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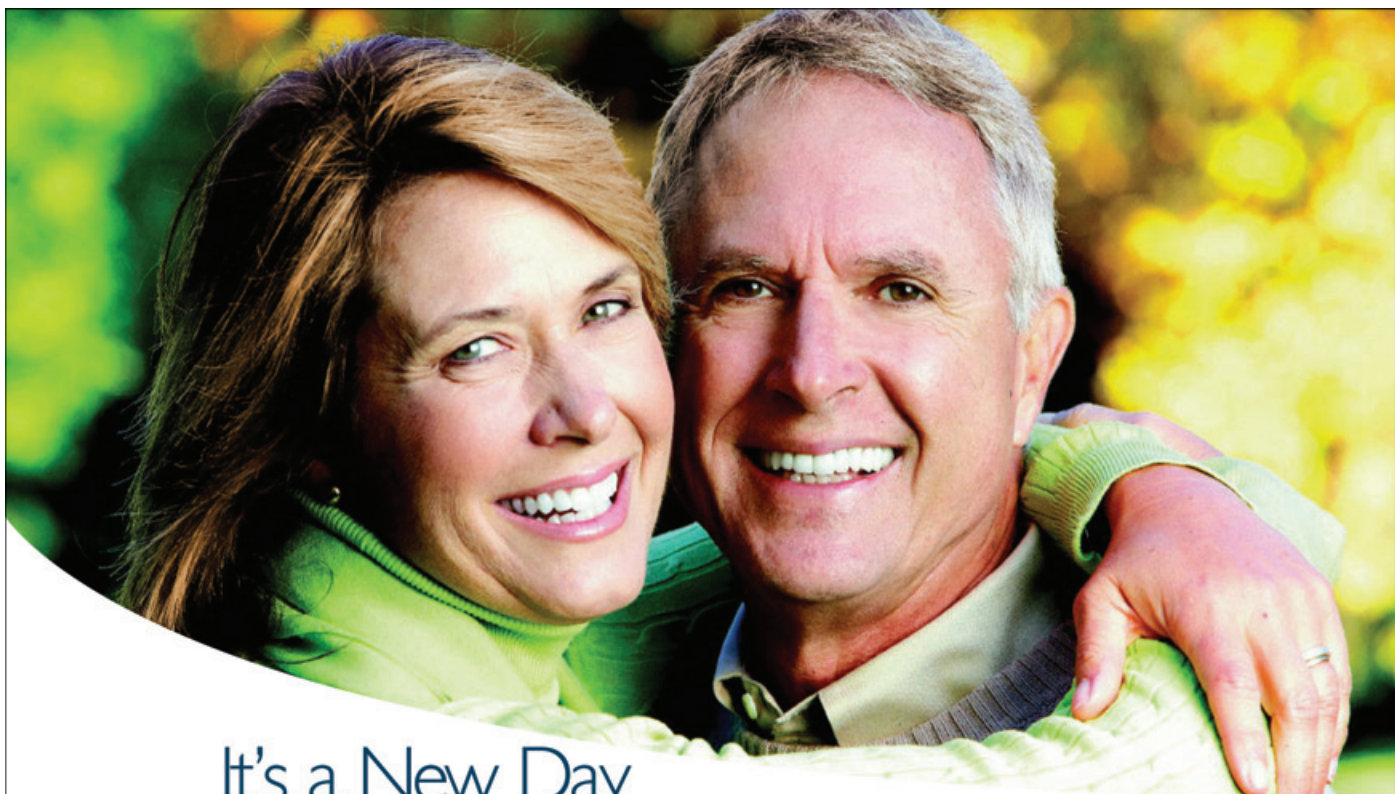
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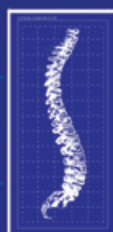
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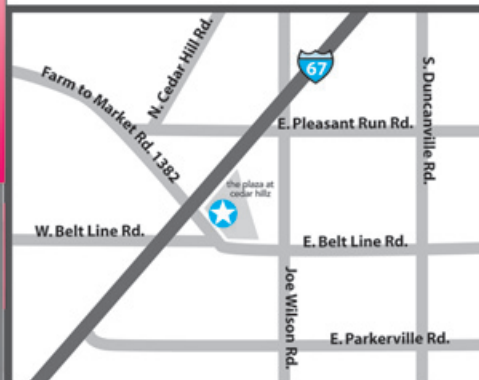


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ON THE COVER



Bruce and Judy McNicol have created a haven from refurbished "treasures."

Photo by Opaque Visuals.

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Editor's Note

Greetings, Southwest Friends!

Having just read through my editor's notes for the past three Februaries, I'm a bit at a loss for something timely, yet new and fresh to write. We always think of February in terms of love, specifically those we love, and maybe, those we hope love us. I think this month I will address the things we love to do.

What is it that you love to do? I love to give — money, things I have baked, a listening ear and, whether appreciated or not, advice. I love to write. I love to read. I love to watch my kids becoming such amazing people. I love playing with my grandsons. I love making my husband laugh. Pretty much, I love making anyone laugh.

And my goal: learning to love God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength — yes, I would love to do that.

May you find strength and capacity for all you love!

Beverly

Beverly Shay
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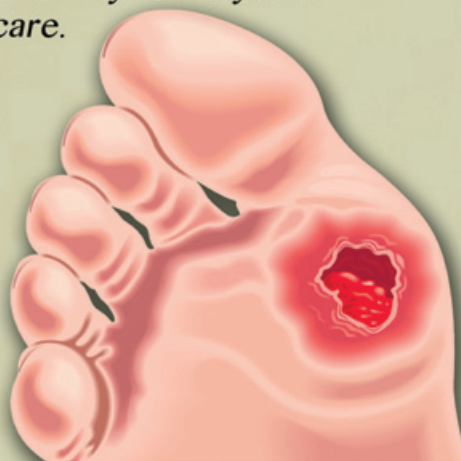
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DHS Student Design Chosen to Represent Texas

The achievements of one Duncanville High School student have received state and national recognition. As a student member of the Business Professionals of America (BPA) organization, senior Jillian Masaini recently created the design for a lapel pin that will be manufactured and distributed for hundreds of BPA members across the state to proudly wear. She used Photoshop CS5 software to create the pin adorned with the state bluebonnet flower and cowboy hat.

Masaini will travel to the state Business Professionals of America competition in Houston this month to be recognized for her winning design. Her mass produced pin will travel with Texas students to the national BPA competition in Orlando in May, where students traditionally trade pins with competitors from all 50 states.

Education Foundation Grant Awarded

"Oh my gosh, guys, we got the grant! We got the grant!" Duncanville High School choir director Susan Kheshtinejad shouted as soon as she saw the Duncanville ISD Education Foundation Board of Directors enter her classroom last month holding a large check. Kheshtinejad applied for an Education Foundation Grant in the amount of \$5,796.50 to help take the Velocity Show Choir's performance to the next level. She plans to use the money to buy two full keyboards and a complete drum set, to enhance the existing accompaniment of electric guitar and saxophone. Read more about this story and others in our newsroom at duncanvilleisdnews.org.



District Staffers Named Duncanville Man & Woman of the Year

Congratulations to two Duncanville ISD staff members, Mike Chrietzberg and Cathy Self-Morgan, for being named the 2012 Duncanville Man and Woman of the year.



Three Students Earn All-State Recognition

Congratulations to three Duncanville High School students who will be representing the DHS Band as members of the 2013 TMEA All-State Band. Pictured left to right are John Parker, tenor trombone; Jazmin Yuen, clarinet; and Derron Hollingsworth, baritone saxophone.



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GAME ON

— By Katrina D. Lewis

Being a standout high school athlete can prove difficult for some young superstars to handle. The pressure of winning, grueling training schedules, maintaining grades and still managing to have some type of social life can be challenging. But some are successful at this juggling act — and accomplish even more. When meeting Briana Holman, it is quickly apparent she is someone who truly knows how to balance it all.

A senior at Cedar Hill High School, Briana is one of the area's best volleyball players. After being heavily recruited, she has decided she will suit up and spike the ball for Louisiana State University (LSU) after her graduation in 2013. Standing 6 feet tall, Briana is an imposing figure on game days. Her steely gaze, versatile playing style and concentration on winning have earned her the oxymoronic nickname of "Smiley," by local sports writers.

"It was exciting seeing all of the letters come in," said Briana's mom, Uniqua Sessions, recalling the onslaught of basketball and volleyball recruitment





Briana Holman is able to balance it all with the help of her mom, Uniqua Sessions.

letters that began clogging both her mailbox and inbox when Briana was just in the eighth grade. "I think now, it's really starting to sink in that she has talent, because she's always been her worst critic."

Letters came from schools across the country including Baylor University, Florida State University, The University of Texas and Penn State University. Although she entertained heading to Penn State (a distance her mom was expectedly not happy with), LSU ultimately made the cut. Briana loved the campus and truly felt the school's coaches cared about her as both an athlete and a student.

Like many athletes, Briana is gifted with an ability that makes it easy for her to compete in multiple sports. Despite dominating in volleyball, it was not her immediate selection. "It was in the sixth grade," she said, remembering the time she was introduced to the sport that will help her fund her college education. "They handed out fliers about having volleyball tryouts. I didn't even know what volleyball was. At first, it was just something to do until basketball season started, so I could stay in shape," she



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said. "I'm a workaholic, I guess. I love working out."

Basketball started off as her first love, and she was playing in a summer league. But volleyball soon became her sport of choice, and she made the varsity team at Cedar Hill High School her freshman year. "I didn't like basketball as much anyway," she said, with a slight shrug of her shoulders.

At Cedar Hill, Briana has been named a district MVP and was a part of the team that advanced past the first round of playoffs in 2012 — a first in the history of the school. Just to add a bit more to Briana's schedule, not only does she play for her high school team, but she's also a member of a select group of players on a competitive club team, the Skyline Juniors.

As a member of this squad, Briana travels across the country for numerous tournaments, which are must-attend events for college recruiters. All of Briana's teammates from the Skyline Juniors will play at the collegiate level, and some will even face off over the net against her, having been recruited to rival schools in the Southeastern Conference where LSU competes.

The schedule is not an easy one for Briana or her mom since they live in DeSoto. Briana's club team practices in Plano, a drive that can take more than an hour, at times, after school and work have ended for both of them. With the support of family, including Briana's cousin, Theresa Muhammad, and her husband, Bismillah, Briana always has a cheering squad at her games and tournaments. High school practice is every day, and club practices are twice a week, but at a faster pace that she enjoys. During the week, taking into account workouts, school, studying, practices and games, Briana's days start as early as 6:30 a.m. and end as late as 1:30 a.m.

Well-known in school and on the high school sports circuit due to her athletic accomplishments, Briana is more than an intimidating force on the court. She is just as effective and dedicated to her activities away from the hardwood. She's a member of an organization called Student Leadership at Cedar Hill and

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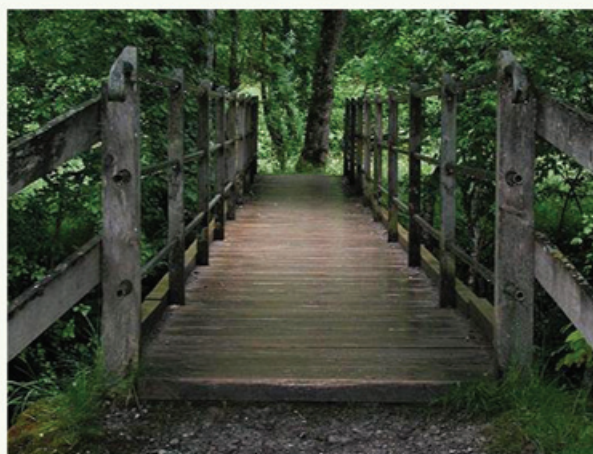
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values her role with the group just as much as her place on her sports teams. Membership in the group is highly selective, with a total of only 30 students from the sophomore, junior and senior classes. The students represent the student body for everyday events and serve as ambassadors, if media or high-profile visitors are on campus.

"It's a class you have to sign up for, or the other teachers will recommend students," Briana said. "We do pep rallies, recycle around the campus. We do a lot of things." Thinking locally, but acting globally, their humanitarian reach extends past Cedar Hill, too. As part of a Make a Difference Day for Hurricane Sandy relief efforts, the group collected canned goods and shipped them to the East Coast. "There are a lot of positive people in the group," she said, "who want to make a difference in the community and in the Metroplex. I will really miss it when I graduate."

Being a part of Student Leadership is just the beginning of Briana's greater vision of always serving those around her and giving back, once she's accomplished a very major milestone. "One of my long-term goals is to be in the Olympics," she said. Her dream is to play in the 2020 games, as volleyball players have to have at least a year of international play after their college graduation before competing in the games.

Briana's post-Olympic plans don't give any indication she plans to slow her pace. "I want to major in pre-med or biology," she said. "I want to go to a really good medical school, open my own practice and become an obstetrician." For now — when she does have time to breathe — Briana turns into a typical teenager, who likes to watch television and hang out with her friends. "I like to watch *Scooby Doo*," she said, smiling.

As much as they love the game and indulging their competitive spirits, a lot of athletes admit there are certain aspects — early morning training sessions, sore muscles, restrictive diets — they won't miss. But Briana proves again that she is not your typical athlete when she ponders what she wouldn't miss. "There's nothing," she said. "There is nothing I wouldn't miss. I'd miss it all." **NOW**

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District increases security measures

DeSoto ISD is reviewing district plans and procedures for handling emergency situations. In short, the district is 'beefing up' security. A meeting recently took place with DeSoto Police Chief Costa, SROs, DeSoto ISD security and cabinet about increased security recommendations, including DPD patrol officers making rounds at elementary schools, updated emergency plans, security guards receiving additional training and resources, card reader entrances and much more. All staff and students must wear a visible photo ID at all times while on a campus. All guests must check-in at the main entrance and wear a visible ID badge at all times while on a campus. To maintain the safety of every student and staff member, we must be diligent in securing all district facilities. The district will roll out a comprehensive emergency plan with additional measures this spring.

Launch of Collegiate Magnet Program

The DeSoto High School Collegiate Magnet Program (CMP) is a unique, early-college program built into the DHS Academy strands. Collegiate Magnet will allow students to earn two-year college degrees while attending high school. Students will be able to save on college costs, obtain marketable skills, and begin the path to a distinguished career. While completing the requirements for their diploma, students will take dual, online, mini session, and summer classes to complete an associates degree. Students will have a choice of 11 associate degree programs to choose from as well as 27 industry and collegiate certifications. Applications (online) are due Friday, March 16, 2013, for the first CMP students.



DeSoto ISD Spelling Bee winner Todd Tillis of Woodridge ES poses with his sponsor and dad.

McCowan MS Teacher Yolanda Hanspard received an iPad from Walmart for attendance in a program with Mayor Carl Sherman.



News to Know

DeSoto ISD parents are invited to attend the **Parent Step Ahead workshop** Saturday, February 9 from 9 a.m. to noon at McCowan Middle School. The workshop will help parents be a step ahead in the education of their children. Contact the Parent Engagement Office for more information, 972-223-6666.

Monday, February 4, DeSoto ISD Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) will host the second of a four-part class called the **iParent Academy for Technology**. Contact ACE for more information, 972-223-6666.

The approved **2013-14 School Calendar** will change the ending date of the fall semester. It will now end before winter break. Staff and students will have a holiday on Good Friday. Early release / parent conference days are coordinated with report cards at the start of each semester. The new calendar is online www.desotoisd.org

The candidate filing and voting dates have been set for the **2013 DeSoto ISD Board of Trustee election** scheduled for Saturday, May 11, 2013. Candidate filing dates for the election will be January 30-March 1.

Positions up for election this year are:

Place 1 — Sandra Wheeler (i)

Place 2 — Van Stripling (i)

Elected board members will serve three-year terms. Interested candidates may pick up and submit a candidate packet at DeSoto ISD, 200 E. Belt Line Road, from 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Nominations will be accepted January 30 through April 4 for the **DeSoto ISD Hall of Honor**. Forms are online for both the DHS Hall of Fame and Distinguished Service Award categories. The Hall of Honor Induction Ceremony will take place May 4 at DeSoto High School. Last year's recipients were Ellis Hobbs, III; Sgt. Jason Brown; Laura Dooley; Dr. Janice Pettis Ingram; and Judy Moss. For more information, visit www.desotoisd.org.

Avoid the Flu! We want to remind all families that prevention is still the best medicine; thus, we encourage all students, parents and employees to get a flu vaccination.

Calendar of Events

Mon., Feb. 11 - DeSoto ISD Board Meeting, Board Room

Tues., Feb. 12 - Board and City Council Joint Meeting

Mon., Feb. 18 - Staff Development Day; No School for Students

Mon., Feb. 25 - DeSoto ISD Board Meeting, Board Room

March 4-8 - Celebrate Texas Public Schools Week

March 11-15 - Spring Break

Fri., March 29 - Teacher Preparation Day; No School for Students

Sat., March 30 - Education Foundation Gala & Auction, Hilton Garden Inn



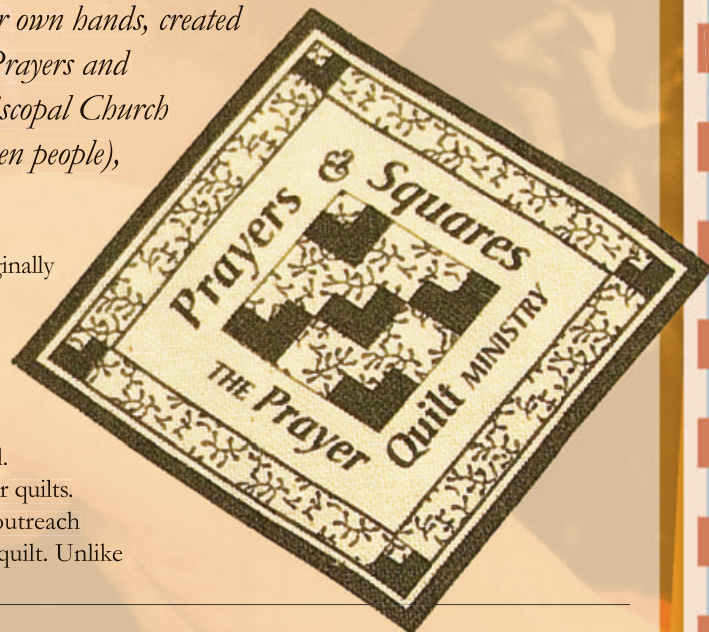
STITCHED WITH Love

— By Rick Hope

They usually gather in the mornings. Each one has a different reason for being there, but they work as a team. They meet on a regular basis, and when they leave, not only have they impacted each other's lives but have, with their own hands, created an opportunity to bless someone else. They are members of the Prayers and Squares Ministry, which meets once a month at St. Anne's Episcopal Church in DeSoto. Although usually small in number (about six or seven people), their impact for others is huge.

The Prayers and Squares chapter at St. Anne's Episcopal Church was originally started by Carolyn Fisher, who had previously been involved with the ministry. As a matter of fact, her husband, John, was a beneficiary when he had prostate cancer surgery. In 2001, the priest at Carolyn's previous church saw the quilt and was impressed. John suggested the priest start a prayer quilt ministry and made the first donation toward the cause. When the Fishers came to St. Anne's in 2006, the ministry was started there as well. Reminiscing, Carolyn estimates she has been part of constructing 290 prayer quilts.

According to the official Web site, Prayers and Squares is an interfaith outreach organization that combines the gift of prayer with the gift of a hand-tied quilt. Unlike



many other groups that make quilts for charitable causes, the purpose of Prayers and Squares is not to necessarily make money by producing and distributing quilts, but to promote prayer through the use of quilts.

The idea behind these prayer quilts is simple. A heavy thread is used to take stitches through the quilt layers and the ends are left free to be tied with a square knot. As each knot is tied, a silent prayer is said for someone in special need of a quilt. That person in need then receives the finished quilt.

Deborah Schlachter was a schoolteacher who was tragically injured on a school field trip and became permanently disabled. Quilting



literally saved her life. "I remember a time when I went to see a friend who offered her two old skirts," Deborah explained. "I thought, *We can make a quilt from these.* The ministry was my ticket back to wanting to live."

Many of these quilts have been distributed, and each one is a special gift of love. They have been crafted for sick infants, for cancer and AIDS patients, for adults and children facing surgery or personal crisis. They have been crafted for many reasons, but each time, it is for someone in need of special prayer.

The organization now consists of many individual chapters around the world. Each chapter has agreed to follow three basic rules, which are referred to as the Three Commandments of Prayers and Squares. First, they are asked to remember the Prayers and Squares motto: "It's not about the quilt; it's all about the prayers." Secondly, no quilt is ever to be given as a surprise. The chapters are expected to ask before

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giving the quilt. Finally, no payment of any form may be taken for a quilt. "It is a gift of love and prayer which cannot be bought or sold. Those who request or receive prayer quilts must not be made to feel obligated to Prayers and Squares in any way," states the Web site, www.prayerquilt.org.

Arlene Henry got involved in the quilting ministry because her daughter-in-law signed her up. "She just wanted to



"It is a gift of love and prayer which cannot be bought or sold."

get me out of the house," Arlene joked. "The monthly meetings are something I really anticipate and look forward to."

Before St. Anne's began the quilting ministry, they also had a prayer shawl ministry in which Pat Conway was actively involved. "It just made sense to go from crocheting prayer shawls to quilting," Pat said, "so I signed up." She explained how everyone pays for their own material. "Occasionally, I will find material for quilts at garage sales," Pat admitted. "Other times, fabric is donated

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by church members and friends.”

The ladies are quick to mention they all belong to other handcraft groups. One of them is known as the Neater Knitters, which makes caps for chemotherapy patients. Another group makes quilts for the local Veterans Hospital. But when they come together once a month, they pool their resources together for this one particular ministry.

After the group completes a quilt, it is embossed with a label that reads: “This quilt is made by Prayers and Squares.” The quilt is then placed in the parish hall and blessed by the priest at the altar. At that time, people come and say a prayer for the person who is receiving the quilt while tying a knot at the same time. “Each quilt is equipped with a crocheted pocket cross made by Nell McBride, one of our members,” Carolyn said. “Inside the pocket is a typewritten prayer.” The pocket cross is then safely pinned to the quilt. Once the cross is delivered to the recipient, people can still come by and tie a knot and say a prayer. A folder filled with thank you notes is kept in the quilting room of the church. This folder is proof positive of how the love, prayers and hard work are very much appreciated.

Recently, the group worked on a project for their church. The theme of the quilt was flowers of the Bible, based on a book of the same name by Helga Curtis. The project was a benefit to aid in the ongoing ministries of the church. Deborah made the patterns based on the pictures in the book and the quilt was raffled for \$5 per ticket. The masterpiece came with a book explaining the flowers and their place in Scripture. They are thinking their next project may be herbs, spices and fruits of the Bible, based on another book by Helga Curtis.

“There are similar Prayers and Squares ministries in the area,” Carolyn said. She listed church congregations in Mansfield, Waxahachie, Lancaster and Cedar Hill, to name only a few, where such groups are available.

The ladies enjoy what they do, and when they are needed to provide a prayer quilt, they are always ready to supply. A little bit of stitching goes into the quilts, but each one is also equipped with prayers and lots of love. **NOW**

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All in a Dog's Day

— By Beverly Shay



Helen Cariotis enjoys a walk in the park with her German Shepherd, Pax.

"Raising dogs is a lot like raising children," began Helen Cariotis, who reared five children. "Growing up, I always had dogs. My mother had a Collie. We lived all over the world because my father was an Army chaplain and later became a Methodist minister." In college, Helen's major was in English with a minor in biology, and she was certified to teach. "But I never really did like teaching kids," she admitted.

When her second child was born in 1975, Helen got a Collie. "I couldn't handle him. After looking for some options, I took him to obedience school at the Dog Training Club of Dallas County. Going through the course I found myself thinking, *This is so cool! I could do this!*" Helen began working with that club. "I love helping other people with their dogs, because I see it as keeping that dog alive and in its home. Untrained or disobedient dogs are often abandoned or neglected," Helen stated.

Helen's goal in dog training was to make the dog a part of the family, so the dog and the owners could feel confident and safe while being out in public or traveling or being with children or company. "My work with dogs made use of all three of my background skills — English, biology and teaching," Helen remarked. "I helped with a newsletter for the club; I was working with animals; and I was definitely teaching!"

In 1982, Helen opened Canine Counselors, desiring to work more one-on-one, as well as offering group classes in obedience training. She would visit the homes of people whose dogs were exhibiting problems. "Some dogs were fearful of

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a certain gender or just unsocial. Of course biting is a major issue,” Helen indicated. She visited their homes to see the environment and observe the relationships — people to people — and to see how they interacted with their dog. Then she customized the dog training to their specific needs. “You can learn a lot about how someone handles their pets by observing how they handle their children. The needs are quite similar: animals need a schedule. They need someone who will be present, consistent and responsible to provide guidance, discipline and security,” Helen explained.

Different breeds of dogs have different temperaments and characteristics. Each dog also has its own personality. So, when looking for a pet, especially a puppy, it's good to have a temperament test done to assure you are selecting the correct breed for



your family. “Take a Border Collie, for instance,” Helen said. “These dogs need activities and structure, because they’re smart and have a high-energy level. They have a herder instinct, so they will ‘care for’ children, whom they see as wayward puppies. But a dog should never be the one in the family who disciplines family members. Dogs want to know their place in the family ‘pack,’ and they feel secure when they know what to do. Biting family members is never an acceptable trait in an animal.”

Helen knows a lot about a variety of breeds. “American Pit Bull Terriers were bred to fight other dogs in pits as entertainment back in the ’30s. They were considered great family dogs, because they never bit humans — their aggression was only toward other dogs, specifically in a pit. Later some Pit Bull Terriers were taught to be aggressive toward humans. Traits breed down.”

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Other breeds also have distinctive characteristics. German Shepherds are high-driven, very loyal to their owners, but not very friendly to others. They have a strong bite and will hold on until told to let go. Police dogs are bred to be alert and to relate mainly to one handler. "Golden Retrievers are stable, friendly, cute, gentle, kid-tolerant — and everyone wants to believe their dog is just like that!" laughed Helen. "But they might not be that kind of dog and cannot even be trained to be like that." Blood hounds are very gentle dogs, and they are definite finders. English Bull dogs, while sweet-tempered, have many physical problems due to not having a normal bite, which hinders breathing and causes them difficulty in the heat. Huskies have a high drive, and they like to run. They will run and run and run. "According to the American Kennel Club (AKC), the No. 1 breed just now is the Labrador, yet due to pure breeding, they suffer easily from hip dysplasia."

Pure bred dogs can be expensive and have expensive needs. So more and more commonly, people are choosing mixed breeds and rescues. As a result, there are fewer and fewer AKC events, trials and shows.

The first step in training a dog is to get its history and identify the main problem areas. "Common problems include difficulty with house training, fear, lack of response to orders and biting. I always look at the house and yard set up. Is the backyard fenced? Do they have regular visits with a vet? How many people live there? Do they relate well with the dog? Initially, I don't relate to the dog," Helen remarked. "I observe the family. Then, once the dog has had the chance to get used to me being there, I relate to the dog. My goal is to determine some of the dog's traits and personality."

Helen comes with prepared written materials covering various issues, giving



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detailed instructions of how to deal with that particular issue. "That way the family will have something written to refer to after I have left. But I go over everything with them in person." Some of the basic things that will help improve a dog's behavior include regular schedules for outside time and feeding, providing high quality dog food. Dogs will eat, drink and eliminate. That's why it is important to schedule their eating and watering and outdoor times. "I tell people not to let the dog see them clean up messes, because the dog will learn that's what people do for them. Dogs are domestically predisposed to house training. I model for the family how to speak and expect response from the dog about what is expected. Keeping a leash on the dog while it is in the house is good training and helps with bonding.

"Well-behaved dogs are kept dogs," Helen said with a sigh of contentment. She no longer has her own dog-training business, but she serves as president of National Association of Dog Obedience Instructors (NADOI). "Dog obedience instructors go through extensive testing to be certified through NADOI. I feel it is a wonderful organization. They, too, want to see dogs remain in good environments where their owners enjoy and appreciate them."

Helen enjoys spending time at the club and NADOI, as well with her German Shepherds, Pax and Ruffy, whom she bought from Gillian Salling, who owns Fernheim German Shepherd Dogs in Sherman. She readily admitted, "Well-trained dogs truly can be good companions." **NOW**

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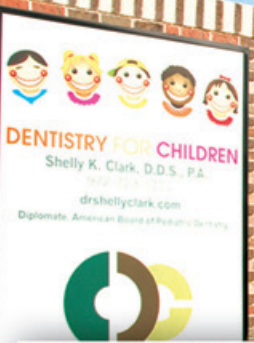
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The Perfect Find

— By Angel Morris

Bruce and Judy McNicol have built their home around special objects found here and there. From a salvaged chandelier to a Salvation Army dining table, refurbished pieces and yard sale treasures have been brought together to make the McNicols' digs eclectic yet upscale. "Everything is from estate sales,



AT HOME WITH BRUCE



so nothing matches. I pick out things I love, and I make them fit together," Judy explained. Like their design style, the McNicols' story is a puzzle that simply fell into place.

"We're from Dearborn, Michigan, and met in junior high at ages 13 and 14. We dated all through high school," Bruce recalled. After Bruce joined the military, Judy moved with her mom to California where he was stationed. The sweethearts married in 1970 and started their family, while Bruce earned a degree in speech therapy. A teaching job took them to Oregon where they lived for six years.

JUDY MCNICOL



"At that point, we had an opportunity to move to Dallas to start an automotive reconditioning business with family. I was doing interiors, while Judy taught herself how to touch up car exteriors," Bruce said.

Judy added, "I've always been attracted to color, and I'm detail oriented, so I was

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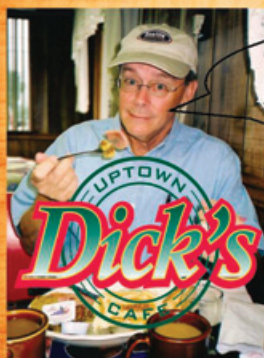
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good at touching up tiny specks on cars. We were learning as we went, but it grew into a pretty good business.”

While working with just about every auto dealership in Dallas, the couple reared their three children and purchased their first Duncanville home, where they lived from 1988 to 1999. Keeping that home as rental property, the couple moved to Cedar Creek Lake for 12 years before getting the itch to move again. “I was shopping with my pastor, Becky, and I came across a chandelier I loved, but I didn’t have anywhere to put it. She said, ‘Buy it! Just believe the right home for it will come.’ So I did,” Judy recalled.



On a separate outing, Bruce discovered a large dining room table that would enable him, Judy, their children and their children’s spouses to all sit together for a meal. “Again, we didn’t have any place for it. But Bruce loved it and got it any way. It was only \$100,” Judy said.

By this point, the McNicols were renting a home in Kessler Park but sought a home big enough for eight grandkids to visit, and something called them back to Duncanville. “You can get a lot of house for your money here. You’re close to a lot of big-city things without all the traffic,” Bruce noted. “This house had really good bones, and the layout was perfect for us.”

Built in 1985, the home’s previous owners had remodeled, and the McNicols saw nothing but potential. “It was like a model home already — a diamond in the rough. We expanded the teakwood floors that were already here, updated the bathrooms, painted and added appliances,” Judy said.

A color specialist who repurposes furniture on the side, Judy created an entry that hints at her home’s unique style right from the start with Wasabi-colored walls, turquoise accent pieces and a large peacock print framed on the charcoal gray fireplace. “I won the print at a design camp in Austin and didn’t know what I’d do with it, but

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it just fit perfectly in this space," she explained. And to the right, guests find the Salvation Army table, refinished by Bruce and placed perfectly in the home's dining room, surrounded by 10 chairs that Judy just happened upon in Dallas' Design District.

In the living room, Judy finally had a home for her chandelier, along with reupholstered chairs and English art with original glass, all from estate sales. Some of her mother's art from Germany finishes off the walls, and estate sale antique furniture, plus a coppertop table from an English pub stand out in the room. "When you collect like I do, every piece has a story," Judy said.

"Although she loves every single piece, none of it is irreplaceable. She can switch it all out or mix in new pieces as she comes across them," Bruce remarked.

Mix-and-match furnishings create everything from the island in the kitchen — where marble counters and stainless steel, industrial appliances speak to Judy's love of cooking — to a bedroom dressing table Bruce purchased because he knew Judy would love it.

The grandchildren love the guest bedroom, with its Jack-and-Jill bath and a play room, where they can store their own collections and video games. Bruce houses his own trinkets in a TV room, where built-in shelves and a desk cover one full wall. From carved wooden figurines to small cars and sports figures, Bruce admits he just likes quirky things. He also collects albums and spends some time restoring a 1956 Chevy. "I've been working on it for five years, and I'm still a lot of money away from closing the deal," he admitted. "I guess you'd say I'm

EACH MOMENT
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officially retired, but I can't bring myself to say that. I still can't believe I won't have to go back to work someday."

When Judy officially retired a decade ago, her son-in-law took over the family restoration business, and she was free to put her design skills to use on philanthropic projects with her church, such as decorating orphanages in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic with basic necessities. She also helped set up a school in Belize and played a major role in the remodeling of Hope Mansion, the plantation-style Cedar Hill house that recently became a home for unwed mothers. Bruce has also gotten involved with foster children mentorships through their church.



"We're getting to do some enjoyable things and looking for other activities which interest us now that we don't have to have day jobs. We have a little booth at Frisco Mercantile, and Judy is always hunting things to put her special touch on," Bruce said. The duo is still sprucing up their home's backyard, where they have already added an outdoor kitchen and sitting area to complement the pool.

And just when they get it the way they want it, the duo might decide to start all over again. "The next house won't have a pool!" Bruce said, but it will, no doubt, have the McNicols' unique sense of style and flair. According to Judy, it's about mixing together the things you love to make your house uniquely your own. **NOW**

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Back row: Natalie Kunkle joins Tricia Hartis, director of nursing, and Linda Helslander, marketing director. Front row: Jill Renshaw and Kerry Roden. Every employee takes time to interact with Arbor House residents.



Restoring Purpose

Arbor House believes in giving new meaning to life for those who are dealing with dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

— By Beverly Shay

Purpose, action, motion and connection are all words that describe life. At Arbor House, a certified Alzheimer's Assisted Living residence specializing in memory care, each resident is treated with compassion and provided with purpose. Fifty-two residents, in varying stages of their journey, are involved in meaningful activities strategically designed to engage them in life as fully as possible. "We work at giving our residents joy in every moment in a safe, attractive environment," remarked Natalie Kunkel, director of operations or the difference maker, as she likes to call herself. "I have a degree in therapeutic recreation," she said, "and I absolutely love helping, teaching and training, while making every resident's life better."

Jill Renshaw, the regional director of marketing, has spent

her career in various aspects of management and marketing. "Ever since I was in Junior League in Abilene, I have gravitated toward projects with the elderly. I just love working with them and cannot see myself ever doing anything else. An experience of gardening with an adult day care group just sealed my desire to serve the elderly and give them amazing, purpose-filled days," Jill admitted.

Arbor House is definitely a home. Four houses with 13 private bedrooms in each allow residents to enjoy greater independence in a less crowded environment. Every aspect of the residents' day is filled with purposely engaging activities in rooms with colors and decor chosen to engage their minds. Meals are served on bright Fiesta Ware, known to improve their appetites and

allow them to readily identify what they are eating.


"We want to give them every reason to stay and feel at home and accepted here," Natalie indicated. "Studies show the highest level of functioning for those with Alzheimer's and dementia occurs best in groups of 15-17 people. Our caregivers interact with residents as best friends. The same caregivers work in each house, so they know our residents, and our residents know them. We have a lot of fun areas, such as our Coca-Cola room, much like an old-fashioned ice cream parlor and our boutique room with vintage clothing, photos, furniture and antique sewing machines where residents can rummage and shop," she shared.

Every half hour, there are four different engagements designed uniquely for the four levels of the journey typical of those in memory-challenged situations. "Not only do we strive to help our residents understand and relate to their environment and particular needs, we work with their families, showing them how to meet their loved ones where they are," Jill said.

"By understanding their behavior, we can determine their needs and find creative situations to meet that need," Natalie added. "All behavior has a reason, and as the situations affecting everyone's lives change, perception also changes. For those with Alzheimer's this is even more acute. As we reduce stressors for them, their ability to function rises, giving both the resident and the family members a chance to live again."

"Everyone who works here has to have a heart for it, or they won't stay. Even our maintenance man has created projects for our male residents — you know, men stuff," Jill smiled. "We feel successful when a resident becomes reconnected to life and finds purpose. And as you walk through our houses, you will find our residents are as active as they can be — because we offer over 30 engagements for them daily.

Kerry Roden, executive director, summed it up well: "This is ministry. I love everything about it, because it is so rewarding. We only solve things one way here — by doing what's best for the resident." **NOW**



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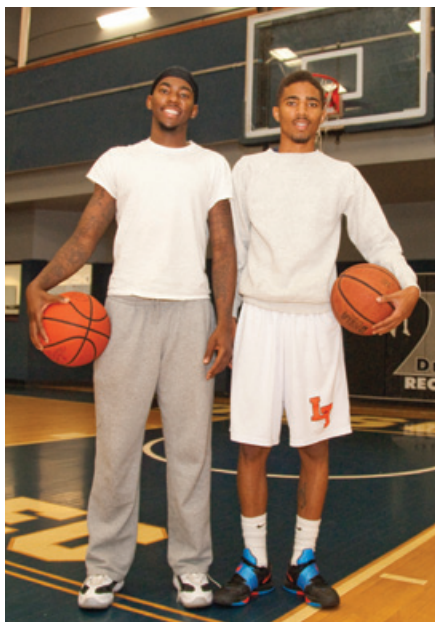
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Damonique Harris and Jalen Armstrong enjoy an afternoon of basketball at the DeSoto Recreation Center.



DeSoto Mayor Sherman (left) swears in Klark Johnson (right) as Mayor for a Day.



Stuart Boston takes a fun photo break while blowing leaves for Project Duncanville.



Dale Hanson of WFAA is the guest speaker at the Best Southwest Chamber Luncheon.



Cedar Hill Chamber welcomes Outreach Medical Home Health Agency with a ribbon cutting.



Kathy Seidlitz gets a cut and style from Sandra Thomas at Fantastic Sam's Hair Salon in Cedar Hill.



Nancy Dean finds the perfect dress for her granddaughter at a local garage sale in Duncanville.



Betty Brown works out on one of the mechanical weight machines at the DeSoto Recreation Center.



Kimora Davis spends the afternoon fishing at Lakeside Park in Duncanville with George and Emmanuel Henrey.



Haley Dahl, who works at The Cake Guys, serves up tasty cupcakes for Sondra Wilcox.

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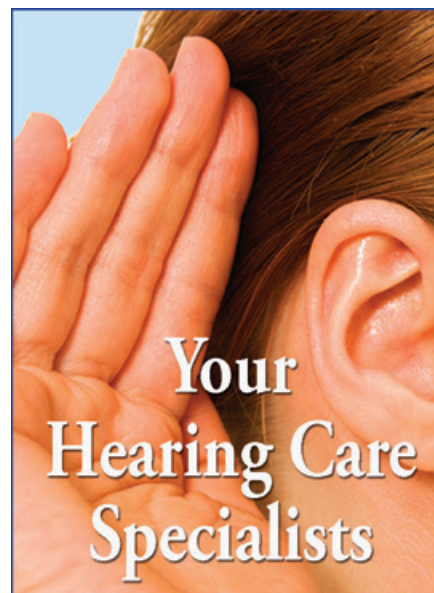
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Help Your Children Avoid Student Debt Burden

It's not so easy being a college kid these days. The job market for recent graduates has been shaky, while at the same time students are leaving school with more debt than ever before. If you have children who will someday be attending college, should you be worried?

You might indeed have cause for concern. Americans now owe more on student loans than on credit cards, according to the Federal Bank of New York, the U.S. Department of Education and other sources. For the college class of 2011, the most recent year for which figures are available, the average student loan debt was about \$26,500, according to the Institute for College Access and Success's Project on Student Debt.

This type of debt load, coupled with the struggles to find a well-paying job commensurate with their education, is causing many recent graduates to get off on the wrong foot in terms of developing savings and investment strategies that could help them throughout their lives. So, what can you do?

If you want to help your kids pay for college, you may want to consider a 529 plan. When you invest in a 529 plan, all withdrawals will be free from federal income taxes, as long as the money is used for qualified college expenses. (However, nonqualified withdrawals may be subject to ordinary income tax plus a 10-percent penalty on the earnings portion.) Contribution limits are high, and contributions may be eligible for a tax deduction or credit for residents in certain states.

A 529 plan, while valuable, is not the only college savings vehicle available. You may also want to consider a Coverdell Education Savings Account, which, like a 529 plan, can generate tax-free earnings if the money is used for higher education

expenses. However, a Coverdell account's contribution limits are much lower than those of a 529 plan. You could also establish a custodial account, known as an UGMA or UTMA, which offers some tax benefits and no contribution limits.

Nonetheless, while these vehicles may help you save and invest for college, they may also divert resources that you might have used for other financial goals — such as a comfortable retirement. Of course, it's not an either/or situation — there's nothing stopping you from contributing to a 529 plan, Coverdell account or custodial account along with your 401(k) and IRA.

Clearly though, it will take discipline and perseverance on your part to save and invest for both your children's education and your own retirement. Like everyone else, you don't have unlimited resources. But you do have another ally — time. The earlier you begin investing for education and retirement, the greater your chances of achieving your goals in these areas. And by understanding how your goals interact, you can work to make sure you don't inadvertently derail one when saving for another.

Avoiding the student loan debt trap while still making progress toward your retirement savings will require creative thinking — and both you and your children may have to make some sacrifices along the way. But the ultimate goals — a college degree that isn't one big IOU and a comfortable retirement — are worth the effort. **NOW**

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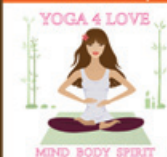
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There Is Hope

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

For many, muscular dystrophy is synonymous with the *Jerry Lewis MDA Labor Day Telethon*, which has now been renamed *MDA SHOW of STRENGTH*. Because of the telethon, countless numbers of people have been educated about this disease, and for many, hope abounds. Muscular dystrophy (MD) is not one disease but defines a collection of more than 30 genetic diseases. In simple terms, the most characterizing factor of these diseases is that the muscles grow weaker, degenerate and become nonfunctional. The diseases are genetic. You can't catch this from someone. You can't do something to your body that sets off a chain reaction of destruction. It is inherent in your genes, and there is no cure.

Muscular dystrophy can make its presence known anytime from infancy to adulthood. The progression of the disease, age of onset and degree of muscle weakness depends upon which disease manifests itself. The most common form is Duchenne MD, which primarily affects boys and occurs in early childhood. The first symptoms are a weakening in the limbs, where it becomes increasingly difficult to run, then to walk. The progression of the disease is relentless, and by age 12, most boys are unable to walk. At some point in the later stages of this disorder, to breathe a respirator may be necessary. The heart muscle may be affected also. Duchenne MD is rare in girls, but they can inherit the gene and pass it on to their children.

Myotonic dystrophy, which is also called MMD or Steinert's disease primarily affects adults. The name myotonic comes from myotonia, which means the muscles have a difficult time relaxing after contraction or rather, after use. Myotonic MD is characterized by prolonged spasms and contractions, primarily affecting adults. This disease also affects the endocrine system, causes cataracts, cardiac abnormalities and affects the central nervous system. Some sufferers have long thin faces and droopy eyes.

Although there is no cure, the news is not all gloomy. For some with the disorder, the disease progresses slowly, and they can enjoy a normal life span. For others, it helps to know the research is intensive, ongoing and impressive. The Muscular Dystrophy Association is proud of the fact that they are "the world's largest nongovernmental sponsor of research seeking the causes of, and effective treatments for, neuromuscular diseases." There are medications and forms of therapy that can slow the progression of the disease and not only add to the quality of life, but prolong life as well. Medical advances continue to march steadily forward. Never give up hope. **NOW**

This article is for general information only and does not constitute medical advice. Consult with your physician if you have questions regarding this topic.

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February 1-4

Register for Daddy Daughter Dance on

February 9: 4:00-6:00 p.m.: ages 4-8 (only); 7:00-9:00 p.m.: ages 9-12 (only), Cedar Hill Recreation Center, 310 E. Parkerville Rd. Cost: \$30/couple; \$10/additional daughter. Featuring DJ Rudy, will include a professional souvenir photo, dinner and more. Late registration: February 5-9: \$40/couple; \$15/additional daughter. Register online at cedarhilltx.com or at the Cedar Hill Recreation Center. (972) 293-5288.

February 1-20

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

February 1-24

African American Repertory Theater presents *Nacirema Society* starring Irma. B. Hall: a romantic comedy about the tradition of cotillion, featuring a African American debutantes preparing to meet society in 1964 Alabama. Matinees: \$20; evenings: \$25. For show times and tickets: (972) 572-0998.

February 5

Voices: A Black History Month Celebration presented by Esther Malone: 7:00 p.m., Duncanville library.

February 5, 12, 19, 26

Homeschool DVD Series: Inventors of the World: 2:00 p.m. at Duncanville library. **5th:** Eli Whitney; **12th:** Louis Pasteur; **19th:** Alexander Graham Bell; **26th:** Thomas Edison.

February 6-April 10

Free IRS assistance (AARP): Wednesdays 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Rooms 1 & 2, Duncanville library.

February 7-9 and 14-16

Duncanville Community Theatre's *Don't Drink the Water* written by Woody Allen and directed by Amy Jackson: 8:00 p.m.

February 9

Heart to Heart for Women's Heart Health. Free health screenings by appointment only: (214) 947-0000 or MethodistHealthSystem.org/HtH: 7:00-10:00 a.m. Program: 10:00 a.m.-Noon, Methodist Charlton Medical Center. Find out fun ways to keep your heart happy, cooking demos, complimentary hand or chair massage, prizes and more.

Cedar Hill Daddy/Daughter Dance: Once Upon a Time: ages 4-8 only: 4:00-6:00 p.m.; ages 9-12 only: 7:00-9:00 p.m., Cedar Hill Recreation. Cost: \$30/couple; \$15/ additional

daughter. Register: cedarhilltx.com/ddd or (972) 293-5288.

Ennis Czech Music Festival: 11:00 a.m. – 10:30 p.m., Sokol Activity Center, 2622 East Highway 34. Bands performing will include the Moravians, Ennis Czech Boys, Jak Se Do, Czech Harvesters, Jodie Mikula Orchestra and Czech & Then Some. (972) 878-4748.

Valentine's Dinner & Auction Benefiting CASA of Ellis County: 6:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center. Tickets are \$50 per person. For more information or to purchase tickets, call (972) 937-1455 or visit www.CASAOofEllisCounty.org.

February 11

Discover Black History Month: 6:30-8:30 p.m., Cedar Hill library. Free for the entire family.

February 12

Red Cross blood drive: 4:00-8:00 p.m., Duncanville library: check out a book to read while you donate blood. Stephanie: (972) 780-5052.

Family story time and crafts: 7:00 p.m., Duncanville library. Stories, songs, puppets, music and crafts for all ages.

February 19, 26

Sew What! A program for crafters: 5:30-6:30 p.m., Duncanville library.

February 21

NAMI Dallas Family Member Support group for families who have someone with mental health disabilities: 7:00-8:30 p.m., Trinity United Methodist Church, 1302 S. Clark Rd. Madeline Kelley: (972) 298-9378.

February 23

Annual Bowl For Kids' Sake Fundraiser: 11:00 a.m., AMF DeSoto Lanes, 121 Northgate Drive, DeSoto: to help support our mentoring program. Teams of 5-6 people; each person raising at least \$100 in donations. www.bowlforkidssake.org; select DeSoto or awalburn@bbbstx.org

Tail Waggin' Tutors: 2:00-3:00 p.m. at Duncanville library. Children are invited to practice their reading skills in a relaxed, dog-friendly atmosphere.

February 28

Book Damsels: 7:00 p.m., Duncanville library Book discussion TBA.

March 2

Cedar Hill Recreation Center's 8th Anniversary and Neighborhood Services Citywide

Block Party: 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Cedar Hill Recreation Center: information about city services, children's activities, health fair, entertainment and tours. Free T-shirt for first 750 people. (972) 293-5288.

Fresh Grounded Faith: The Avenue Church, 1761 N. Hwy 77, Waxahachie. The event features best-selling author, speaker and Bible study teacher Jennifer Rothschild. Other special guests include Lysa Terkeurst and Dara Maclean. A large number of area churches are involved in this area-wide women's event. For more information, visit www.FreshGroundedFaith.com or call the church office at (972) 937-5301.

March 2 and 3

Texas Independence Day Celebration: 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Historic Granbury Square. **Saturday** at 11:00 a.m., world-renowned Hardin Simmons University Six White Horses lead the parade. Historic Granbury Merchants Association host period-correct vendors around the Square selling items like: goat milk soap, flint knives, quilts, sarsaparilla root beer, chili and beans and cornbread; wild west re-enactors perform and Indian teepee demonstrators teach children how to make toys of the period. Buttermilk Junction String Band and Wild West Cowboy Band highlight both days. Contact: texashubbard@hotmail.com.

First Sundays

The Duncanville United Group (a community organization working for the betterment of the Duncanville community), meetings: 5:00-7:00 p.m. at varying locations each month. For location, contact: duncanvilleunited@yahoo.com.

Tuesdays (through tax season)

Free tax help (AARP): 10:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Cedar Hill library.

Wednesdays

Word Clues: a free class to impact speaking, writing and word recognition skills: 4:00 p.m. Learn Greek and Latin roots, prefixes and suffixes of English words. Register: (972) 291-7323.

Thursdays

Adult craft time: 10:00 a.m.-Noon, Cedar Hill library: meet and share craft ideas and techniques.

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



In The Kitchen With Elouise Williams

— *By Beverly Shay*

"I am pretty good at cooking. I can do it by myself, controlling when, how and how much," Elouise admitted. "I took home economics, but learned mostly from my mother's 'watch-me-and-do-what-I-do method.' I often start with a new recipe from the paper or a friend and add my own ingredients to give it a twist that suits my taste."

Her cooking has a Southern flair, but she especially likes baking and comfort foods. Once while making her favorite cake, Italian Creme, it collapsed as she turned it out of the pan. "Every time I make it now, I wait for it to fall apart again. Here are some of her special cookies and candies. **NOW**

Cookies

- 1 cup margarine
- 1/4 cup shortening
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 3 eggs
- 2 tsp. vanilla
- 3 cups flour
- 1 1/2 tsp. baking soda
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 cup pecans, chopped

1. Cream together margarine, shortening and sugars. Add eggs, one at a time; add vanilla.
2. Sift together: flour, soda and salt. Add to creamed mixture. Stir in pecans.
3. Drop by small spoonfuls onto greased cookie sheet; bake at 375 F for 10-12 minutes.

Divinity

- 2 cups sugar
- 1/2 cup white Karo syrup
- 1/2 cup water
- Dash of salt
- 2 egg whites
- 1 1/2 tsp. vanilla
- 1 cup pecans, chopped

1. Boil sugar, Karo, water and salt until hard ball stage (248 F). Remove from heat; cool to 220 F. Do not stir.
2. Whip egg whites on high until soft peaks form. Gradually add syrup mixture in a fine stream, beating about 2 1/2 minutes. Reduce mixer speed to medium; add vanilla; beat another 20-25 minutes, until mixture starts becoming dry; stir in nuts.
3. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto waxed paper.

Western Cake

- 2 sticks butter or margarine (room temperature)
- 1 1-lb. box granulated sugar
- 6 eggs (room temperature)
- 2 cups flour
- 1 Tbsp. vanilla
- 1 tsp. lemon juice

1. Cream butter; add sugar; beat until fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition.
2. Sift flour 3 times; add gradually to batter. Add vanilla and lemon juice; mix well.
3. Bake in greased and floured tube pan at 325 F for 1 1/2 hours. Cool for 4 minutes and then invert pan.

Pralines

- 2 cups sugar
- 1 cup water
- 1/2 cup powdered milk
- 1/2 cup white Karo syrup
- 1/8 tsp. salt
- 2 cups pecans
- 1/2 stick margarine
- 2 tsp. butter flavoring (or to taste)
- 2 tsp. vanilla

1. Cook first 5 ingredients to soft ball stage (230 F).
2. Add remaining ingredients, beat until creamy. Drop by spoonfuls onto waxed paper.

Rice Pudding

- 6 eggs
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 2 tsp. vanilla
- 3 cups milk
- Pinch salt
- 1/2 cup rice, cooked

1. Combine eggs and sugar; mix well. Add vanilla, milk, salt and rice.
2. Pour into deep-dish pie plate. Bake at 350 F until thick, approximately 1 hour.

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



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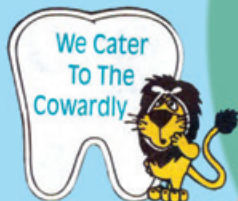
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