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FEBRUARY 2016

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## ON THE COVER



*Art Del Barrio has a vision for education in Ennis.*

*Photo by Amy Ramirez.*

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## Editor's Note

*Happy Valentine's Day!*

To celebrate Black History Month, I wanted to take this time to honor a very special lady in my life — Cora Whitlock. I celebrate her friendship all year long. Our relationship started many years ago when my youngest was in the first grade. She lovingly “kept me in my place” at each school meeting, while making my son feel comfortable and capable in his own skin. I can’t really remember when I started referring to her in conversations with others as my “angel,” but my angel she is and no doubt will continue to be.

February is also the month we recognize the ones we love with long distance phone calls, sentimental cards and heart-shaped boxes of candy. Don’t waste another moment. Tell your family and friends exactly what they mean to you, because we all know we’re not guaranteed tomorrow. We only have today, so make the whole, entire day count!

Oh, and eat a gooey, nutty piece of candy for me!

*Sandra*

Sandra Strong  
EnnisNOW Editor  
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# 2016 J Bar C Cowgirl Roundup

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# A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

— By Stephanie Marchbanks



*The first thing a visitor to Art Del Barrio's office sees is a large Ennis Lions football poster that reads, "We don't hang it up after five rings." Art proudly designed the poster, and beyond it, in an overstuffed office, he spins multiple plates — first kneeling at a low, secondary computer tapping out event postings, next, juggling phone calls and, finally, managing multiple projects on huge planning boards. As the communication officer for Ennis ISD, and as the new executive director of the Ennis ISD Educational Foundation, Art is focused on a vision for future education in Ennis. "We want to think outside the E," Art explained with a smile.*

As the captain at the helm of the education foundation, Art hopes thinking outside the E will lead to more funds for the Ennis schools, with a special focus on innovative teaching practices. And as communication guru for the district, he churns



# FOR THE FUTURE

out videos, manages social media, handles press releases, issues the weekly pride page, does graphic design, creates ads and snaps photos when he can. In other words, Art is a busy man.

But Art's schedule doesn't dampen his passion. And as far as the education foundation is concerned, he has big dreams. "As an organization, we want to reach new pinnacles and provide educational programming that may not otherwise be funded with limited state funds," Art pointed out.

The foundation came to fruition in February 2014 and was established to support all Ennis ISD campuses, teachers and students with dollars that are otherwise not available through state and federal funding. In April 2015, Art attended a training conference hosted by the Texas Education Foundation Network. The purpose of the conference was for school education foundations to meet, collaborate and learn from each other. For Art, this conference was pivotal. "I came back with a wealth of knowledge," he stated.

Art used the new knowledge to establish structure for the foundation. Employing the seminar's managerial chart, he began setting up four committees for the Ennis foundation — the program committee, the finance and governance committee, the marketing committee and the development committee. And each committee has an important job.

"OUR BOARD IS A GROUP OF  
GREAT LEADERS,  
WHO SHARE THE SAME  
VISION AND CARE FOR THE  
FUTURE OF ENNIS ISD."

But the goal of all of this management is to eventually bring the foundation to a place of financial self-sufficiency via an endowment fund, which is an investment pool set up by an institution and managed so that the principal amount is kept intact, while the interest is available for use, funding the association. When Art says the foundation wants to think outside the E, he means just that. "We hope to seek funding from bigger foundations or larger corporations and creatively

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Art Del Barrio poses with his daughter, Marilee.

ask ourselves how we can bring in money without only tapping into Ennis donors," Art revealed.

Each year, the foundation distributes money to schools via grants for a particular purpose, awarded to individual teachers, groups of teachers or to a school campus. This past year, the foundation gave out over \$51,000. This money was divided several ways. For example, \$4,800 was set aside to help new teachers get their classrooms up and running, split evenly between 18 lucky recipients. Among the unique grants funded were a Crime Scene Investigation (CSI) program and art tables to the Ennis High School; a Weatherbug grant awarded to Sam Houston Elementary, which sets up a weather network for the students to analyze weather data from



around the country, as well as submit data collected in Ennis; a Science, Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) lab presented to Bowie Elementary; and an Ears in Reading technology grant given to Austin Elementary, allowing students to listen to books and follow along with their eyes.

For those interested in applying for a grant, the grant calendar began in December when representatives met with all campuses, to inform them of grant availability. By January 4, the grant application was available online. Also in January, the foundation hosted two grant writing workshops, so teachers could learn how to structure their application and put the grant together correctly. February and March are times to come up with an idea and research cost and feasibility. This period is an opportunity for teachers to be creative and ask themselves, "What can we do to help our students?" The grant applications are due by April 1 of each year.

Once the grants are in, the program committee meets to rate the grants, using a set rubric for evaluation. "If grants are written with students in mind, and if it looks like it's going to help the students and falls in line with district curriculum, the board wants to fund it," Art emphasized. "Our board is a group of great leaders, who share the same vision and care for the future of Ennis ISD."

But back to those spinning plates, vision for the education foundation is

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not Art's only thought. When he puts his communication officer's hat back on, he sees green of a different kind. In the overstuffed office, there is a green screen on the north wall, a testimony to Art's desire for a weekly webcast news report, coming sometime in the future. His goal of starting by January 2016 was put on hold to make room for education foundation work, but Art is not deterred.

"The idea is to broadcast the newscast via our YouTube channel," Art noted. "I already have a virtual news set. I already have the lights. I have an editing program, and with my background in radio, I can really just wing it. I used to do news reporting and high school football games on radio."

And the mention of YouTube brings up the social media presence that Art doggedly developed. "The expense of your own channel is prohibitive, but YouTube is free and social media is free, and it is a very effective method of communication when used properly," Art asserted. In fact, in Art's short time with EISD, activity on the district's social media accounts has doubled.

Speaking of background, Art grew up in Mission, Texas, the home of Tom Landry. Art went to Mission High School, where he ran track and played basketball. He earned his degree in broadcast journalism at The University of Texas-Pan American in Edinburg, Texas. He is a single dad to Marilee, age 7, a first-grade student at Sam Houston Elementary.

As to that vision for the education foundation, which Art is calling Legacy 2036, he reiterated the importance of the endowment fund. "We want to have a goal that by 2036, we have \$2,000,000 in the endowment fund. If invested properly, a yield of 4 percent will generate \$80,000 a year to give out," Art observed. "And that's exciting!" **NOW**

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# Serend

— By Donnielle Tyner

*A chance meeting in an elevator. An exchange of introductions. A spark of romantic interest. It sounds like the beginning of a romantic comedy, but that is exactly how the story of James and Toni Barr began 15 years ago. Not long after their serendipitous encounter, the two decided to wed on James' birthday in December, melding together his two children and her four, later adding a son of their own.*

James grew up in Ft. Worth. When he met Toni, he was living in Coppell and working for ExxonMobil in their IT department. She was working as a technical writer for one of ExxonMobil's contractors. Eventually, James would leave ExxonMobil for two years before returning to work there. He's been with the company for 26 years now. Toni has worked for Charter Communications since 2004. "The cable industry is male-dominated, and it makes the job challenging, but it's rewarding. I come home exhausted, but it's fulfilling when you enjoy what you do," Toni explained with fortitude.

After they married in 2003, James moved to Ennis, Toni's hometown. "I pretty much grew up in Ennis. We moved here when I was 8 years old," Toni shared, with love for her hometown. "The nice thing about growing up in a small town is everyone knows you and your kids. My kids can't get away with anything. It's like you have an extended family — the community." Both of Toni's parents were teachers in the Ennis ISD.

The couple enjoys giving back to the community through serving at their church, Tabernacle Baptist. Every Sunday for the past seven years, they have taught the 2- to 3-year-old class and have loved every minute of it. James also plays guitar in the church band, a skill he brings into their Sunday school class for the kids. Last year, the couple traveled to Ecuador on their first mission trip to work with children in a weeklong church camp. Both felt the pull to return again.



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When James and Toni decided to fully remodel their home, it was an undertaking they were not expecting. Each room on the ground floor was modernized with the help of Maliska Homes Inc. They started with the kitchen, which was the room that needed the most work. The flooring is the only part of the kitchen that was untouched because the tiles were laid into the foundation — a practice that isn't done anymore. "Toni searched the Internet for ideas and gave them to the home designers, who in turn did a magnificent job," James gushed. "They removed a desk that was set into the wall and turned the area into a buffet." Every cabinet

was extended and had glass added to the doors for an updated look.

Another room that required quite a bit of work was the living area. The original fireplace stone was made from earthy brown rocks that was not only outdated, but darkened the room considerably. Now the updated fireplace, with its granite and white wood mantel, adds to the brightness of the room and contrasts nicely with the dark wood floors. The entire back wall of the room is made of an assortment of unique shelves that hold classic literature and decorative pieces. One such item, a circular stone slab with pink and purple shell stone inlaid in a floral arrangement,

once belonged to Toni's grandmother. She kept it in her curio for years. After she passed, Toni inherited it. "When I pulled the stone out of the curio, I noticed it had a name handwritten on the back. Apparently, my grandmother had a habit of writing the name of the person who gave it to her, so the item would eventually return to the giver," Toni mused.

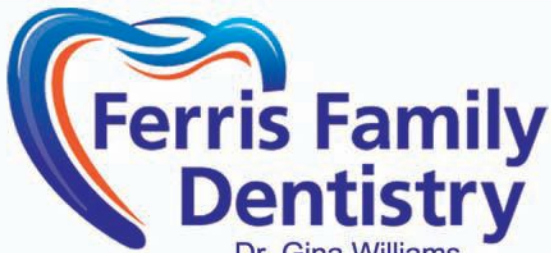
James' office was originally a patio complete with a built-in barbecue that was later removed. "I remember being in the fifth grade and walking home from Austin Elementary. I would look over here and see them building this house. A few months after they finished, they



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added this room," Toni reminisced. "I remember peaking in the window and seeing a pool table." After the kitchen was remodeled, Toni noticed the windows to the office didn't match, so they had the windows updated also.

The darkened walls in the formal dining room are a dramatic contrast to the white and gray walls throughout the ground floor. On one wall rests an antique buffet that belonged to James' mother. They had it refinished in Waxahachie to its original wood color. Between two great windows is a curio filled with decorative pieces, but one in particular is special — a red cookie jar from Toni's great-grandmother.



Toni comes from a musical family and has enjoyed playing the piano since she was a little girl. Thanks to her father's connections in the music business, Toni's grandfather, a rancher from Oklahoma who encouraged her musical interests while she was studying music in college, was able to purchase a black grand piano for his granddaughter. That same musical gift proudly takes its place as the focal point in the front room. When they updated this room, the couple took Toni's musical interests to heart, which is



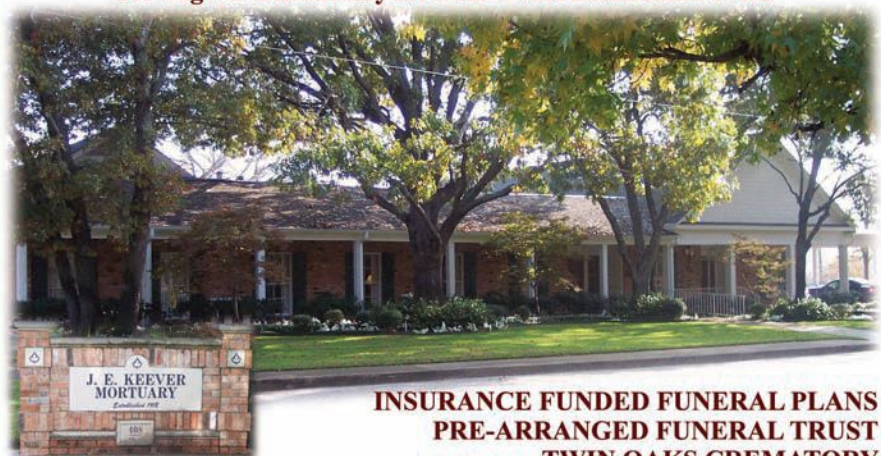
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why it's the only room in the house with carpet, so the sound doesn't echo while she plays.

The bedrooms upstairs are filled with sentiments from the past. In the guest bedroom hangs a painting of white flowers, a gift from Toni's aunt who was an artist in San Antonio. A 157-year-old



desk that traveled across the ocean from Sweden with James' great-grandmother is a valued piece in young James' room. Decorating the walls of the master bedroom is cross-stitching that Toni completed when she used to stay at home with her older children.

James and Toni's story began coincidentally. But with the love of a close-knit family, the joy of serving the community through their church and the devotion to teaching the Gospel of Jesus to children both in Ennis and around the world, the loving couple anticipates a blessed and fulfilled future. **NOW**

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# Her Something More

— By Sandra Strong

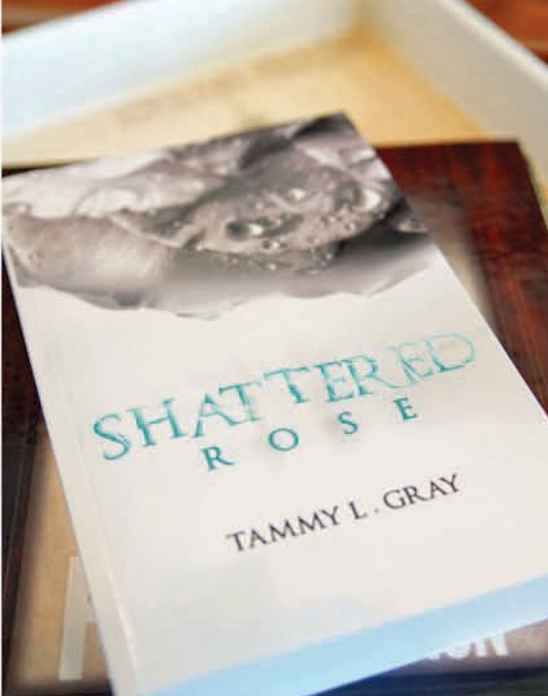
*A seed for the written word was planted in seventh grade. The sower was a creative writing teacher with long hair and a great smile. All students did in her class was write short stories the old-fashioned way — with pen and paper.*

This seed remained dormant until a few years ago when Tammy Gray realized she needed something more in her life. She loved being a supportive wife to a full-time pastor and a mother to three beautiful children, but she felt something was missing. “I had worked outside the home in a military position for years before making the change to stay-at-home mom,” Tammy explained. “It was a big adjustment for me.”

During this time, Tammy and her husband, Todd, struggled with the balance of things. He wanted to support her in the same way she was supporting the family. But, she continued to feel led to pursue something beyond her work in the home. They prayed for a career choice that would satisfy Tammy’s desire, while keeping the joy she felt in being at home intact. Needless to say, the Lord took the seed that was planted in elementary school and made something more wonderful than they could have imagined.

For Tammy, the something more came in the form of her first novel, *Shattered Rose*, a fictional work that focuses on self-esteem, hidden eating disorders, body image, first love and longtime commitments. This work, as well as the others that have followed, are prime examples of an allegory — a story that holds a much deeper meaning over and above the obvious surface meaning. “There was no plan. I just knew it needed to go down on paper,” she remembered. “The only thing I did know was who my characters were going to be. Avery was the struggling heroine, Jake represented sin and temptation and Parker, although not perfect, was a picture of Christ.”





Tammy's gift of writing allowed her to continue the story with *Shackled Lily* and *Splintered Oak*. From these two novels came *Mercy's Fight*. Each fictional installment has at least two main characters, plus two more characters that represent the battle between good and evil. As a pastor's wife, Tammy wanted readers to feel Christ's unconditional love as they were introduced and got to know the characters. Hers are stories of redemption that bring the struggles of everyday life — depression, a father's love and honesty, to name only a few — to the forefront.

*Shattered Rose* was intended to mirror the plots found in secular books, while allowing readers to find kinship with the characters Tammy describes in such detail. As you read, some scenes will have you gripping your seat because of the injustice, while the very next page will bring tears to your eyes because the main character has finally found his or her way. "I want to present a message on the reality that broken people cannot fix broken people," she shared. "The story, when complete, should transfer back to real life application." And the characters and story lines need to be relatable for Tammy's growing readership.

Tammy's goal with each new novel is for it to be better than the last. While most writers may not care for critics and their reviews, that's where Tammy is different. "Their words, good or bad, provoke emotions," she admitted. "That's a good thing for me. It helps me grow as a writer."

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The latest novel in publication, *Sell Out*, transports readers to a high school with two kinds of students — the leaders and the followers. The focus is on bullying and how it can adversely affect those on the receiving end. Like all her works, readers are taken on a roller coaster ride of emotions, as they visualize the reality in which they live, in her words. "Even in seventh grade, characters came to me easily," Tammy stated, "but I'm learning to make them fresh. I'm going deeper to find their personalities." Because of this growth, Tammy feels *Sell Out* is her best work to date, and it's the only one that made her cry as she wrote.

Tammy wasn't sure if she was cut out to be a Christian fiction writer when her editorial journey first began. She wondered how "real" should her writing be? "I have to write what's on my heart, in my mind and what I've experienced firsthand in my own life," she said. "If that means I tackle taboo subjects, then so be it."



She quickly felt the affirmation from many areas in her life. The peace she feels when writing lets her know she is doing what God has called her to do — write Christian novels that address the facts. "My purpose as an author is greater than simple love stories," she confided. "My books prompt some type of reaction, and it's my purpose to help readers along the way."

Even though she works at home from the comfort of her living room, Tammy diligently tries to adhere to her Monday through Friday schedule. She clocks in at 9:00 a.m. and closes her laptop at 3:00 p.m., just in time to pick the kids up from school. She may get a total of three hours of writing done per day, due in large



part to the other duties that need her attention as a writer, such as marketing and online conversations with other writers. "It's never been about book sales for me," she honestly admitted. "I've been told stories of moms who have read the books and then given them to their daughters to read. They open up a line of communication that allows people to talk openly and honestly."



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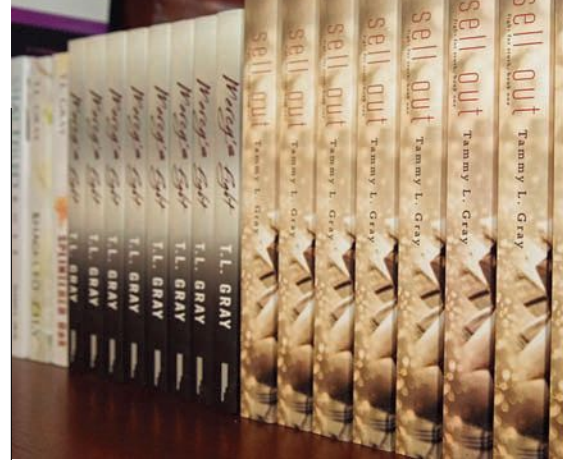


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Tammy is taking the lead from her elementary teacher as she plants seeds with each new character, each new problem and each new Christian solution. She creates a world where young adults, through their imperfections, learn to let go of pain before they can learn to live a life of victory. "I thought I'd only have one book," she added, "but God had something much bigger in mind."

As she contemplates the next chapter of her next novel about a preacher's kid, she takes a moment to pause, as she realizes the one small seed that was planted so long ago has grown roots, making her stronger with each new character. "It's amazing to see God do what He does best," she said. "He's taking care of me, and I'll continue to write as long as the ideas keep coming." **NOW**

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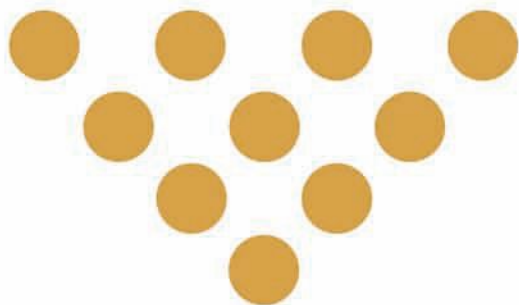
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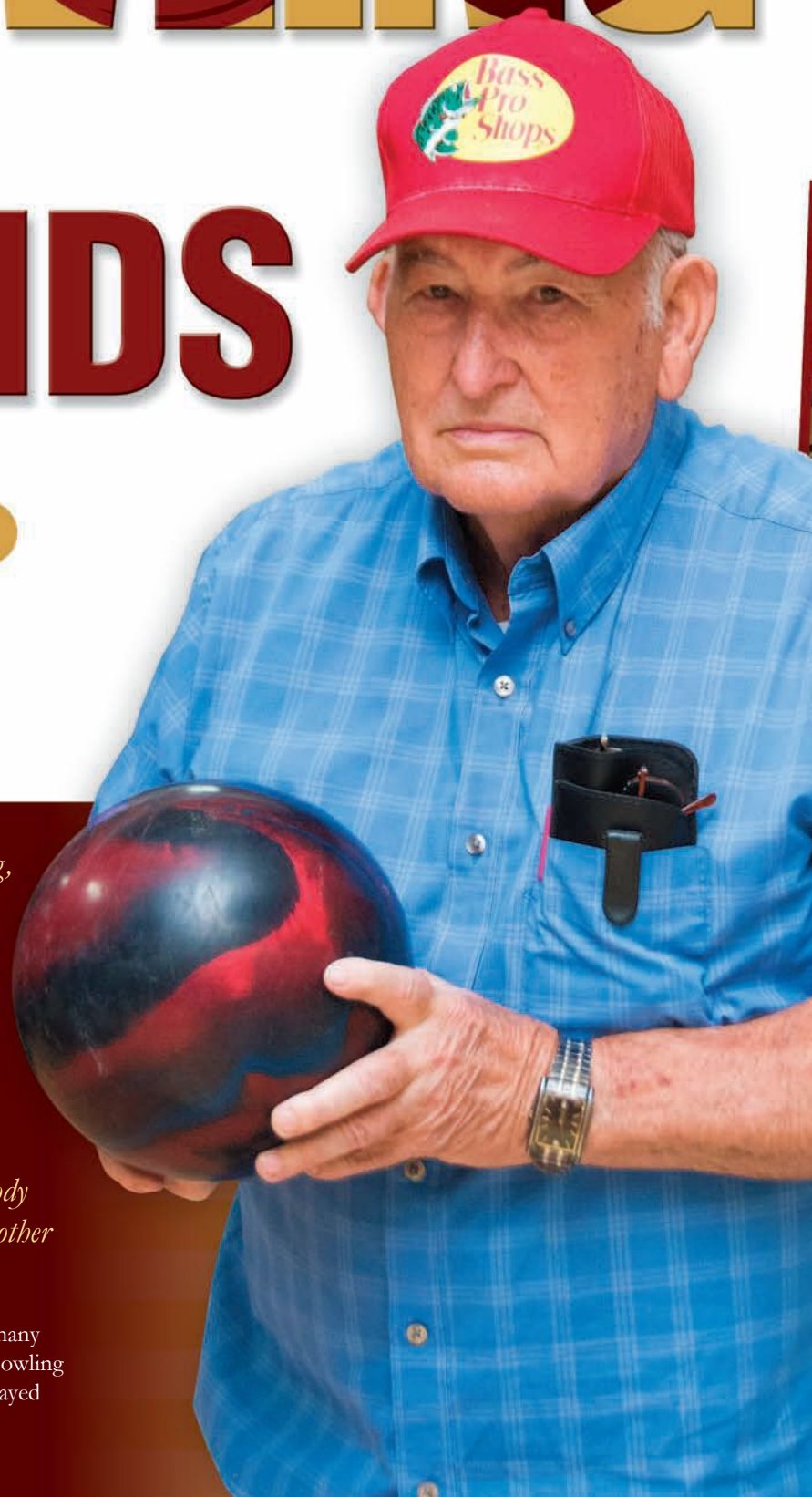
# BOWLING WITH FRIENDS

— By Virginia Riddle



*Harold Rice didn't invent the sport of bowling, but he is a proud member of the Mixed Classic League that meets each Wednesday evening at the Ennis All Star Bowl. "I call it the Old Folks League," Harold said. "You have to be tough to be old." Based on that statement, Harold is the toughest member of the league — tough to beat. At 80-plus years young, he is the oldest bowler. "Nobody gets upset with anybody else," he said. "We shake hands and cheer each other on. It's just a fun time."*

Bowling has been an activity Harold has enjoyed over many years. Raised on a ranch near Alto, Texas, he didn't see a bowling alley until he was grown. "We worked on the ranch and played



school sports, but we had never heard of bowling or golf,” Harold remembered. “My dad was quite an athlete, and both of my brothers were athletes. They could beat me at everything! I could run like a deer but couldn’t hit the baseball. However, my brother was the pitcher.”

In 1952, Harold moved to Houston, and it was during that decade that he started bowling, while working in the oil well supply industry. “I started bowling on an oil well supply team,” he said. And he was in his 20s when he first saw a golf ball and started practicing that game. After Harold became a city of Dallas police officer, he and his wife, Jacquie,





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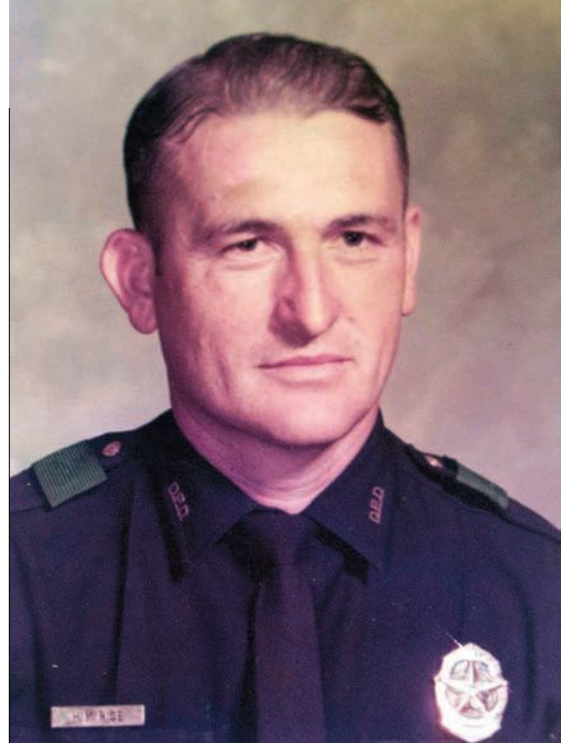
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continued to enjoy bowling together. Harold's dad, who had been watching pro bowlers on television, decided to try his hand at the lanes during a visit. "He was 64 years old at the time and was a natural who bowled 180-270," Harold said proudly.

An associate degree in criminology and psychology from Abilene Christian University-Dallas led Harold from being an officer on the beat into homicide. He became a sergeant before retiring from the force. "I loved walking a beat, and homicide was stressful," Harold shared. Bowling became a stress release, and he has always enjoyed the fellowship and competition. "Bowling has always been my excuse for exercise. I still come for the workout and will even bowl by myself. When you do bowl by yourself, you're ball comes back quicker and you are constantly bowling," Harold revealed.

However, work and raising a family does get in the way of fun times. When Harold and Jacquie moved to Ennis, they quit bowling for 43 years. "We bought roughly 5 acres near Ennis from one of my men on the force and then, later, moved into town," Harold said. Harold has long considered the number 6 to be his lucky number. It was in his police badge number, and he found it significant that it was the street house number.

It's hard to make a comeback, but Harold has done just that at the bowling alley. "I had to build back up and take my time," he said. "I've had to adjust my bowling style to take pressure off my

back, but I decided to try to bowl again. Jacquie and I started in a daytime league five years ago, since it was something we were both interested in doing again. I'm always trying to improve."

Unfortunately, Jacquie developed a troubling shoulder, so she favors bridge games now, but she is supportive of Harold's continuing interest in bowling. "She was a better bowler than me. When I have a good night, which doesn't happen very often, I want to come back again to see if I can do it again. When I bowl a 200 game, I call my wife. She doesn't get too many calls," he quipped.



The night leagues are full of families and folks of all ages and abilities. Harold enjoys the family-oriented atmosphere of the sport, which he describes as a very good, clean activity. He identified several multigenerational and husband and wife teams, as well as a father/daughter team. Most of the night league bowlers still work full-time jobs, and it's a common practice in league play to keep partnerships going through the seasons. "We bowl our average, so you have to get above your average to help your team. Through the years, my team has never finished below third place. Several people have been on the pro tour, but the system really is fair to all bowlers," Harold said. "Some of these younger bowlers are really good, but they don't laugh when others are making mistakes."

Harold is very at home at the Ennis All Star Bowl. "These new owners keep the equipment in great shape and are really good people," he said.



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All Star Bowl owners, Billy Joe and Lauren Cathey, love seeing great bowlers, like Harold, walk in to bowl.

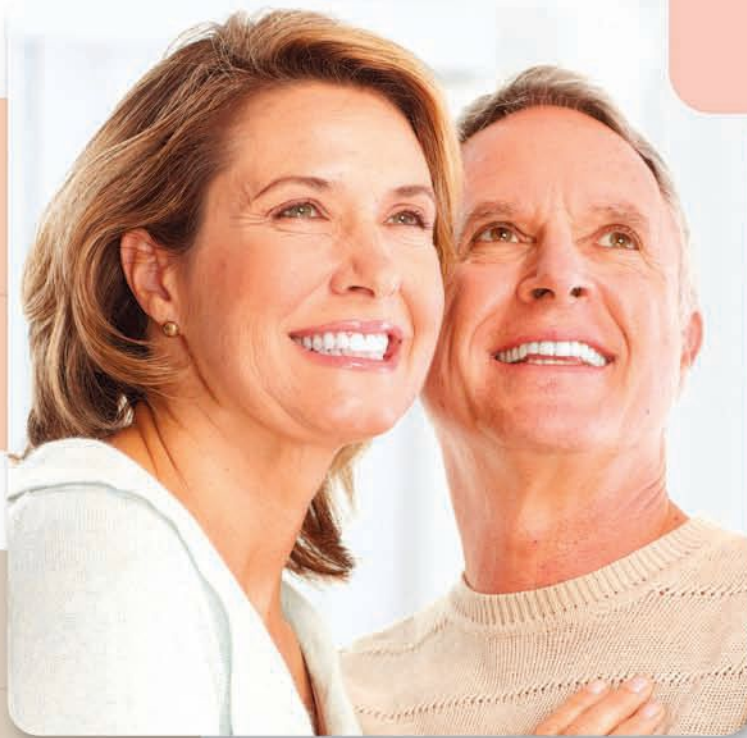
A busy man, Harold no longer finds a lot of time to watch tour pro bowlers, but he still favors the older pro bowlers when he occasionally watches. "I like to watch women play on the golf pro tour, instead. I find it interesting how a little bitty woman can hit that ball so far, and I can't," he said laughingly.

Harold and Jacquie have enjoyed traveling with other couples in a rented van, while touring California and surrounding states. They have gone on other escorted bus trips. "It's a lot of fun. There's always a guide that knows everything," Harold said. They also rent a place on Galveston Island each year for family reunions. "All my people are from around there," Harold remarked.

Harold and Jacquie are the proud parents of grown children, who are all college graduates and professionals. Harold enjoyed coaching Little League baseball for nine years. He and Jacquie are active members of their Sunday school class, bridge club and 42 club, and Harold also enjoys the Lion's Club. "We meet at noon on Wednesdays and do a lot of good in the community." He works with children with disabilities through the Lion's Club. "It's worthwhile to see them smile for a while," he said.

Fishing and golf are sports Harold also finds enjoyable. "I have a fishing buddy who competes with me with catch and release," he said. A regular on the golf course, Harold shoots in the 80s. "Two of the original golfers in our foursome are still playing. Just like with bowling, I play golf for the fellowship and exercise," he said.

Popular as a sport since the pharaohs of Egypt invented bowling around 5,200 B.C., Harold and many other folks since then have loved this sport and made it a part of their lives. Harold will continue to strive, like everyone who steps up to the line with a ball in hand, to bowl perfect games. **NOW**



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The Traylor family find joy and satisfaction as they represent the RV lifestyle. They love meeting people and hearing all about their RV travels.

# Have Wheels, Will Go

*Come visit Traylor Motor Homes, and experience the RV lifestyle. — By Virginia Riddle*

At Traylor Motor Homes, Jerry and Charmaine Traylor have a recreational vehicle either on the lot or one that can be ordered and customized to suit every customer's need from pop-up tent campers to customized RV units that fit governmental entities' needs. The Traylor family and their six-member staff sell, service and carry a broad range of products for RVs. "We greet folks and let them know we will bend over backward to help them," Charmaine said.

Traylor Motor Homes was first located in Cedar Hill for 27 years, but in 2008, Jerry and Charmaine relocated their business to Palmer. "Palmer welcomed us with open arms, and servicing local customers and those who travel I-45 is the bread-and-butter of our business," Charmaine revealed.

The business is licensed through the state of Texas and is a licensed dealer for Pleasure-Way, Augusta RV and Coachmen. "We can order and perform warranty work on any unit," Charmaine said. "We are a one-stop shop that sells parts, services, units and insurance."

With the popular Class B vans, they have created a niche business with retirees who want the RV lifestyle but don't feel comfortable driving a big rig. "The vans and smaller RVs are a perfect fit for people," Charmaine remarked. "They have many of the amenities of the larger units, such as queen-sized beds, recliners and TVs, and these units are just beautiful."

An authorized government contract holder, Traylor Motor Homes offers specialized RV units for federal, state and local

## Business **NOW**

government needs, as well as business corporations. "We have worked with the U.S. Navy, Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, private on-the-job training companies and on-site drug testing companies. We provided a Mary Kay consultant with an RV in which she does makeovers for women on the job site," Charmaine said.

**"We are a one-stop shop that sells parts, services, units and insurance."**

Hunters, fishermen, weekend tailgaters and sports and outdoor enthusiasts find that having an RV along makes for a more fun and relaxed time. In fact, that's how Jerry and Charmaine became RV owners. When their grown daughter, Jeriva, was young, Jerry, a hunter and native of Rusk, Texas, and Charmaine, a fisherman and native of Dallas, would escape their outside sales professions in Dallas by camping on the weekends. They bought a used RV that needed a redo and learned by redoing the unit from top to bottom. "My grandmother used to say, 'Can't ain't in the dictionary.' She advised everyone to, 'Have more than one egg in the basket,'" Charmaine said. "It was trial and error as we went from owning to leasing to a leasing back program for others and then opening our business. Obviously, God had a plan, and we kept on diversifying."

Their firsthand experience is passed on to others. Jerry is the past president of the Texas Recreational Vehicle Association. "We love our products and enjoy educating people. It's a joy to represent the RV lifestyle, meet people and hear about their travels," Charmaine said. As RV enthusiasts, the Traylor's enjoy following their customers' recommendations on great places to visit when they take a break.

"Jerry is the initiator and dreamer. I'm the implementer and worker bee," Charmaine explained. Building their business together has been a labor of love for family, work and the road beyond. **NOW**



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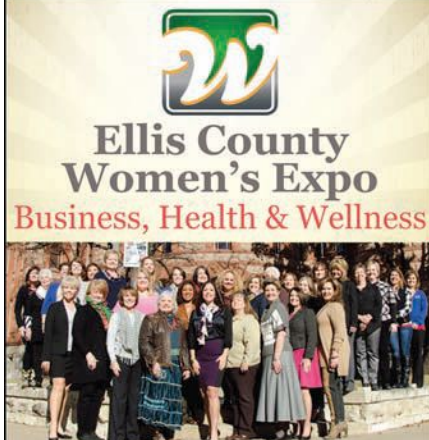
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*Pastor Chris Jackson, looking sharp in his suit, prepares the church for Sunday services.*



*Officer Lizzy Gentry and Chief Erick Scott are on duty at Ennis High School.*



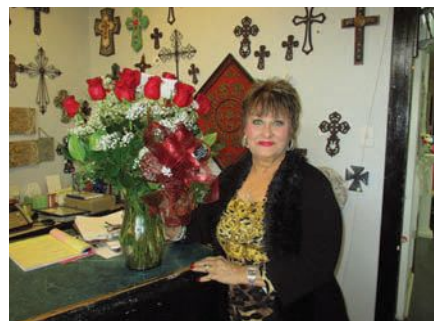
*Brittany Session and her daughter, Everlyn, spend some quality reading time at the library.*



*Here comes double trouble with Haven Rounsavall and her monkey, Lyla.*



*Dillon Cole greets Lone Star Fitness customers at the front desk.*



*Nancy Swindell, owner of Apple Annie's Garden Gate Floral & Gifts, prepares for the upcoming Valentine's Day rush.*



*Melody Mosley is ready to eat a pink doughnut with sprinkles.*



*Students from EHS Art 2, 3 and 4 take a field trip to the Ft. Worth Art Museum.*

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# Give Your Retirement Plan a Tune-Up

Conducting an annual review of your retirement goals and strategy is an ideal way to check that your plans for your financial future remain realistic and on track. With that in mind, taking the three easy steps outlined below will help you conduct your retirement tune-up.

## Step 1: Review Your Retirement Goals

Your first step should be to review your retirement savings goals and assess whether anything significant has occurred during the past year that might affect either your outlook for retirement or your current strategies to prepare for it. For example, have you decided to change the date when you'll retire? Or have you experienced any new milestones, such as getting married, divorced or having a child? Any of these events may affect how much you will want to save to fund the retirement you envision.

## Step 2: Take a Fresh Look at Your Retirement Strategy

Your portfolio's specific mix of stocks, bonds and cash, known as your asset allocation, should complement your financial goals, risk tolerance and time horizon. <sup>1</sup>If you haven't taken a fresh look at your investments in a while, don't assume that your old asset allocation is still appropriate for your current needs.

Even if your personal outlook hasn't changed, keep in mind that uneven returns provided by different investments may have caused your portfolio to shift from your intended asset allocation. If your asset allocation needs to be rebalanced, now may be the time for action.

## Step 3: Consider Saving More

None of us know what the future may hold. A good way to improve the odds that you have saved enough for retirement is to save more, no matter how prepared you may already be.

If you have not already done so, consider funding an IRA. For the 2015 tax year, you can contribute a maximum of \$5,500 and those aged 50 and older can make an additional catch-up contribution of \$1,000. These limits are set annually by the IRS. More information can be obtained at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov). Conducting a retirement tune-up is always a great idea but don't forget to consult with your financial advisor to discuss your options. **NOW**

## Source/Disclaimer:

*<sup>1</sup>Asset allocation does not ensure a profit or protect against a loss. Because of the possibility of human or mechanical error by Wealth Management Systems Inc. or its sources, neither Wealth Management Systems Inc. nor its sources guarantees the accuracy, adequacy, completeness or availability of any information and is not responsible for any errors or omissions or for the results obtained from the use of such information. In no event shall Wealth Management Systems Inc. be liable for any indirect, special or consequential damages in connection with subscriber's or others' use of the content. Material prepared by Wealth Management Systems Inc. for use by its financial advisors. © 2015 Wealth Management Systems Inc. All rights reserved.*

*Kelly Francis is a LPL Financial advisor based in Ennis, TX. Securities offered through LPL Financial, Member FINRA/SIPC.*

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# The Slippery Slope of Home Blood Pressure Monitoring

It's all the fad these days! Now that we have ready access to information on the Internet and affordable equipment to check blood pressures, there is a growing trend for people to take a more active role in their blood pressure management. After all, if I can measure my pressure, can't I simply take my medicines when it is high and skip it when it is not? The emphatic answer to this question is, "No." This common practice may lead to catastrophic consequences.

First, consider the equipment used in checking blood pressures. Physicians almost universally use mercury sphygmomanometers because of their high degree of accuracy and long-term stability. That is to say that they remain in calibration for a very long time due to the consistency of the weight of a column of mercury. Contrast that to the aneroid sphygmomanometers that include all of the digital and dial-read varieties. Rather than relying on the constant weight of mercury, these instruments correlate the tension in the arm relative to the tension in an internal spring. Therein lies the problem. With repeated compression and release the spring fatigues, and the pressure reading may falsely decline. Manufacturers commonly warn consumers in their product disclosure about this tendency and advise shipping the unit back for recalibration periodically. However, that rarely occurs, and the consuming public makes very bad decisions on the basis of bad information.


Further, when the physician checks your blood pressure, he or she will feel for the artery in the arm. This is done so the stethoscope can be applied to the same area in order to accurately hear the correct pressure. However, with most aneroid machines, no

stethoscope is used. Instead a built-in sensor in the cuff "hears" the blood pressure as the tension in the cuff is released. The problem is the sensitivity of these sensors is not standardized and will vary from model to model. Additionally, the position of the sensor relative to the artery is very important for it to "hear" an accurate reading. If the sensor is not directly over the artery, the resultant reading will be incorrect.


Consider also the body's response to a dose of hypertension medication that is withheld due to an incorrect blood pressure reading. Our bodies have internal sensors that continually monitor blood pressure and make moment-to-moment adjustments to keep it in its target range. For reasons that are unclear, the hypertensive individual has a higher set-point for blood pressure than those who have normal pressures. When one takes a blood pressure medication to lower the reading, the body produces chemical mediators that try to raise the pressure. When one skips their blood pressure medication, these chemical mediators are already in place, and a serious blood pressure spike may arise, leading to a stroke.

So what is the best approach to blood pressure management? Take your medication faithfully and consult your health care provider before making any adjustments to your blood pressure regimen. To your good health! **NOW**

*Dr. Larry A. Jinks, M.D., F.A.C.P.  
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### February 11

Daddy Daughter Dance – A Glass Slipper Event: 6:00-9:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center. Tickets are \$15 each. Tickets went on sale January 1 and must be purchased in advance at the Waxahachie Civic Center. Tickets will not be sold at the door. For more information, call (469) 309-4040.

### February 12 — 28

*The Sunshine Boys*: **Friday** and **Saturday** evening, **Sunday** matinee, Theatre Rocks. For more information, call (972) 878-5126 or visit [www.theatrerocks.com](http://www.theatrerocks.com).

### February 13

Cupid Shuffle 5K & 15K: 7:50 a.m., 15K begins; 8:00 a.m., 5K begins, start and finish at Getzendaner Park, Waxahachie. You can register online at [www.reachcouncil.org/events](http://www.reachcouncil.org/events). Wear your tutu and your valentine-inspired socks. For more information, email [nisa.hurd@reachcouncil.org](mailto:nisa.hurd@reachcouncil.org).

Czech Music Festival: Sokol Activity Center, 2622 E. Hwy 34. There will be five polka bands to listen and dance to. For more information, visit [www.ennisczechmusic-festival.com](http://www.ennisczechmusic-festival.com).

### February 18

Ellis County Amateur Radio Club: 7:30 p.m., Ellis County Sheriff's Office Training Center (County Farm), 2272 FM 878, Waxahachie. Talk-in on the 145.410 machines. All are welcome. For more information: [wd5ddh.org](mailto:wd5ddh.org).

### February 19, 20, 21

Gingerbread House Barn Dance/Chili Cook-Off: **Friday**, gates open at 10 a.m.; **Saturday**, gates open at 8 a.m.; **Saturday**, The Barn Dance: 6:30 p.m.-midnight, Ellis County Youth Expo Center, 2300 Hwy. 287 Bypass W., Waxahachie.

### February 27

Waxahachie Symphony Association sponsors Baylor University Jazz Band with a special appearance by the Waxahachie High School Jazz Band: 7:00 p.m., Southwestern Assemblies of God University (SAGU)

Hagee Communication Center Performance Hall, 1200 Sycamore, Waxahachie. For ticket information, visit [waxahachiesymphony.org](http://waxahachiesymphony.org).

### March 5

Ellis County Women's Expo/Business, Health & Wellness: 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center. Event will include health screenings, door prizes, fashion and shopping. Over 100 vendors. Tickets: adults \$5; children under 10 are free. For more information, call (972) 937-2390 or visit [www.waxahachiechamber.com](http://www.waxahachiechamber.com).

### Ongoing:

#### Third Tuesdays

Ellis County Veterans Networking Group: 6:30 p.m., Ryan's Steakhouse, Waxahachie. For more information, call Mike Lamb at (214) 763-0378.

#### Fourth Saturdays

Bristol Opry: 7:00 p.m., featuring local singers and musicians. For more information, contact Jim Gatlin at (972) 846-2211.

*Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your current event details to [sandra.strong@nowmagazines.com](mailto:sandra.strong@nowmagazines.com).*

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## In the Kitchen With Irene Vitovsky

— By Virginia Riddle

Growing up on a farm in Bardwell, Irene Vitovsky remembers when her family grew, processed and preserved almost everything they needed for cooking and baking. “My mother, Bessie Lanicek, was such an inspiration to me.”

Irene really began cooking and baking after she married. “Today, I prepare simple but healthy food, and bake or grill instead of frying,” Irene said. Many of her recipes were published in *Catholic Daughters of the Americas Cookbook, Court of Our Lady of the Bluebonnets* #2268. Retired after 25 years of service at Ennis State Bank, Irene enjoys having more time to garden and bake. “Sending my sweet goodies to family in North Carolina is a joy,” Irene shared. “They truly love the gift packages when they arrive.” **NOW**

### Favorite Strawberry Cake

- 1 pkg. white cake mix
- 4 eggs
- 1 3-oz. pkg. strawberry gelatin
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/2 cup oil
- 1 14-oz. pkg. frozen strawberries, thawed and well drained, reserve juice for frosting
- 1 stick butter, softened
- 1 16-oz. box powdered sugar

1. For cake: Preheat oven to 325 F.
2. Combine cake mix, eggs, gelatin, water and oil; beat for 3 minutes on medium speed.
3. Fold in strawberries; pour mixture into a greased and floured 9x13-inch baking dish.
4. Bake for 35-40 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean; cool before frosting.

5. For frosting: Mix butter and powdered sugar on low speed; add reserved strawberry juice gradually until frosting is the desired consistency; spread on cooled cake.

### Kisses

- 2 egg whites
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 cup sugar
- Few drops vanilla
- 1 cup shredded coconut
- 1 3/4 cups corn flakes

1. Beat egg whites until frothy; sprinkle salt over the top and continue beating until stiff.
2. Gradually, beat in sugar and vanilla.
3. Fold in coconut and corn flakes; drop from teaspoon onto greased cookie sheet.
4. Bake at 350 F for 20 minutes. Don't overbake.

### Pecan Pie Muffins

Yields about 2 1/2 dozen.

- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup pecans, chopped
- 2/3 cup real butter, melted
- 2 eggs, beaten

1. In a bowl, combine brown sugar, flour and pecans; set aside.
2. In a second bowl, combine butter and eggs; mix well. Stir into flour mixture until moistened.
3. Pour into greased and floured or paper lined miniature muffin cups until each is 2/3 full.
4. Bake at 350 F for 20-25 minutes; remove to cool on wire racks.

### Sugar-free Hawaiian Delight Pie

- 1 1.5-oz. pkg. instant sugar-free vanilla pudding
- 1 8-oz. can crushed pineapple
- 1 8-oz. tub sugar-free Cool Whip
- 1 cup pecans, chopped
- 2-3 bananas
- 1 graham cracker pie crust
- 1 pt. fresh strawberries

1. In a large mixing bowl, combine pudding and entire can of pineapple; mix until pudding is dissolved.
2. Gently mix in Cool Whip and pecans.
3. Layer sliced bananas onto bottom of crust; pour pudding filling into crust.
4. Garnish with sliced strawberries.

### Cocoa Puffs Treats

- 1/4 cup honey
- 1/2 cup light Karo Syrup
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 12-oz. jar crunchy peanut butter
- 4 cups Cocoa Puffs cereal

1. Combine honey, syrup and sugar in a saucepan; bring barely to a boil.
2. Remove from heat; add peanut butter and cereal; mix well.
3. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto waxed paper; let cool.

To view recipes from current and previous issues, visit [www.nowmagazines.com](http://www.nowmagazines.com).



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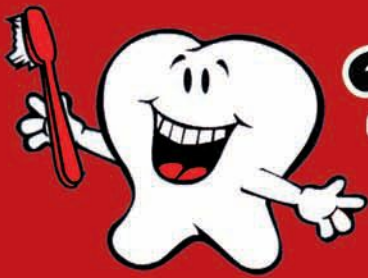
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