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M A G A Z I N E

March 2008

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One With  
the Fire**

**Fit for Life**

**Called to  
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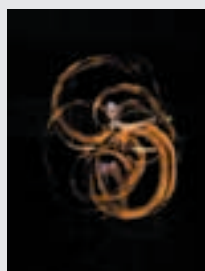
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Subscriptions are available at the rate of \$35 per year or \$3.50 per issue. Subscription and editorial correspondence should be sent to: *WaxahachieNOW*, P.O. Box 1071, Waxahachie, TX 75168. For advertising rates and other information, call (972) 937-8447 or e-mail us at: rhensley@nowmagazines.com



# Waxahachie NOW

## Editor's Note

### *Goodbye Winter, Hello Spring!*

The mornings may still be a bit chilly as you walk out the door for work, but I promise, the warmer days are looming ahead. We here at *WaxahachieNOW* look forward to the new life that spring brings as evidenced by the stories featured in this month's edition.

Jeff Aycock, fire academy coordinator, teaches young recruits the ins and outs of becoming a firefighter; our featured artist, Ashley Davidson, masters the art of spinning fire. In the home feature, read how an unplanned trip to Waxahachie forever changed the lives of John and Arlene Hamilton. The Millers are teaching others in the community the benefits of "getting fit," while new life is taking root at Getzendaner Park thanks to passionate volunteers and the nationwide EarthKind project.

I challenge you to go ahead, pull up a lawn chair and get to reading. I know you will not be disappointed!

*Sandra McIntosh*

*WaxahachieNOW* Editor

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living facilities, sharing his knowledge about Trinity Mission. You can see Harrell at local health fairs and numerous community events. Harrell has been dedicated to the team at Trinity Mission for over two years.



**Vicki Johnston,**  
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organizational skills,  
her laughter and her

passion for our residents, have made her a vital part of our Management Team. You may see her dressed as Raggedy Ann or dressed in uniform, but each time that you meet her you know that she loves what she does. We are very blessed to have her as part of our Team. Please come out to meet Vicki, she will share with you our mission. Quality of Life for our residents is what it is all about.

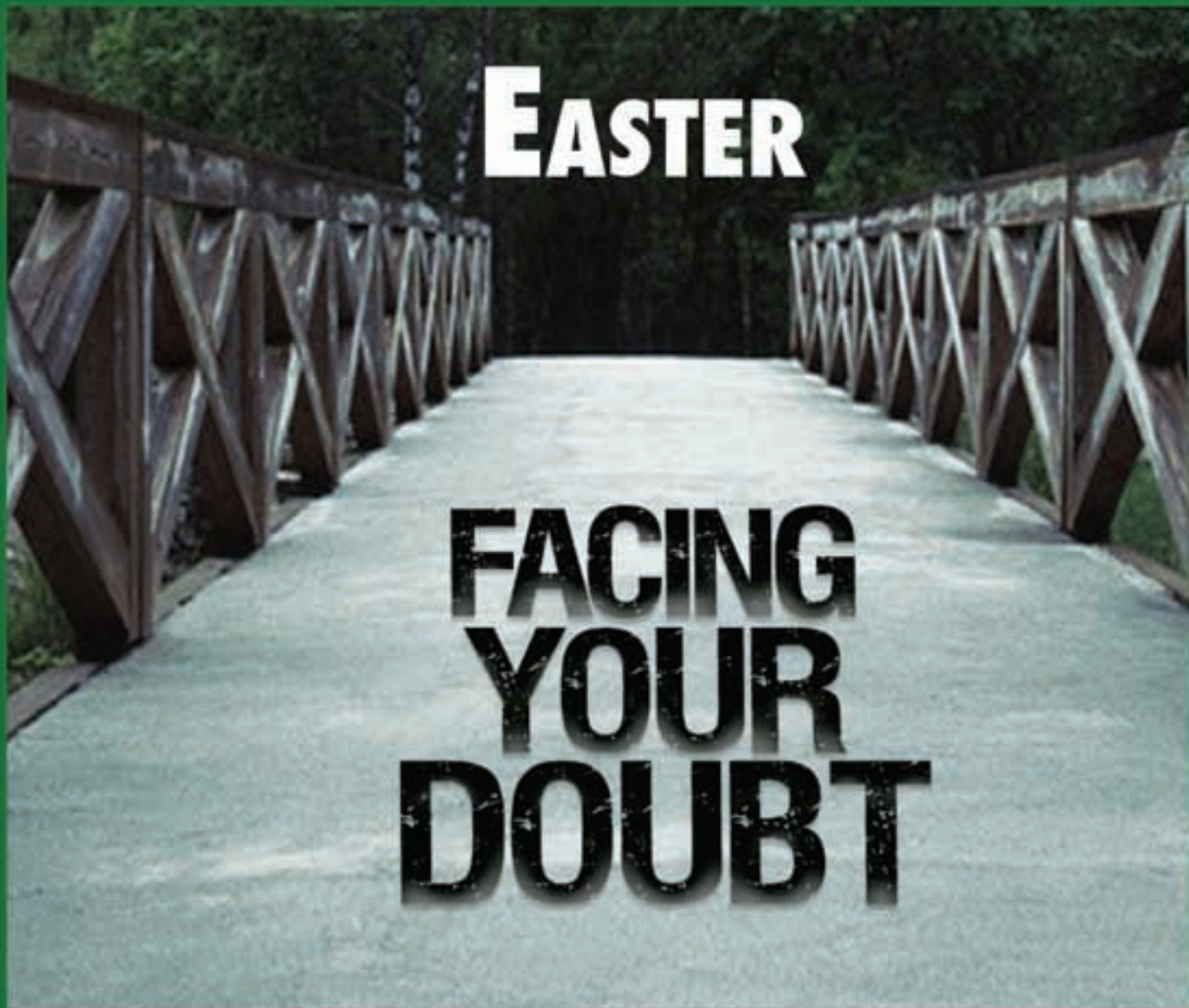


**Mark Phelps,** Director  
of Maintenance has  
been with us for 1 1/4  
years. He finds his  
work to be exciting  
and fulfilling. He  
enjoys the many

projects that he has been a part of like floats for the Christmas parade, National Nursing Home Week and our Fall Festival. The residents enjoy watching him work. Mark is looking forward to many more years at Trinity Mission of Italy.

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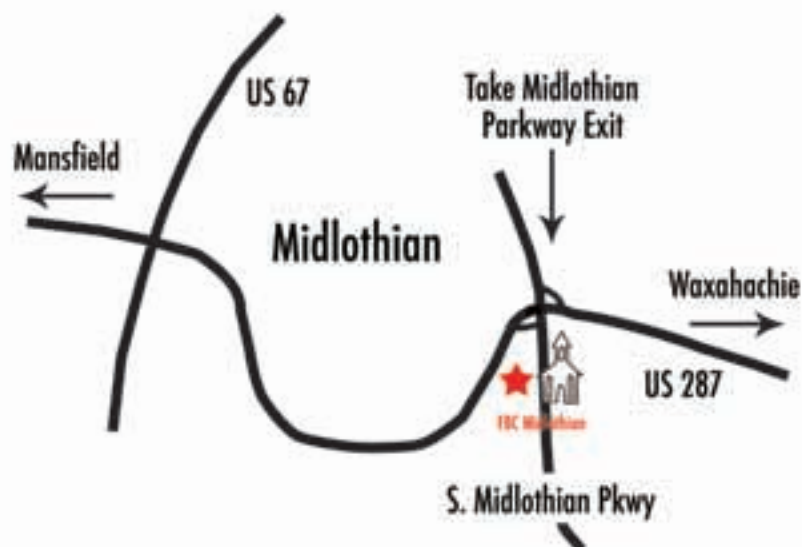




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# Called to Protect and Serve

— By Sandra McIntosh

Firefighters put their lives on the line every day for individuals they have never met. For Jeff Aycock, coordinator of the fire academy offered at Navarro College's Waxahachie campus, fighting fires and saving lives is a calling. "It's not just a job where we go to work day after day and year after year to draw a paycheck," he said, with great conviction for his lifelong career. "Firefighters are the safety net of the community. We are the ones that keep you safe while you sleep. It's one full circle of giving back to the community."

With 22 years of valuable firefighting experience listed on his résumé, Jeff's words come from a man whose heart for people far exceeds his position at Navarro College. "We pass things on to one another," he explained, referring to the new recruits, as well as all those that came before him. "It's all about giving back. Someone passed something down to me and now it's my turn to give back what I've learned to those

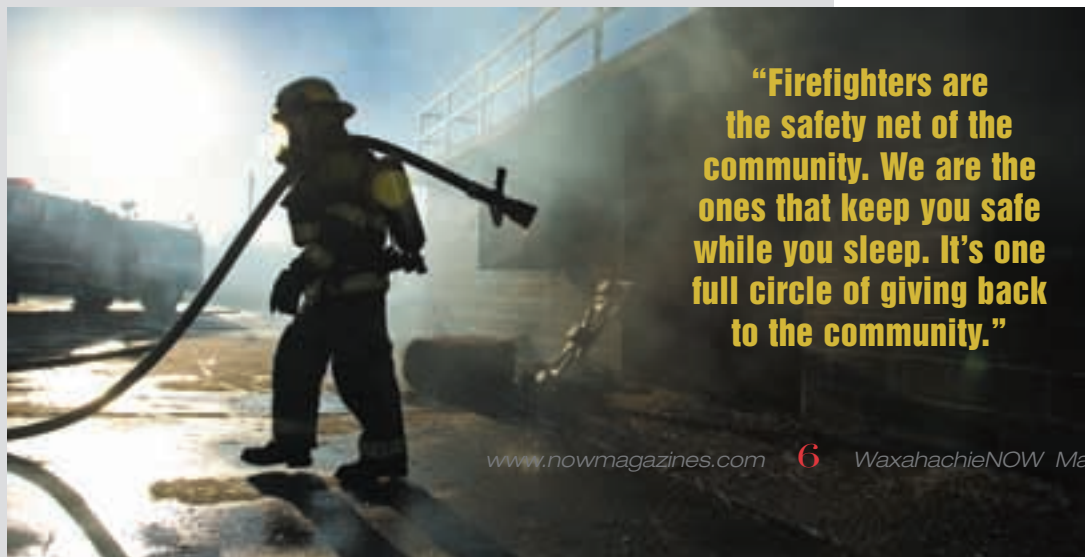
with the same calling to be a firefighter." The words quoted by the late New York Fire Chief Edward F. Croker are words by which Jeff has fashioned his career, as well as his teaching style. The quote simply states, "I have no ambition in this world but one, and that is to be a firefighter. The occupation thrills us and stimulates us to the deeds of daring, even at the supreme sacrifice. Such considerations may not strike the average mind, but they are sufficient to fill to the limit our ambition in life and to make us serve the general purpose of human society."

Jeff's first introduction to fighting fires began as a volunteer in 1977. Volunteering gave him the push he needed to attend fire school, becoming a full-time firefighter with the Ennis Fire Department in 1982. Thinking he might enjoy a career with Southern Pacific Railroad, Jeff left his firefighting job behind in December of 1983, only to return three years later.

"I've been back 22 years now," Jeff said. "I've seen a lot of people at their very worst. My job has always been to make them feel better during tough times, while also fighting the fire."

The growth of the fire academy has warranted a new facility to supply qualified, educated, caring firefighters to Ellis, Navarro and surrounding counties. "What began on the Wilemon [High School] campus, has grown into a new 12,000-square foot building with additional classrooms,

**"Firefighters are the safety net of the community. We are the ones that keep you safe while you sleep. It's one full circle of giving back to the community."**





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a new computer lab, shower facilities and two drive-through bays," Jeff said, proud of what Navarro has been able to accomplish in such a short period of time.

In the competitive world of firefighting, it is no longer enough to be "just a fireman." Students today are going one, and sometimes two steps further, to be the best they can be at their chosen profession. Currently, students are opting to add emergency medical technician (EMT), paramedic certifications and degrees to their educational résumés. "There is no specific order in which to master the classes," Jeff said. "Taking the three classes opens doors to better opportunities." In fact, Jeff added that today's firefighters must have the basics in emergency medical services (EMS) to be a firefighter.

Students enrolled in the fire academy receive 640 hours of training, even though the state's minimum is 468. Classroom, as well as hands-on instruction, is conducted in areas such as: commission rules and regulations, hazardous materials operations and rescue and live fire training, to name only a few. "Hazardous materials seem to be a major issue," Jeff cited, "especially since 9/11. We go above and beyond what the state requires."

An advisory board made up of members from Ellis, Navarro, Limestone, Freestone and Leon counties keep representatives abreast of what is needed in relation to firefighters. "Fire departments in these five counties tell us what their needs are and our job is





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to fulfill those needs to the best of our ability," Jeff explained. "This new building [Navarro College] will allow us to meet the needs much more efficiently, as will the classes currently filled to capacity." With so much extra classroom space, Navarro not only offers instruction in fire, EMS and paramedic training, they have also opened the doors to those who desire to serve the community as police officers. "The first police classes began here in January," Jeff added. "Our hope is that once the word gets out, that class will grow to full capacity, too."

Jeff finds great rewards from his job in relation to the fire academy at Navarro College. Jeff is able to share his memories with each class, hoping each student will glean something positive in the retelling. "It's the little things that we take for granted," he said. "What we may consider little can be huge to a homeowner. As an instructor, I can pass on all the training I want, but it's the small things like covering the family photo album with a waterproof tarp, saving the family pet or changing batteries in a smoke detector at 2 o'clock in the morning that can make all the difference."

Thankfully, Navarro College's vision for both continuing education, and





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protective services, line up with Jeff's philosophy on the fire academy. In a small area such as Ellis County, it is easy for Jeff, and others like him, to see the results of their efforts as teachers, firefighters and mentors on a regular basis. One such tale involves a high school student who just happened to experience some car trouble on Interstate 45, just within the city limits of Rice, Texas. Lo and behold, the Rice police officer that came to her rescue that particular evening was a Navarro College graduate. Jeff said other similar incidents take place all the time. "It's not at all uncommon to run into ambulance paramedics who have been through the program," Jeff said. "It just reinforces what I already knew to be true — the education students are receiving here at Navarro can be trusted."

The fire academy opened its doors to the first class of students in 1998, thanks to the foresight of Dr. Lynn Nolte. Jeff agreed Dr. Nolte's vision provided the firm foundation by which the fire academy continues to flourish today. "It's not just about the classroom and hands-on instruction," Jeff added. "It's also about the camaraderie and sense of belonging each student feels long after graduation. They are no longer 24 kids graduating. They are 24 in a multitude of graduates who are called to protect and serve." **NOW**





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— By Alex Allred

# Taking Root in Waxahachie



At Home With  
**John and Arlene Hamilton**

An unplanned trip to Waxahachie forever changed the lives of John and Arlene Hamilton. For over 30 years, the couple had lived in, and reared their two sons outside of a St. Louis, Missouri, suburb. However, John always knew he would one day live in Texas. Although John did not retire from his position as vice president with Anheuser Busch until 1999, the Hamiltons began their search for the perfect Texas home in the 1980s.

With the aid of a Texas travel book, "We would pick a section," explained Arlene, of how they traveled to different parts of the state. It was their annual vacation.

Together, they had compiled a list of "musts" for any town they would consider. "We knew we wanted a good medical center, lots of local activities and access to a big airport," John said.

They also had an agreement that if either one of them did not like a town, it would be scratched off the list, no questions asked.

From Abilene to Texarkana, they traveled the state, but it was on their last visit as tourists that they discovered Business Highway 287.

They looked at Weatherford, Mineral Wells and Glen Rose. John liked Stephenville and Arlene liked







Granbury. Still, nothing appealed to them both. "We had an extra day," Arlene recalled, "and I saw there was this town called Waxahachie." Like so many first time visitors, the Hamiltons



were instantly captivated by the gingerbread homes, but it was the renovation of the county courthouse that caught their attention. "When we got to the courthouse," John

explained, "we said, 'Well, this is a community that cares about its history.' That was on a Thursday." By Friday, they had been in touch with a real



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estate agent and had begun driving around, looking at homes.

When they arrived at what would eventually become their own beautiful, historic homestead, John told Arlene, "Boy, I sure hope I like it as much on

the inside as I do the outside." From the curb, the house appeared to be a majestic two-story home with a large wraparound porch, complete with porch swing, ceiling fans and large bay windows. Inside, he was not nearly as impressed with the natural, Texas yellow pine floors currently covered with wall-to-wall carpeting. It was a home that only came to life once the Hamiltons moved in. They closed on the home in September 1999, but remained in St. Louis through the holidays determined to celebrate one more Christmas with friends and family. "The movers came on January 4, 2000," Arlene said, with a smile. "He [John] was moving to Texas. I could come or not ..."

As they settled into their new home, John became intrigued with the



history of the house. It is registered with the U.S. Department of Interior, Waxahachie Heritage Preservation Committee and Historic Waxahachie, Inc., but he was most interested when a former resident and neighbor presented him with a picture. It was a black and white photograph of a little girl standing in front of a home in the year 1912.

Specifically, it was a picture of John and Arlene's home. It was a picture of their house when there were no trees and no other structures nearby; back when Marvin

Street was little more than a dirt road.

While John and Arlene are appreciative of their home, it can be argued that the true benefactor of their move was the house. Almost immediately, John and Arlene pulled up the wall-to-wall carpeting, refinished the original woodwork and soon began to display

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their antique collection of turn-of-the-century coffee grinders, tool boxes with hidden drawers and cupboards, Hamilton crocks (yes, it is a brand name) and even a 1937 pedal car John had restored.

In the kitchen, they replaced the cabinets with open glass doors to show off their Fiesta ware, blending a contemporary style with primitive kitchen tools, such as a cherry pitter, bean slicer and apple peeler, to name only a few. Hanging in the kitchen window is an impressive stained glass picture John designed "as a tribute to my backyard," Arlene said proudly.

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is beautifully decorated with treasures John and Arlene have discovered from their travels around the country, in and out of antique shops, but they are not simply collectors of history. They embrace it, live it and teach it. Beyond his extraordinary abilities to restore toy cars, as well as vintage automobiles, John is a self-taught blacksmith and craftsman. Arlene adopted the 2,000-year-old craft of spinning and goes to classrooms to teach children how she, a spinner and dyer of cloth, can actually create spools of wool and cotton to make clothing and blankets.

In fact, it was her desire to be part of the community and embrace the roots

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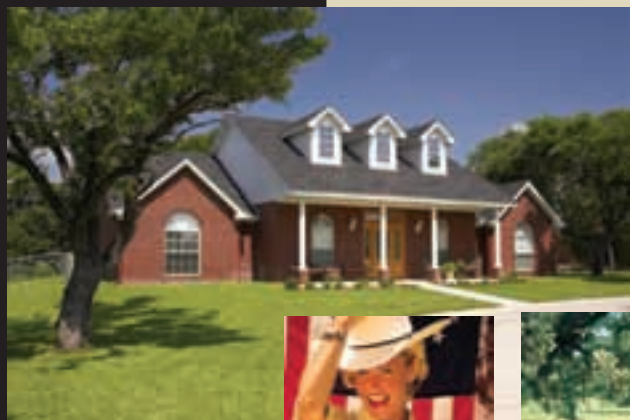
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of her ancestors, which spurred her not only to create the perfect herb garden for medicinal and culinary purposes, but also to grow natural dyes for her wool and cotton fabrics. "When I saw there was a Master Gardner class offered in February," she said, "I thought it would be a great way to learn about the community." She was right. Through



the course, she met a new network of friends and learned about plants and Texas soil; she did not stop there. She became Wildlife Habitat certified, a member of the Herb Society of America and a certified harvester of rainwater.

Truly, the Hamilton's backyard is a reflection of Arlene's passion, complimented by John's artistic talents. Outside the kitchen is a butterfly host garden, providing nectar for hummingbirds and butterflies. When the summer heat began baking the small garden, John created an iron fence and gate to open into the small patio and walkway, allowing cooler air to





circulate through. Arlene's herb garden, strategically placed in the center of the yard, is home to such culinary delights as parsley, sage, thyme, tansy, borage, basil, marjoram, mint, lemon grass and oregano. "It's one of the things I love about Texas weather," she said. "I can be out here year-round."

Ironically, John and Arlene still believe it is they who were so lucky to have discovered Waxahachie. In reality, Waxahachie is the winner as John and Arlene are fully committed to caring for their community. It is the true gardener philosophy — water and nurture it to watch it grow. "It is important for us," John added, "to be an asset to our community and to our neighbors. We can't just be in it; we have to be a part of it."

Beyond the flower beds, bird bath, potting shed and John's handcrafted wrought-iron floral designs, there is a sign that reads: *Like life, few gardens have only flowers.* For Waxahachie, John and Arlene are that rare bloom around which a garden is centered. **WAXAHACHIE**

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# Becoming One With the Fire

— By Sandra McIntosh

As a child, Ashley Davidson had a conscious fear of fire. “I was deathly afraid of it,” she explained. “At school bonfires, I’d stand as far back as I could, and I remember worrying all the time that our house might catch on fire and burn down.” Just over a year ago, a neighborhood performance not only cured her fear of fire, it intrigued her in such a manner that she now has a very close relationship with the flames. “Some people were spinning glow sticks,” she remembered, further explaining that glow sticks are the simplest form of poi spinning. “They also said they spun fire. Of course, I said, ‘No way!’”

That comment quickly turned into her first lesson in the art of poi, where she learned the six basic moves that most spinners master before choosing to add fire to their performances.

To fully understand the danger that is found in what Americans consider an “ultimate” art form, you first must understand what poi is and where it came from. Poi is a form of juggling that originated with the Maori people of New Zealand. During its early beginnings, the people used it not only for entertainment, but to increase flexibility, strength and coordination. In New Zealand, it soon grew into a performance art form, where more women took an active role in spinning than men. “That’s not the case in the United States,” Ashley added. “Until recently, very few women have

spun fire. In fact, I’m the youngest spinner I know. All those I’ve met, learned from and taught are in their mid-to-late 20s or older and they’re mostly all male.”

Those early moves that include names such as the weave, the butterfly, threading the needle, stalls, extensions and the buzz saw have since been incorporated into moves, which Ashley has perfected during her own practice times. She has successfully added distinctive moves to the basics as a representation of her own unique style, something she says all spinners have. “I’m still trying to decide what to name all my new moves,” she said, with an excited laugh. The one thing of which she is most proud is her uncanny ability and fearlessness when it comes to lying down with the fire. “I will begin the fire spinning routine standing up,” she explained, “and then I’ll lie down and allow





## ARTS NOW

the fire to spin above me. This particular move is known as the buzz saw."

Although Ashley makes the art of spinning fire seem effortless, she will be the first to say it takes hours of practice and requires a great respect for the flames. "When you spin, you are in the fire. All you can hear is the flames," she said. "You think you have it all figured out, until you combine the trick



with the fire. If you don't respect the fire you will end up burning yourself or someone else." Whether practicing or performing in front of a live audience, Ashley has learned the importance of wearing the proper attire. "From experience, I've learned that flat shoes are the best," she interjected, "and it's important to put my hair under a hat or tie it up in a bandana."

Ashley purchased the majority of

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## ARTS NOW

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Once the wicks are soaked in camp fuel, a liquid similar to kerosene, the excess is tapped off.

Ashley is able to choose from several different kinds of spinning tools which include a long stick, called a staff, with a wick on each end; batons with wicks on both ends; or her favorite, tempered steel chains with a wick meticulously placed at the end of each chain. "You can make them [the chains] stall; one can be up in the air while the other is close to the ground and the shapes you can create are endless," she said. "It's gracefully dancing and becoming one with the fire."

Just talking about fire poi, Ashley's eyes light up, her words come out hard and fast and the adrenaline begins to pump through her veins. "Fire spinning is not only an awesome workout for the entire body," she expressed, "it's addicting to both the mind and soul." To listen to Ashley share her craft, it is readily apparent that she plans to continue mastering the art of fire spinning for a long time to come. Plans for the summer are to spin fire on top of a Plexiglas table located in the center of a pool. "I'm learning how to eat and spit fire, too," she added. Ashley has hopes of one day incorporating all forms of fire into one act. No longer is she scared of the fire. Yes, she still treats it with the utmost respect, but she has learned to find the beauty within the flames. **NOW**





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# Sports NOW



— By Jaime Ruark

For over a year now, Waxahachie has been reaping the benefits of a dynamic sports and fitness duo. If you are working toward a fitness or rehabilitation goal, chances are you have seen the Millers at BaylorWorx, Snap Fitness or the Lord's Gym. If you use excuses to stay away from the gym, exercise extreme caution around this passionate couple, because for Sean and Utahna Miller, health and fitness is not just a job, but a way of life. "I was in the military about 20 years ago. It was the first time I'd been part of a structured exercise program. In 10 weeks of training, my whole physique changed," Sean said. His first experience with a fitness regimen ignited a spark inside him, but like so many of us, that spark faltered a few times as life, with its inevitable forks in the road, unfolded.

Sean and Utahna met in a calculus class in northern Utah, where they both studied business. Realizing they had much more in common than just a shared school curriculum, the two fell in love, married and eventually moved to Texas to settle in Waxahachie. "We

both pretty much stayed in shape until about 10 years ago, following the pregnancies of both our children," Sean admitted, candidly sharing the couple's gradual slide into complacency. "We both just got lazier. Life got busier and we didn't eat right. Then Utahna started taking aerobic classes." Watching his wife reap the positive benefits of wellness in body, mind and spirit pushed Sean to exercise again.

"Fitness and health is 40 percent genes and 60 percent lifestyle. To be honest, we both come from poor genetics,"

## "Fitness and health is 40 percent genes and 60 percent lifestyle."

Utahna shared. Sean never played high school sports because his father suffered a massive heart attack at age 50; and due to weight issues, Utahna's mother was the recipient of a heart transplant. This unhealthy predisposition only served, however, to motivate the couple. "In 2000-2001, Utahna became certified as a trainer at the YMCA," Sean said, with pride in his eyes. "I was still exercising pretty regularly, but that changed

when I took a calling to work with youth. I spent about four years getting back out of shape," he chuckled. "In 2001, I began a wholesale furniture business with a partner, but about a year ago, I finally realized I just wasn't doing what I enjoyed. So in December 2006, I took the Cooper certification course, and in March and April of this year I started at BaylorWorx." Crunching on a healthy snack of nuts, Utahna interjected, "The Cooper Aerobic Center in Dallas is the Harvard of personal training programs — it's one of the best."

Utahna has been with BaylorWorx for five years. "For me, it was like every door just opened. It was a true blessing to be able to work with people and a real joy to see them improve their lives. And working together, now, is fun. I leave the house, wave and say, 'See you at work in an hour!'"

The Millers work with a variety of people, including rehabilitation patients and injured athletes. "I worked with a



## Sports NOW



20-year-old, ex-high school football player. He was shocked at how out of shape he was, but he had trained for short bursts of speed. He had no cardiovascular and strength endurance,” Sean said. “Simple injuries due to stress can come from over-development of specific muscle groups.” Utahna added, “Everyone has a tendency to focus more on their strengths and not their weaknesses, when in fact, they should be working on the weaknesses, while maintaining the strengths.”

“We love it when people come to us before there is a need, before it becomes a necessity. We love to focus on preventative fitness rather than just recovery,” Sean enthused. With her passion beginning to bubble over, Utahna expressed, “Having children makes you realize you have an important choice to make: live healthy or die young. You can choose to live in a positive way.”

Motivation is both natural and real coming from the Millers. “Fitness is not all physical — a lot is mental. People respond to negative motivation briefly, if that. Our job is to find what

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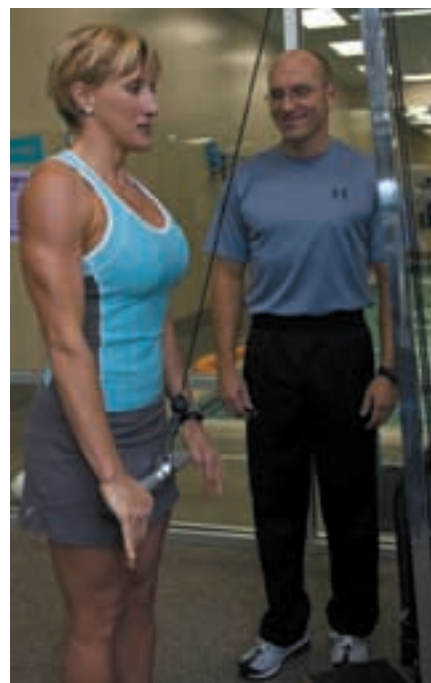


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## Sports NOW



will positively motivate each individual. For older people, that may mean helping them become self-sufficient again," Utahna explained.

Utahna has a nutritional certification, as well as the certifications needed to be a health and wellness coach, all from her studies at Cooper Aerobics Institute. She whole-heartedly believes nutrition is an essential key to being healthy. "One of my training sessions is a shopping trip. We look at what the person buys, we read labels. It's a real eye opener," she said. "So many manufacturers advertise something as healthy when it's actually not, because they want to sell that product. I show people a cost-effective way to eat right at home."

Fitness is truly the Millers' way of life. Their children, eighth-grade daughter, ShaunTelle, and fifth-grade son, Spencer, have the benefit of learning at an early age how being healthy impacts their whole life. For their children, for themselves and for their clients, working out, in Utahna's words, is "not just work — it's our passion, our life." **NOW**

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# Scrub Worthy and Wise

— By Sandra McIntosh

Scrubs to You opened for business at its original location on Sycamore Street in August 2004 after Tonia Smith, proprietor of the business outfitting those in the medical field, went through 18 months of intolerable pain and an inability to dress herself. "I was unable to button or zip my clothing," Tonia explained, referring to the disability caused from a severe case of carpal tunnel syndrome. "Before electing to undergo surgery, I spent a year in therapy. I was able to pull clothes on and off, so scrubs were all I was able to wear during that time." Almost immediately following her surgery, Tonia decided to give notice at her full-time job and go into business for herself. "I quit my job in June and opened the doors for business in August," she remembered. "I don't really know how it happened so quickly; it just happened."

When opening the business in Waxahachie, Tonia had one thing in mind. She wanted to give back to the medical community she feels gave so much to her. "They have to love their job of giving of themselves to people every day," she said, once again referring to the nurses and medical staff that

took such good care of her during her time of therapy, surgery and recuperation. "I wanted to be able to offer something that was affordable, yet functional, comfortable and stylish to those who work in the field of medicine."

Just recently, Scrubs to You relocated to 1408 W. Jefferson. New business hours are Monday – Friday 9:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. and Saturday 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. "The new location is not only convenient," she added, "it's within walking distance from the hospital, and it offers so much more display space than I had at the old location." Tonia is excited about what the new year and the new locale have to offer her customers, not only in convenience, but in selection, price and availability. The shop will continue to offer old favorites from Mad About Scrubs, Cherokee and Peaches and Klogs, while also offering full lines of the Grey's Anatomy scrubs by Barco and selections from Katherine Heigl's new line. "The selection for men has also grown since moving to Jefferson Street," Tonia said. "I've seen the demand grow, so I thought it best to increase stock in that area, too."



*Tonia Smith poses with her husband, Randy, and sons Harlan and Haden.*





## Business NOW

Selections in both tops and bottoms include solids in every color imaginable, as well as holiday prints and fabrics that many would consider "personality prints" in whimsical patterns and florals, as well as the ever-popular camouflage and hot chili pepper prints that help brighten up an overnight stay at the hospital or a visit to the dentist or doctor's office. Special orders are always

**"I wanted to be able to offer something that was affordable, yet functional, comfortable and stylish to those who work in the field of medicine."**

welcome and group discounts are also available. For more information on "scrub" parties and special orders, call Tonia at (972) 937-9733 or e-mail [scrubstoyou@sbcglobal.net](mailto:scrubstoyou@sbcglobal.net).

Other items that are always available include: stethoscopes, nursing clipboards, EMT pants, chef pants, lab coats and gloves in a bottle. "The gloves go on like lotion," Tonia explained further. "The germs are washed off, but the glove-like seal protects the skin, keeping it soft and undamaged."

Tonia realizes that she would not be able to do what she does if not for the support of Randy, her husband of 18 years, and their two sons, Harlan and Haden, ages 12 and 9 respectively, as well as Tonia's mother, Virginia Meazell and father-in-law Herman Smith. "I guess you could say Randy and I were high school sweethearts," she said. "With two boys, we've had lots of experience with the local hospital. It's nice to see items from Scrubs to You when we are waiting our turn in the emergency room." **NOW**

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## Education **NOW**

# Be Kind to the Earth

— By Sandra McIntosh

As a longtime certified Master Gardener and president of the Ellis County organization, Nancy Fenton, is passionate about conserving the world around her for future generations to come. Feeling this way about her surroundings made it easy for her to get involved in EarthKind, a program created by Texas A&M horticultural specialists who are seeking practical and effective techniques for gardeners that are environmentally responsible. "These techniques yield healthy, hearty plants worthy of EarthKind's seal of approval," Nancy said. "The program combines the best of organic and inorganic growing methods for various soils."

Nancy's involvement in the nationwide study includes a pilot program at Getzendaner Park, as well as educational speaking engagements at the Parks Department, area nurseries and civic organizations. The study at the park began with seven varieties of roses in test beds located in key locations. "This is the first year of a three-year testing process conducted

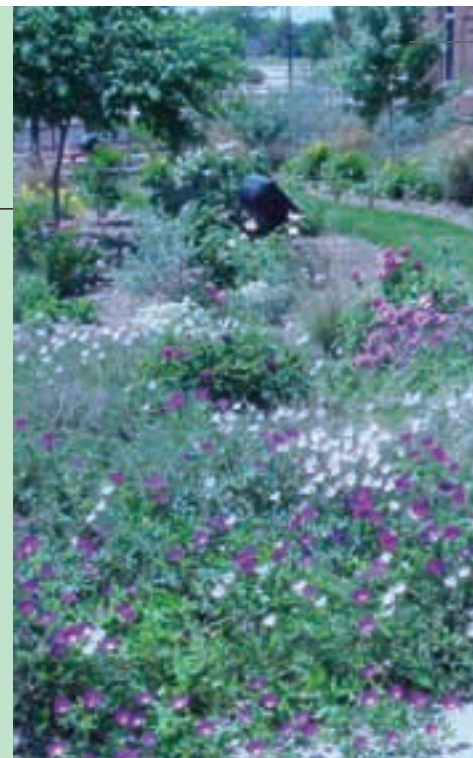
throughout the United States for drought, pest and disease resistance," Nancy said, "as well as vigorous growth and blooming patterns."

Nancy explained further that the overall goals of the pilot program are to reduce the amount of water, fertilizers and pesticides used in landscaping, and to reduce the volume of yard waste that makes its way into landfills across the country. "As I see it, the whole thrust of the program in my mind," Nancy stated, "is to make people aware of the excessive amount of water spent on landscaping. Studies show that 80 percent of water consumption is used to keep our yards and landscaping alive."

The general population is prone to take for granted that this large amount of water will be available for years to come. "When in reality it won't," Nancy said. "Without the lakes built by the Corps of Engineers, we'd be just another Dust Bowl." When teaching adults about water conservation, Nancy does not mince words. "With our ever-growing population, the manmade lakes are beginning to feel the stress of the excess water being used," she said. "We've got to make some significant changes in the way we do things if we expect to have enough water for the generations to come."

The classes that Nancy teaches are her way of educating the masses on the best and most efficient ways in which to conserve water and use less pesticides, while also having landscaping of which you can be proud. The basic class is a condensed, one-hour introduction to the EarthKind way of planting. "It's a simple, basic outline that people can apply in their own home gardens," Nancy said, explaining that the short version is reserved for the nursery and civic organization presentations due to the time restraints that are in place.

The basic class teaches adult students that the first thing they need is a plan for what they are doing. Once that has been decided, Nancy explains the proper way to prepare soil. "They



Nancy Fenton, Gay Doyle, Sandra Jones and Ruth Davis at Getzendaner Park, the site of a current EarthKind project.



## Education **NOW**



must use compost and expanded shell," she said. "The next step is to select the right plant for the right soil." This simply means that a plant that needs shade will not survive in full sun, and vice versa. For the soil in Texas, Nancy also puts a great deal of emphasis on using disease-resistant and drought-tolerant plants. She said those types of plants have the most success when it comes to growing in Texas soil and temperatures. "And last but not least," Nancy interjected, "is what to do after

**"The program [EarthKind] combines the best of organic and inorganic growing methods for various soils."**

planting. People must mulch with three to four inches of organic mulch. It keeps the soil moist longer between each watering cycle and moderates the extremes in Texas temperatures."

The more intense seminar lasts three hours, and is much more detail-oriented than the basic presentation. It includes soil analysis with an emphasis on pH balance and soil type, as well as specific compost and shell needs within particular soils. "This class is taught at a deeper, more detailed level," she said. "We

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discuss plant analysis and selections and I go over detailed planting instructions.” Nancy also includes an overview of varying organic mulches and the best way in which to use them.



*Nancy Fenton tends the roses in the test beds at Getzender Park.*

“The intense class,” Nancy added, “takes gardeners to the next level.”

The principles that Nancy is teaching in key locations across town are the same principles being followed with the roses that have been planted at the park. The roses used for the Ellis County EarthKind project were chosen from a list that was nation-specific. “They are being tested from Maine to California,” Nancy said. “The varieties planted in Waxahachie are just a small portion of the varieties being used across the United States.”

EarthKind techniques have been proven to reduce the use of water by 50 to 70 percent, while also reducing pesticide application by 100 percent through integrated pest control. The steps taught in class are the same steps being demonstrated at Getzender Park. “The goal is to conserve water and reduce our landfills,” Nancy emphasized, “so we can enjoy the best of both worlds.” By following the simple guidelines that Nancy outlines in her classes, even beginning gardeners can start to grow the most delicate of plants with better results than they have ever experienced before. **NOW**

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# When is a Rose Not a Rose?

— By Nancy Fenton

One of the best long-blooming plants for our area is a “rose” that is not really a rose! The common name is Rose of Sharon or Althea and it blooms continuously from spring through fall. This six to 15 foot, small shrub can be trimmed up into an attractive small tree with a festive topknot of blooms or left to its upright, but sprawling, natural shape. One of its best attributes is that it can take the extremes of our finicky

weather in stride and do quite well with little water. Of course, a wide choice of colors does not hurt either!

The single lavender and single white are the most common, but the doubles are more than twice as pretty. As a relative of the hibiscus family, it has large circular, ruffled blooms in striking colors, but with none of the temperamental need for “hothouse treatment.” Rose of Sharon goes into the ground and happily stays there to thrive through our hot summers and cold winters!

With a long European heritage starting in the 16th century, Rose of Sharon was brought to American soil by the colonists as a favorite plant, and has come into the national interest once more. The originals probably were “pass a long” plants given to family as they set out across the world on their quest for new horizons.

## Great Outdoors NOW

Hybridization in the 1960s and '70s expanded the size and the color choices. Some of the newer varieties such as Lavender Chiffon, Blue Satin and Olana, may be available in the nurseries. The standard double white and pink as well as the single purple will be available at the coming Ellis County Master Gardener Spring Expo scheduled for Saturday, March 29 in the Waxahachie Civic Center.

All of these hardy plants tolerate our alkaline soils and prefer compost rather than heavy doses of fertilizer. They bloom on new wood so should be pruned lightly in late winter, while still leafless, to stimulate that topknot of bright blooms. Find a place with full to partial sun and give these beautiful, hardy “roses” a try! **NOW**

*Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener in Ellis County.*

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## Around Town NOW



A ribbon cutting, top left, was held at Surgery Center of Waxahachie. The Episcopal Church Band, bottom left, provided the entertainment during the church's Mardi Gras celebration held on Fat Tuesday. Carol Cull and Jill Parr, top right, tended to sales at the Anderson Art Gallery located at the Fine Arts Museum. Ribbon cuttings were held at right, second and third row, for Waxahachie Trade Days and Our House in Milford. The new owners of Sears in Waxahachie, bottom right, hosted the monthly meeting of Rise and Shine Networking.



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## Around Town NOW



Deborah Wakeland, Tina Moore, Debbie Southland and Linda Needham (Cotton Queens), top left, dressed up for the Mardi Gras Parade. A ribbon cutting, bottom left, was held at MGM Grande. Tina Bohlman, president of the Ellis County Art Association posed with Shawn Davis, social events chairman, top right, who decorated the refreshment table for the Anderson Art Gallery event. Steve and Wendy Middleton, second row center, enjoyed the Mardi Gras celebration at the Episcopal Church. Texas Chamber of Commerce Executives elected Debra Wakeland, president and CEO of the Waxahachie Chamber and CVB, second row right, to the 2008 Board of Directors. A sweet little girl dressed as a princess, bottom right, also had fun at the Episcopal Church Mardi Gras celebration.

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## IN THE KITCHEN WITH SARAH FARMER

**S**arah Farmer is truly an artist. Her singing, painting and cooking are all conducted with passion, excellence and enthusiasm. Inspiration and memories of sitting on the countertop “squishing” the corn bread dressing in her mom’s big silver bowl has brought Sarah into her adult life with a love for cooking. “I like to experiment and always try new things,” she said.

With a busy life as a young wife and student, Sarah finds the time to prepare that special meal every week. “Baking is therapy for me,” Sarah added.

Sarah remembers childhood sleepovers when she and her friends would bake a cake together. Her excellence is credited in part to her passion for presentation. “Presentation is everything,” she said. “It must taste good and look good.” **NOW**

To view more of your neighbors’ recipes, visit our archives at [www.nowmagazines.com](http://www.nowmagazines.com).

### CRAB DIP

11 oz. cream cheese, softened  
1 small onion, finely chopped  
5 Tbsp. mayonnaise  
2 6-oz. cans crabmeat,  
drained and flaked  
1/8 tsp. garlic powder  
cayenne pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 350 F. In a medium bowl, combine the cream cheese, onion, mayonnaise, crabmeat and garlic powder. Spread mixture into a 1-quart baking dish. Bake for 20 minutes until a light golden crust forms on top. Serve hot.

### TIRAMISU

16 oz. heavy whipping cream  
1/2 cup granulated sugar

2 tsp. Adams vanilla extract  
2 8-oz. pkgs. cream cheese (softened)  
3 cups fresh brewed espresso or strong coffee  
1/2 cup powdered sugar  
64 Nilla wafers  
1/4 cup espresso ground coffee beans  
(for garnish)

Beat heavy whipping cream until slightly thick. Add granulated sugar and vanilla. Continue whipping until sugar is dissolved and forms soft to medium peaks. Refrigerate. Beat cream cheese in large bowl; gradually add one cup of fresh brewed coffee. Add powdered sugar until mixed well. Gently stir in whipping cream. Dip each wafer for no more than 2 seconds into remaining brewed coffee, and layer in the bottom of 9 x 13-inch baking dish until the dish is covered with a single layer of dipped wafers. Spread about 1/3 of the cream mixture on top of the layer of wafers. Repeat dipping the wafers and

placing them into the dish on top of the cream mix. Next, cover with remaining cream mix. Place espresso ground coffee beans in sifter and dust the top of the dessert. Chill for a few hours or overnight for best results. Serve cold.

### PENNE PASTA IN A GARLIC CREAM SAUCE

1 14.5-box penne pasta  
1 Tbsp. olive oil  
1/2 red onion (rainbow sliced)  
1 - 2 clove(s) garlic (minced or pushed through  
garlic press)  
15 cherry tomatoes (cut in half)  
1 16-oz. jar Classico Garlic Alfredo Sauce  
1 Tbsp. Italian seasoning  
salt and pepper to taste

Boil water for penne pasta following the cooking instructions on the box. In a Dutch oven, heat oil

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## Who's Cooking NOW

on medium heat. Add onion; cook for 5 minutes. Add garlic and tomatoes. Next add Garlic Alfredo Sauce, Italian seasoning and salt and pepper to taste. Cover; let simmer for about 10 minutes. Add sauce to cooked and drained pasta; stir. This can also be prepared with canned crabmeat (cook the same time as onions) or grilled chicken. Yields: approximately 8 servings.

### GUACAMOLE

3 medium-sized, semi-soft avocados  
1 Roma tomato, diced  
1/4 red onion, diced  
1 jalapeño, diced  
1 lime (for juice)  
salt to taste

Cut avocados in half and remove the pit. Make slices lengthwise in the meat of the avocados and spoon the meat of the avocado into a bowl, scraping the inside wall of the skin. Add tomato, onion and jalapeño and mash with a spoon or fork until only a few large chunks remain. Mix in lime juice. Add salt if desired.

### STUFFED POBLANOS

1 8-oz. package cream cheese, softened  
1 package Hidden Valley Ranch dressing mix  
1 cup Mexican flavor shredded cheese  
1 8-oz. can chicken  
1 stalk green onion, diced  
4 poblano peppers  
(cut open and remove seeds)

In a medium bowl, mix cream cheese, Ranch mix and shredded cheese. Add chicken and green onion. Stuff poblano peppers with mixture. Place peppers on cookie sheet or baking dish; broil on high. Let cook until tops of peppers form a black crust, approximately 15 min.

### HOT SAUCE (SALSA)

2 14.5-oz. cans whole tomatoes  
1 or 2 fresh jalapeños, chopped

Pour juice from the tomatoes into a bowl. Chop up all the tomatoes either by hand or with a chopper or food processor. Pour into the bowl. Add one jalapeño and taste. If not hot enough, add more until it is to your liking. Remember, it usually gets spicier after a few hours in the fridge. It is simple, but I think it is the best!

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## Finance **NOW**

# Will Presidential Election Year Affect Investors?

— By Jeff Trojacek

As you are no doubt aware, 2008 is a presidential election year. As a citizen, you may well have a great deal of interest in the election. But how about as an investor? How does an election year affect the investment climate? And — again from the perspective of an investor — does it matter who wins?

To begin with, let us examine how the stock market reacted in the past to the selection of a president. The Dow Jones industrial average rose in nine of the past 11 presidential election years, with an average gain of slightly more than nine percent. So it is clear that, for the most part, the market has done pretty well when America goes to the polls.

Does the election or re-election of a president just make us more optimistic, leading us to invest more heavily and thereby drive up the markets? Probably not. In reality, many factors — such as corporate profits, geopolitical concerns, interest rates and inflation — drive stock prices. This is true in all years, whether an election is held or not. Consequently, stock returns from past presidential election years, while impressive, cannot serve as a reliable predictor of what the market might do in 2008.

Now, let us turn to the next question: As an investor, how will the outcome of the election affect you? There is not really a simple answer. In the past, the stock market has performed well — and performed poorly — under both Democrats and Republicans. Of course, candidates of both parties will have different priorities and try to enact different economic agendas, and these priorities may have some impact — although one that is notoriously hard to predict — on different market sectors. In short, no one can accurately forecast the effect of this November's election on the financial markets, and that will not change even after the

nominees are known.

Instead of pondering the “what-ifs” involved in a presidential election, you are much better off following some tried-and-true investment strategies. Here are a few to consider:

- **Keep on investing.**

World events may be good or bad, and the stock market may be up or down — but no matter what happens, the most successful investors stay in the market. Look for quality investments and hold them until either your needs change, or the investments themselves undergo some type of transformation.

- **Know your risk tolerance.**

If you are losing sleep at night over your investments, you are probably taking on more risk than the amount with which you are comfortable. At the same time, if your investments are putting you to sleep, they may be too conservative, which could mean they are not providing the growth necessary to help you meet your goals. Strive for a balance that fits your investment personality.

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## Finance NOW

### • Think long term.

If you are constantly adjusting your investment mix in response to short-term events, you will probably rack up big commissions and you almost certainly will not make the necessary progress toward your important objectives, such as a comfortable retirement. So, train yourself to ignore daily or weekly or monthly price fluctuations and keep your eyes on the far horizon. If you have chosen the right investments, they should be designed to help you work toward your goals in exchange for your patience.

This November, do not forget to vote. But before and after Election Day, cast your ballot for solid investment technique. **NOW**

*Jeff Trojacek is an Edward Jones representative based in Waxahachie.*

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Yes ☐ No ☐
2. Do you feel tired and groggy on awakening?  
Yes ☐ No ☐
3. Are you often sleepy during waking hours and/or can you fall asleep quickly?  
Yes ☐ No ☐
4. Are you overweight and/or do you have a large neck?  
Yes ☐ No ☐
5. Have you been observed to choke, gasp, or hold your breath during sleep?  
Yes ☐ No ☐

If you answer "yes" to any of the above questions, you should discuss your symptoms with your physician or call us for more information.



- Sleep Apnea
- Narcolepsy
- Movement Disorders
- Insomnia
- Other Sleeping Disorders

Margaret E. Mike MD, Medical Director  
Board Certified in Sleep Medicine

Dr. Blayne Laws MD, Co-Medical Director

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## Health NOW

# Early Detection is Best Prevention

— By Sandra McIntosh

A person's best prevention for colorectal cancer is early detection and immediate treatment. Individuals who undergo regular screening for colon cancer greatly reduce the risk of having a colorectal cancer. These available screenings include fecal occult blood tests, sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy and polyp removal.

Fecal occult blood testing should be done every year with a flexible sigmoidoscopy every five years. Double-contrast barium enemas are recommended every five to 10 years. A colonoscopy still remains the most sensitive test for detecting colon polyps and tumors, and is recommended every 10 years. Once polyps have been found, they should be removed and from that point on, the patient should begin to undergo colonoscopies on a more frequent basis. Other things a person can do to prevent, as well as lower their risk, include the following:

- Quit smoking. Extensive research has proven that smoking is clearly

linked with a higher risk of colon cancer.

- Take an aspirin on a daily basis.

Because of the potential side effects associated with aspirin, this daily dose is not recommended for everyone.

Consulting your physician would be the first plan of action.

- Take a safe dose (1 mg.) of folic acid on a daily basis.
- Take part in physical activity on a daily basis.
- Make fruits and vegetables a part of your daily food intake.

The United States Agency for Health Care Policy and Research also recommends that people older than 50 who have an average risk for colorectal cancers undergo screening for colon cancer. They also recommend that individuals aged 40 and older who have a family history of colorectal cancer undergo screening.



Symptoms of cancer of the colon and rectum can be exhibited in several different ways. People sometimes overlook some of the symptoms of colon cancer, attributing them to other causes.

Many attribute all rectal bleeding to hemorrhoids, but it can be a symptom of cancer. Other overlooked symptoms include: an iron deficiency that causes fatigue and pale skin; abdominal pain and distension; unexplained, persistent nausea or vomiting; unexplained weight loss; change in bowel movements; and rectal pain. Recent studies show that the average length of symptoms, from beginning to end, is 14 weeks, but there is no association between the length of symptoms and the size of tumor.

Another way you can fight colorectal

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## Health NOW

cancer is by getting actively involved in walking for a cure like Dr. Gordy Klatt did in the mid-1980s. As a colorectal surgeon, Dr. Klatt had a strong desire to grow the income of his local American Cancer Society office. He put his plan into action by holding the first American Cancer Relay For Life event in Tacoma, Washington. The event has grown into an annual gathering of cancer survivors, as well as family and friends, who have lit the fire for an entire nation. To find out more about the Relay For Life event in your immediate area, please visit their Web site at [www.relayforlife.org](http://www.relayforlife.org). **WVW**

### Sources:

1. Sanofi Aventis.  
[colorectalcanerinfo.com](http://colorectalcanerinfo.com).
2. eMedicineHealth. [www.emedicine-health.com/colon\\_cancer](http://www.emedicine-health.com/colon_cancer).

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Renfro Healthcare Center in Waxahachie has introduced an innovative new treatment for patients who suffer from dysphagia, a painful and often debilitating swallowing disorder.

Known as VitalStim® Therapy, the treatment uses non-invasive electrical stimulation to help re-educate the throat muscles needed for swallowing. Cleared for use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, VitalStim® Therapy is applied externally and delivers small electrical currents to the neck to stimulate inactive or atrophied swallowing muscles. With repeated therapy, throat muscles are retrained until the patient reaches an optimum level of swallow function.

"VitalStim Therapy is truly a breakthrough in treating dysphagia", said Sara L. Brianas, MS, CCC-SLP, Speech-Language Pathologist at Renfro Healthcare Center. "Since introducing VitalStim at Renfro, we have seen some exceptional outcomes that probably would not have been possible with traditional approaches to therapy. Patients have shown dramatic improvements in their ability to swallow and have returned to more normal diets - and a better quality of life - much sooner than we've seen in the past. Even patients on feeding tubes have responded well to the therapy".

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# March 2008

## Community Calendar

### First Wednesday

Red Moon Café, located at 3701 N. I-45 in Ennis, will host an evening of karaoke from 8:30 p.m. – midnight.

### Third Wednesday

Ellis County Christian Women's Connection will host its monthly luncheon from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Waxahachie Country Club, 1920 W. Hwy. 287 at I-35 South. Cost is \$13 inclusive and vouchers for nursery child care are available to mothers attending. To make reservations, please either call Kay at (972) 937-2807 or Mary at (972) 937-9984 or e-mail windchime@charter.net, no later than the Sunday prior to the luncheon.

### Every Friday and Saturday

The Red Moon Café will host live bands. Be sure to check their Web site at [www.theredmooncafe.com](http://www.theredmooncafe.com) for all upcoming events.

### Second and Fourth Tuesday

Waxahachie Business Interchange Networking is held from 7:30 - 8:30 a.m. Network with other professionals and promote your business. Bring \$1 entry fee and plenty of business cards. Coffee and pastries will be furnished. Call (972) 937-2390 for location.

### March 8 and 9

Waxahachie Trade Days open Saturday 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. and Sunday 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Located

at the Ellis County Expo Center next door to the Cowboy Church of Ellis County. For more information, contact Dean Worley at (903) 286-0183 or [www.waxtradedays@yahoo.com](mailto:www.waxtradedays@yahoo.com)

### March 10

Executive board meeting for the Waxahachie Chamber will be held at noon.

### March 12

A meeting for the board of directors will be held at 11:45 a.m. at the Chamber offices located at 102 YMCA Dr. For more information, call (972) 937-2390.

### March 29

Meals on Wheels 3rd annual BBQ Benefit. Location TBA. The fundraising event will include dinner, entertainment and an auction with all proceeds going to benefit Meals on Wheels. For more information, please call (972) 351-9943.

Master Gardeners of Ellis County will host the annual Ellis County Lawn and Garden Expo at the Waxahachie Civic Center located at 1950 N. I-35 E from 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. This comprehensive educational extravaganza will include over 100 lawn and garden-related exhibitor booths, keynote speakers, gardening workshops for children from 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. and a variety of adult workshops. Gaye Hammond will introduce children to the joys of growing roses at 1:00 p.m. At 2:00 p.m.,

Neil Sperry will speak on growing green, followed by the art of landscape planting that will flower all summer by Dotty Woodson at 3:30 p.m. The Master Gardener plant sale will feature butterfly-attracting plants, natives, heirloom tomatoes and hard to find plants. For sponsorship and exhibitor information, please send an e-mail to [expo.ecmga@yahoo.com](mailto:expo.ecmga@yahoo.com) or call James at (972) 814-0699.

For more community events, visit our online calendar at [www.nowmagazines.com](http://www.nowmagazines.com)



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