the vets even more reason to relearn functions they may have lost through injury. Both the dog and their owner learn to read each other's stress levels and alleviate them. It's a win-win situation." **NOW**

Editor's Note: For more information about Patriot Paws, visit <http://www.patriotpaws.org>.

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A Special DEDICATION

— By Katrina D. Lewis

Most humans have something within that propels them to give back to their communities. Whether volunteering to build a home, distributing food during the holidays or writing a check, they find the time to make this world a better place. For Sherri Robinson, these moments have been her work for more than 40 years.

Sherri is the coordinator for the Duncanville Swingers, a group of post-high school, mentally-challenged adults, mostly in their 40s. In addition to organizing training for Special Olympics activities, Sherri also manages the Duncanville Swingers' social events, such as bowling, going to movies and attending sporting events. The group is unique in that they are not part of a school group or work place, like most of the competing athletes who participate in Special Olympics.

Sherri's work with the group began while she was a teenager, when her mother saw an advertisement for an organization called Teens Aid the Retarded. The group was asking for volunteers from surrounding cities, including Duncanville. Sherri's mother arranged for her daughter to be part of the group. "My mom decided I needed something more than me to focus on. All

13-year-olds can be pretty self-absorbed," she laughed.

Unfortunately, the organization did not last long, folding after less than six months, from what Sherri remembers. However, that did not stop Sherri or her mother from their involvement, as there were still quite a few participants from the program from the Duncanville area. "She and I put together a brochure, and at the time, I was going to First Methodist Church in Duncanville. They were like the home base for us. They let us meet there, and we just kind of got it going," Sherri said.

The participants were allowed to choose the group's name, and though the meaning of the group's name can be met with a few raised eyebrows, Duncanville Swingers it was. "At the time, it wasn't a big deal," she said wryly.

Originally, the group started out servicing all ages but

Duncanville **NOW**

eventually became focused on adults. Mentally-challenged adults are able to attend high school until they turn 22. Unfortunately after that, many are on their own for their social activities and outings. "Once you get out of high school, you come to me," she explained. "Right now, I have a great relationship with the high school special education teachers. They will give their graduating seniors my phone number, and if the parents/guardians are interested in their child being involved, then they can call."

The Duncanville Swingers currently participate in the Area 10 division of Special Olympics, competing in basketball, track and field, bowling and bocce ball. There are roughly 65 members in the group — some living in group homes, others with siblings and parents. Amazingly, Sherri still has one member of the group who, like her, has been involved since they were both 13-year-old girls. The women even share the same first name, though with different spellings. "A lot of the ones who were here in the beginning have passed away or moved," Sherri said. "She's the only one left from the very, very beginning."

Sherri has never questioned why she has continued working with the group this long — it's almost part of her DNA. "My mom and dad were very involved," she said, recounting how her father helped coach her sports team and how her mother and some of her mother's



Sherri Robinson, right, poses with Sherry Dickerson, who has been a member of the group since its very beginning.

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friends taught kindergarten students in an under-served area of the city when she was a little girl. "I mean, that's just what you did. It's who we were. It never dawned on me not to do this anymore."

Though Sherri does not have paid staff to assist her, she is extremely thankful for a supportive network of group home employees, parents, siblings, volunteers and area business owners, such as Red Bird Bowling Lanes, DeSoto City Pool and the city of Duncanville Recreation Department. "We do a variety of things," she explained. "But, I have to be limited on what we do because of funds. We have no 501(c)(3), so we're not a nonprofit organization. We do things that don't cost a whole lot [for which] everyone can pay, or I get people to give me a discount on stuff, or they let us come for free."

Sherri has been able to work deals or receive discounts for tickets to Air Hogs baseball games in Grand Prairie, and the group attends matinee movie screenings to save funds. A local bowling alley allows the group to bowl for less than \$2 per game, and Sherri is allowed to bring her group to a local city pool before it opens for the public during the summer months.

Of all of the events the Duncanville Swingers hold each year, almost none is looked forward to as much as their annual Christmas party. Last year's event, as it has been for the past several years, was successful due to the participation of Northwood University in Cedar Hill. A "white-linen" affair, group members dressed in their Sunday best, while business majors concentrating in restaurant and hotel management



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worked as servers. “Generous. They are just extremely generous to us,” Sherri confessed. “The company that provides the food to Northwood donates the food free of charge to us. The facility is beautiful. They let us have a big dance — that is a big, big, big part of the program.” This month, a Valentine’s Day dance will be the major social outing, “complete with a few romances,” Sherri grinned. Just last month, the athletes started basketball practice, and they are looking forward to Special Olympics soon after Valentine’s Day.

Reflecting on the major successes of leading the Duncanville Swingers, Sherri does not reminisce on medals won, records broken or major physical expressions of strength or agility. Rather, in keeping with the Special Olympics’ mission of demonstrating courage and experiencing joy, she focuses more on the internal changes in members of her group. “Over the years, I’ve gotten them out of thinking all about the medals. A lot of times, as mature as I like to think some of my higher-level guys are — they still react to disappointments like most people. They used to throw their ribbons down on the ground!” she said, laughing. “You can’t do any more than your best, and that’s all you can do. If you do your best, you’ve won for the day, and you’ve won first place. That’s what I try to teach them.” **NOW**



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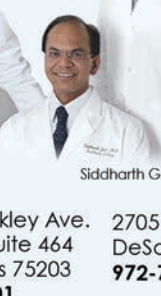
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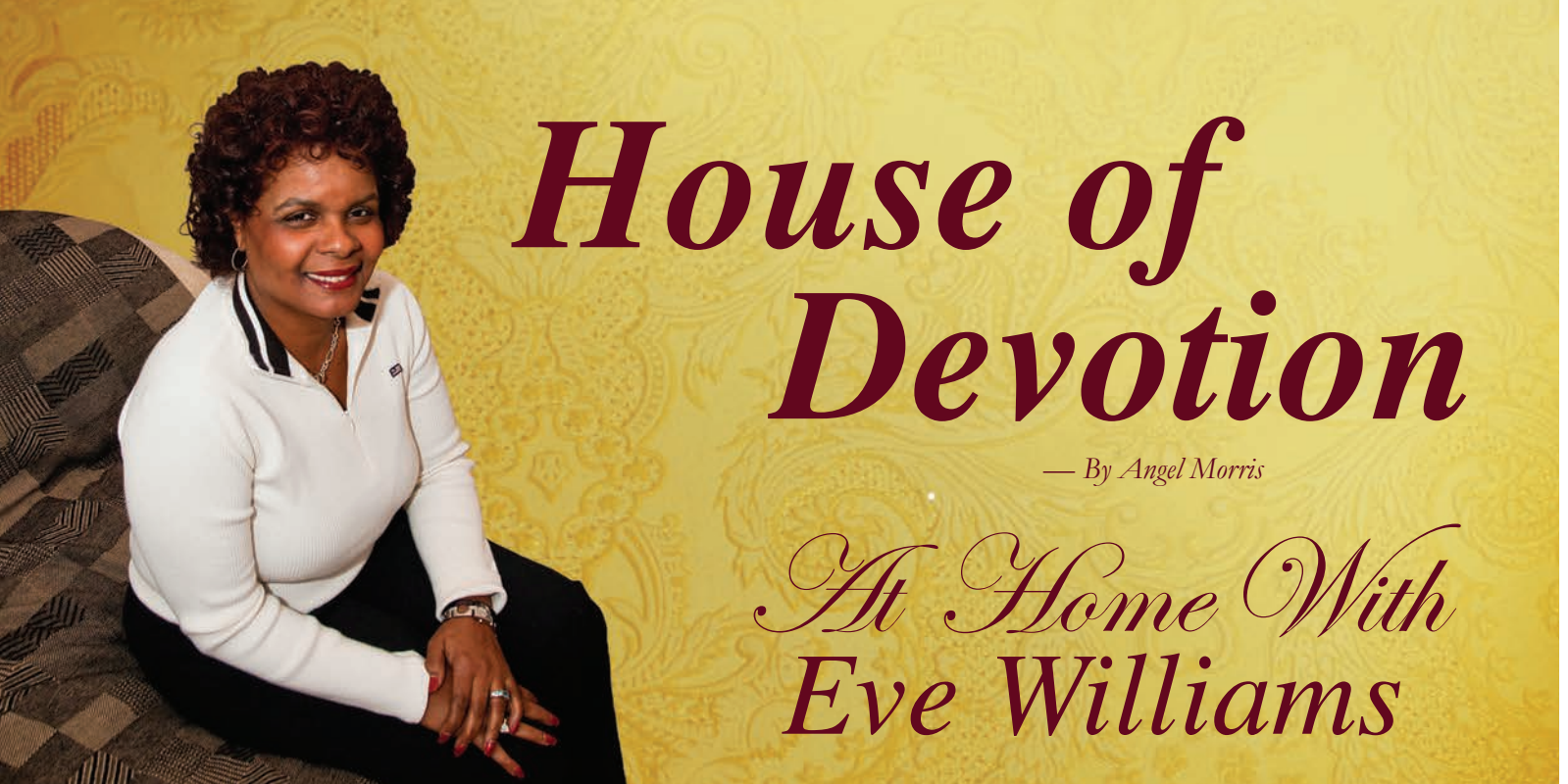
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House of Devotion

— By Angel Morris

At Home With Eve Williams

Ever a devoted daughter, Eve Williams moved from Grand Prairie to DeSoto in 1999 because her dad lived in the city, and she sought an upscale neighborhood. She chose a 5,000-square-foot home

on 1.3 acres. “It has charming walk-up appeal with plants all around,” Eve noted. “I personally plant flowers every spring — one of my most satisfying, stress-relieving duties.”



In the past 30 years, Eve has lived in various cities in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. She was born in Chicago and went to high school in Wisconsin. After moving to Texas in 1980, she earned a bachelor's degree in business administration, as well as a master's degree from The University of Texas at Arlington.

Today, as the president and CEO of Dikita Enterprises, Inc., Eve considers her home her refuge. A decorative-gravel, circular drive welcomes her daily, and a slate stone entrance leads to steps and red doors with stained glass windows. Entering the home, dark wooden floors ground the entry and halls, with the living room and dining room to the left and right. A white, winding staircase leads to three bedrooms upstairs.


"The upstairs is devoted to the children. Whitney (16) has the second largest bedroom, while my college student, Erika, has the bedroom with a private bath and patio. She sat out there many nights on the phone, until I made her go to bed," Eve recalled.

Also upstairs is a guest bedroom and game room, with a pool table/conversion ping pong table. "This room is perfect for the kids to entertain. It also has Nintendo and Xbox," Eve said. "Our house was, and still is, where everyone else's child was welcome for sleepovers, because there was always room."



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Downstairs, the master bedroom houses a sitting area with marble fireplace and bay windows. Window treatments are a wild animal theme, serving as a backdrop to a leopard-print couch. "I have black canvas window coverings with branches of tree limbs adorning the top of each window," Eve said.

Eve admitted an affinity for African animals, favoring elephants and tigers. "My favorite piece is a wooden end table that has three elephant heads and trunks for legs."



The master bath has walk-in closets and his-and-her vanities. Its skylight brightens a Jacuzzi tub from above, while glass blocks encased in marble offer built-in lights below. "The tub has a bay window from one end to the other adorned by large drapes and window jewelry," Eve explained. "It's a very romantic space."

French doors lead from the master bedroom to Eve's sanctuary. "This is my favorite room. It is equipped with TV, stereo, futon, exercise machine

and bookcases with my collection of favorites," Eve said.

The second downstairs bedroom is set off the dining room adjacent to a butler pantry. "It is perfect for my mother — it looks out to the front where she can see anyone approaching. She watches out for the teenager of the house and can safely monitor her comings and goings," Eve noted.

Eve's mother's bathroom is equipped with a walk-in tub with 16 hydro-jet spouts, designed especially for seniors.

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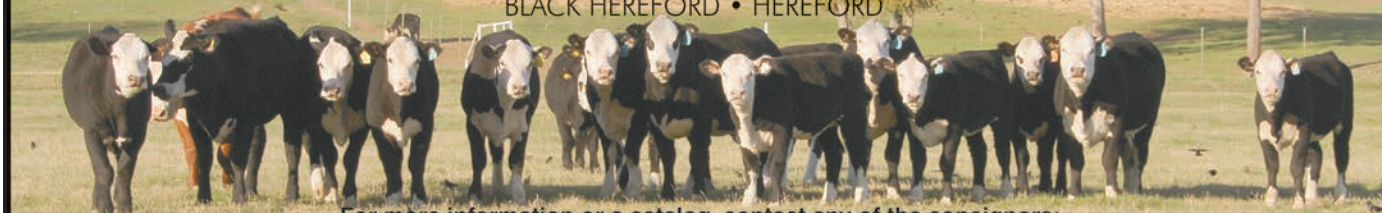
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"Mom spends hours here and has a TV above it so she doesn't miss her soaps and CNN," Eve grinned.

In the family room, a much-used fireplace features glazed, shattered glass off which fires dance. A wall of windows showcases white plantation shutters, while another houses a flat-screen TV for watching the Dallas Cowboys. A wet bar, which is available for entertaining, has baby blue tiled countertops and glass shelves that hold Eve's wine glass collection and portraits of her with famous folks she has met in her travels.

The nearby kitchen has light oak cabinets and an island. "Since my mom lives with me, we are often two cooks in one kitchen. To coexist, we have two ovens, two microwaves and a double sink," Eve said.

Matching the den's wet bar, tiled counters hold kitchen essentials. "My mom is a gadget person. We have everything from the Home Shopping Network or that Rachael Ray has suggested," Eve joked.

Born during the Depression era, Eve's mother "has a thing about buying lots of food." Eve remarked, "Every year, I donate dozens of cans and boxes of food to friends, church and the DeSoto food pantry. We have every type of soup and every spice and seasoning made. I'm prepared to cook any type of meal a guest may request!"

Guests can dine at the eat-in counter or in the kitchen's separate eating area, which opens to the covered backyard

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patio. "The part of the house that most people marvel over is the yard. Certainly the front is appealing, but the back is to die for," Eve said.

When purchasing the house, Eve was told the yard had been a *Better Homes and Gardens* feature. It has at least 26 trees, a tree house, a pool separated by a wrought-iron fence and a patio with slate-finished flooring. "When we throw parties, the deejay is often playing music from the patio in the sky (the tree house). Many trees have lights so far up it requires special ladders and tree climbers to change blown bulbs," Eve said.

The pool area — three-fourths the size of a football field — is surrounded by ground lighting and greenery. A seven-foot statue of an armless woman creates a Roman feel. Lights rotate through color shades in the heated pool and Jacuzzi, where there are also two water features — one streaming water into the air and another cascading water from lion heads built into the pool walls.

When not in the pool, Eve is often found in her office. "The space was a computer lab when my children were growing up. With them fighting over the use of a single computer, this room had to become very high-tech times two," Eve said. Now it houses the necessities of an adult office, including a network of security cameras surrounding the property.

As chairman of DeSoto's Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and a force in stimulating economic growth in the city, Eve is no stranger to dedication. Her home is a tribute to such devotion to family and career. Perhaps a favorite keepsake best depicts how Eve has made the house a home. "I have a table-sized statue of a unique breed of birds made of precious stones, which I bought in Brazil. The birds are apricot-colored, with gold-plated feet and eyes made of rubies," Eve explained. "What was so interesting about this statue of one male and one female bird was that within this breed, the male is so dedicated to the female that if they're ever separated, he would die. Now that was an awesome concept of devotion." **NOW**

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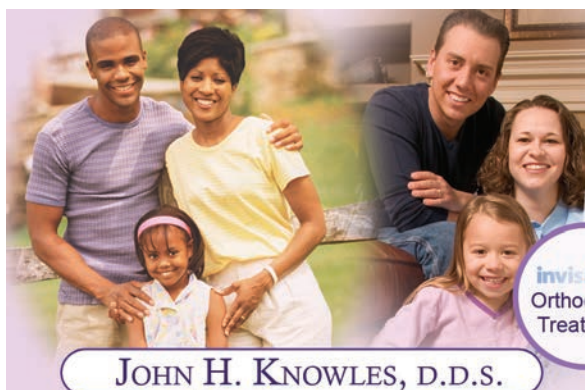
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A LASTING VENTURE

Anh Nguyen extends his personal motto of doing things right to his employees and customers.

— By Beverly Shay

Grabbing a bite to eat has become a national solution for multi-careered families, with multiple after-school activities, who often feel they live out of their cars just to keep up. No one wants eating to be a tasteless, albeit inexpensive, or expensive venture. Anh Nguyen has made it his goal to provide the best food he can at a reasonable, fair price. “We decided not to raise our prices for the last three years,” Anh remarked, stating most meals at his restaurant, Mason's Chicken & Seafood Grill, are under \$6.

Anh has been working in restaurant service since he was in college studying business finance at The University of Texas at Arlington, having worked at Sonic while in high school. “I want

to stay in business forever,” he remarked, “so I do it right — with honesty and a good product. I am a firm believer that the tortoise beats the hare, so we don't make fast, abrupt changes, although we are continually improving our food and our service. We offer consistent, quality taste so people can count on it, time after time,” Anh stated. “Our product speaks for itself, and our customers keep returning.”

Mason's best-selling item is catfish, with fried shrimp, hot wings and chicken tenders following close behind. If you add in some French fries, hush puppies, homemade mashed potatoes, coleslaw, fried okra, onion rings, dirty rice and/or baked beans, you certainly won't go hungry. Appetizers, burgers and

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sandwiches, pork chops, country-fried steak, hot links, tilapia and oysters ensure something delectable. Any food craving can pretty much be met at Mason's, which is another reason why customers come back for more. "Most of our customers become frequent customers," Anh said of the steady stream of patrons he has year-round. "We don't seem to experience any slack time throughout the year."

Not only is Anh's food good, he also endeavors to provide a positive life experience for his employees, of which he usually has 14 full and part time between his Grand Prairie and DeSoto stores. "When looking for employees, whom I hire locally, I look for someone intelligent, motivated to work and full of integrity, which is the most important virtue or character trait a person can have. Personally, I live by biblical principles; that's also how I run my business," Anh stated.

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prices. "We are a viable part of the local community through hiring, paying taxes and involvement in the local activities. But even more than that, I want my customers to leave here happy — as happy as I am about coming into work here each day. When they leave here happy, they go into the community happy," Anh smiled, adding, "Hey, I eat my own cooking, because it is good. We make everything here, except our desserts — our own seasonings and sauces, and we cut up and prepare the chicken daily. Consistency in quality and taste is a big deal to me, as is friendly service and good homemade food made fresh and served with a smile. People who come in here are more than customers — they're our guests." **NOW**



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Duncanville ISD Spelling Bee winners seventh-grader, Jacobi Davidson (right), and fourth-grader, Joshua Wilson (left) pose for a picture.



DHS senior, William Jameson (center, right), is awarded the 2011 ExxonMobil Bronze Medallion and given a \$1,000 scholarship toward pursuing a degree in engineering at the regional Hispanic Heritage Youth Awards.



Archie and Nicole, welcome their daughter, Mya Na'Kayla, the first baby born in 2012 at Methodist Charlton Medical Center.



Deuntae Pegues is a star for a day during his shopping spree at Macy's, coordinated by Wish Granters for Make-A-Wish Foundation of North Texas, Kyle and Katy Miller.



Outgoing Duncanville Women's Club 1st VP Sandy Jones poses with guest speaker, Dr. Rosemary Rumbley.

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Heart Healthy Tips for Valentine's Day

— By Dr. Lesa Ansell, DC, RN-BSN

Valentine's season is here again, and we are thinking about chocolate, love and hearts. And because Valentine's Day is centered around these things, we can use them as discussion points. The first one, chocolate, makes you "feel better" although usually it is just emotionally. Chocolate actually is good for you in limited amounts. It contains monounsaturated fatty acids (MUFAs), which may help lower your risk of heart disease by improving associated risk factors. They may lower your total blood cholesterol and low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol levels. They are an essential part of the Mediterranean Diet, which is considered one of the healthiest diets available. Other examples of MUFAs are: avocados, canola oil, olive oil, peanut oil, butter, nut butters, nuts and sesame seeds.

We have all heard, "love makes the world go 'round." While that is not true, it is an essential part of human life. According to Abraham Maslow, physiological and safety needs are the only things more important than love and belonging. Without love, the emotional and physical states of the body suffer. Scientists have now been able to measure the physical effects that emotional states cause in the body. Shame, guilt, anger and fear actually weaken the body. Trust, forgiveness, joy and love strengthen the body. Since your heart emits a stronger electromagnetic force field than the brain, the brain will actually match the biological rhythm of your heart. When you feel the positive emotions, such as love, the brain

continues in a much more coherent (normal) rhythm, which is healthier for the brain and heart.

The heart, although used symbolically during this holiday, is the most critical to our discussion here. It is one of the vital organs, meaning the body cannot live without it. A strong, healthy heart is essential for living a long, happy life. Unfortunately, it is often too late when people decide to take care of their heart health. Some of the diseases that can arise from poor eating and poor lifestyle habits are: coronary artery disease, myocardial infarction (heart attack), valve problems, arrhythmias (abnormal heart rhythms), cardiomyopathies and weakening of the vessel walls resulting in aneurysm. Some tips to have a healthier heart include: stop smoking, exercise more and eat healthier. Get an annual checkup, especially before starting a new exercise program. This can be done by your medical provider or alternative health provider, such as a chiropractor, to ensure that you are healthy enough to start a program. If prescribed medications, take them as directed. If you have chest pain, get it checked. And the last thing is share the knowledge you gained here. Family and friends will love you for it, and we know that is good for *your* heart! **NOW**

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Economic and Investing Outlook for 2012

— By *Dennis Brock*

Market and Economic Review:

While 2011 came in with high hopes for economic growth and stock market gains, that optimism soon dwindled as the economy stalled, due in part to the first-ever downgrade of U.S. debt and an ever-growing European crisis. By the end of the third quarter, optimism turned to panic as markets around the world sold off, due to fears of a global slowdown and likely U.S. recession. Given the high level of volatility, it may be hard to believe the Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJIA) was up five-and-a-half percent and the S&P 500 had a positive gain including dividends.

Investment Outlook:

Current earnings growth estimates for the DJIA and S&P 500 for 2012 are 10 percent. This is a good number; however, these estimates would be at risk:

- 1) If Europe were to enter a severe recession.
- 2) If China's economy were to have a "hard" landing. Currently, China's central bank (similar to our Fed) has been raising interest rates and tightening credit to slow their economy (a "soft" landing).

- 3) If U.S. economic growth is too slow. The U.S. did avoid a recession last year, but growth this year is likely to be slow.

Investment Strategies:

Given current earnings estimates for the DJIA and S&P 500, a total return of seven to nine percent may be reasonable. If the DJIA breaches the 13,000 level, we should evaluate if we need to reduce our stock holdings. Likewise if the DJIA declines back into the 11,000s, it would likely be a good buying opportunity. For those investors with a greater risk tolerance, European and Emerging Markets may be good investments. If you feel you need to own stocks for the greater growth/return potential but cannot stand the volatility, then annuities may be a candidate for some of your portfolio. Some annuities allow you to participate in the returns of the stock market without risking loss of principal. **NOW**

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Through April 6

DeSoto Public Library's Spring Reading Club for ages 5-12. Features interactive stories, crafts and prizes. To sign up, call (972) 230-9666.

All Month

Register in February for spring coed adult volleyball "strictly for fun" league. Play begins in March. Registration is \$116/team. All games played at Cedar Hill Recreation Center. (972) 291-5130 or cedarhilltx.com.

February 1-15

Cedar Hill Recreation Center Valentine Membership Special: \$10 off three-month membership.

February 2, 9 and 16

DeSoto Public Library presents a series of African American feature films produced between 1935 and 1956 from a special collection of the G. William Jones Film & Video Collection from the Hamon Arts Library at Southern Methodist University: 6:30 p.m. These films offer a unique African American perspective in American motion picture history. Cost is free, but you *must* pick up a ticket from the library, and you *must* present the ticket to view the movie. **Feb. 2:** *Midnight Shadow* (1939); **Feb. 9:** *Girl in Room 20* (1946); **Feb. 16:** *Souls of Sin* (1949). (972) 230-9661.

February 2-26

African American Repertory Theater presents *Free Man of Color* by Charles Smith: **February 2:** preview performance (\$10); **Friday and Saturday nights:** 7:30 p.m. (\$20); **Saturday and Sunday matinees:** 2:30 p.m. (\$15) at the Corner Theatre, 211 E. Pleasant Run Rd., DeSoto. To purchase tickets: (972) 572-0998 or www.aareptheater.com.

February 11

Some Real Cedar Hill Story Telling & Get Together: 6:00-8:00 p.m., 1980's House (Quilter's Retreat), 398 Broad St. at Cooper. Event features homemade snacks and desserts. Some likely to tell stories: Jimmy Mobley, Joe Potter, the Hickmans, Robert Nelson, various others and you, if you'd like. Informal setting and dress. No charge, but donations accepted. Bring your friends, neighbors and your memories of unusual/fun incidents and join in telling stories. For information, call Phyllis: (972) 293-3806 or (214) 769-8425.

February 14

Valentine's Day

Margaret Clauder presents *Love, Love, Love* where Lovey sings silly love songs with Valentine puppets and more: 7:00-7:45 p.m. at Duncanville Public Library's Dad's Night Out.

February 18

DeSoto Public Library presents a free program on African American genealogy: 11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. with Lela Evans, a librarian at the University of North Texas at Dallas, a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Lancaster Genealogical Society and the Association of Professional Genealogists. (972) 230-9661.

February 25

20th Annual Las Vegas Night presented by the Duncanville Noon Lions Club: Doors open: 6:00 p.m., Hilton Garden Inn, 800 North Main Street, Duncanville. Join the evening of casino action, auctions and full buffet dinner to raise funds for scholarships and Lions charities. Tickets: \$70/person; \$85 at the door. Contact Steve Martin at (972) 977-0060 or www.DuncanvilleLionsClub.com.

February 22-March 9

Register your softball team for the 2012 Cedar Hill Spring League; fee: approximately \$385/team. All games played at Virginia Weaver Softball Complex. (972) 291-5130 or cedarhilltx.com.

February 26

Bridal and Special Event Show: 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center, Midlothian. Admission: \$3.

February 27

The Southwest Dallas County Parkinson's Group's monthly support meeting: 6:30-8:00 p.m., Trinity United Methodist Church, 1302 S. Clark Rd., Duncanville. Refreshments will be served. Exercise and speech classes are also available. (972) 298-4556.

March 3

Cedar Hill Recreation Center's 7th Anniversary and Neighborhood Services Citywide Block Party: 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Rec. Center, 310 E. Parkerville Rd. Fun activities for the whole family, including a

health fair. First 500 people receive a free T-shirt. (972) 293-5388 or cedarhilltx.com

American Association of University Women's southwest Dallas branch's 19th annual Expanding Your Horizons conference. For information, contact Penny Ball (972) 709-1957 or penny@acm.org.

The Canterbury Episcopal School Annual Gala: 6:00 p.m., Ruthe Jackson Center, 3113 S. Carrier Pkwy., Grand Prairie. Take a trip back in time through "Retro Rewind" featuring dinner, music, dancing, live and silent auctions, retro costume contest and prize raffle. To purchase raffle tickets, become a sponsor or donate to the event, visit www.CanterburyGala.com, call Sherry Bowers at (972) 293-5877 or e-mail her at cesgala@yahoo.com.

March 7

Duncanville Women's Club monthly luncheon: 11:00 a.m. (registration: 10:30 a.m.), The Golf Club of Dallas, 2200 Red Bird Lane. Guest speaker: "The Lady in the Hat," Mae Hoover, Laffologist and story teller. For information or reservations, contact Barbara McComb at (972) 296-4601 or Joan Bryan at (972) 296-8986.

March 31

12th Annual Lawn & Garden Expo, presented by the Ellis County Master Gardeners: 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center, 2000 Civic Center Ln., Waxahachie. Event includes plant sales by ECMGA, over 100 exhibit booths, adult and children workshops, door prizes and guest speakers. Adults: \$5; children under 12: free. Free admission tickets available from participating sponsors. See ecmga.com for a list of sponsors and Expo details.

Ongoing:

Tuesdays

Duncanville Public Library's Homeschool Videos presents *U.S. History — Origins to 2000* series: 2:00 p.m. **February 7:** *Revolution*; **February 14:** *New Nation*; **February 21:** *Expansionism*; **February 28:** *Reform*.

Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your event details to bsbay.nowmag@sbcglobal.net.



In The Kitchen With Holly Horak

— *By Beverly Shay*

"I enjoy cooking because it's a new adventure every time," admitted Holly Horak, who rarely makes the same thing twice. "Cooking feeds my soul and makes me happy." Holly learned to cook from her mother. "I always wanted to be in the kitchen with her when I was little. I read cookbooks and watched cooking shows, searched the Internet and blogs for recipes and inspiration. I love to bake. I keep everything on hand, so when I get bored, I can bake, even late at night!" she laughed. Holly cooks for her boyfriend, co-workers, family and friends. "While I don't have any 'traditions' yet, I am starting to cook dishes from my Czech background. I am excited to learn how my ancestors cooked and ate," Holly declared. **NOW**

Easy Santa Fe Soup

- 1 15.25-oz. can whole kernel corn
- 1 10-oz. can Ro-Tel (I prefer hot.)
- 1 10 3/4-oz. can cream of chicken soup
- 1 10 3/4-oz. can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 26-oz. can ranch-style beans
- 3 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cubed (or shred after cooking)
- 2 cups water

1. Pour all canned goods into Crock-Pot; add chicken and water. Stir.
2. Cook on low for 6-8 hours or on high for 4-6 hours.

Shrimp Portofino

Pasta and Lemon Butter Sauce:

- 1 lb. Vermicelli pasta
- 2 sticks butter, cut into

tablespoon-size portions

- 1 Tbsp. shallot, minced
- 1 Tbsp. garlic, minced
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1/2 cup lemon juice

Shrimp:

- 4 Tbsp. butter
- 2 Tbsp. minced garlic
- 3 cups mushrooms, sliced
- 24 large shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 1 1/2 Tbsp. roasted pine nuts
- 6 cups fresh spinach leaves

1. Boil pasta according to directions on package. Keep warm, but set aside.
2. To prepare lemon butter sauce: Melt 1 Tbsp. butter in large skillet over medium-high heat; sauté shallots and garlic until translucent. Add white wine; reduce to slightly more than half, whisking occasionally.

Add cream; reduce by half. Add lemon juice and reduce by half.

3. Reduce to low heat. Add remaining butter, 2 Tbsp. at a time, whisking continuously after each addition to completely incorporate butter. Continue to simmer, whisking until sauce just coats spoon.

4. Prepare shrimp by melting 4 Tbsp. butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add garlic and sauté until translucent. Stir in mushrooms, shrimp and pine nuts. Sauté for several minutes or until shrimp are done and show color.

5. Remove skillet from heat and gently stir in spinach.

6. Place warm pasta on plate with shrimp mixture on the side. Pour lemon-butter sauce over pasta, permitting a bit of sauce to drizzle onto shrimp.

Valentine Lace Cookies

- 3/4 cup light brown sugar
- 1/2 cup sweetened, flaked coconut
- 1/4 cup unsalted butter, melted
- 1/4 cup flour
- 1/2 tsp. pure vanilla extract
- 1/8 tsp. fine sea salt
- 1 4-oz. bar bittersweet chocolate, chopped into 1/2-inch pieces

1. Preheat oven to 375 F. Line 3 baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone liners.
2. In a large bowl, mix together all ingredients, except chocolate.
3. Scoop 6 1-Tbsp. balls of dough; place 3-4 inches apart on each baking sheet. Lightly flatten the tops of the dough.
4. Cook until golden, 8-10 minutes. Allow to cool 15 minutes.
5. Melt chocolate in a bowl (microwave or double boiler). Using a fork, drizzle the tops of the cookies with melted chocolate. Freeze for 5 minutes to set chocolate. Store in airtight container at room temperature.

Quick Chicken and Dumplings

- 3 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 1 10 3/4-oz. cream of chicken soup
- 4 14-oz. cans chicken broth
- 2 cubes chicken bouillon
- 2 cans Grands biscuits; cut each biscuit in fourths

1. Place all ingredients in Crock-Pot, putting biscuits in last. Do not stir.
2. Cook on high for 3 hours.
3. Shred or cube chicken before serving.

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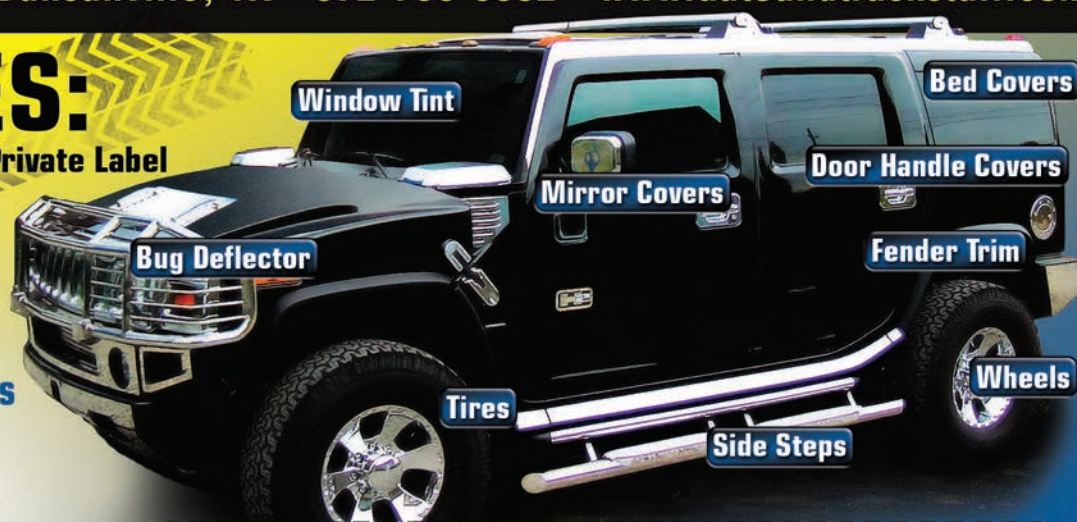
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