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# MansfieldNOW

M A G A Z I N E

March 2010

**A Theme  
of Hope**

**Good Music  
Done  
Honestly**

**At Home With  
Jim and  
Melody Cockerell**





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Serving Mansfield and  
the Surrounding Area  
MAGAZINE

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## On The Cover

Musician Jason Nix poses with his long-time companion: his guitar.

Photo by Shana Woods.

## Editor's Note

*Hello All!*

The luck of the Irish to you this month as we celebrate St. Patrick's Day! The saint was said to use the three-leafed shamrock to explain the Holy Trinity, so wear your green proudly.

There is, however, much more to this month than just pinching each other for not wearing green. It is also Women's History Month, and, as illustrated by educator Sharon Austin and by the ladies of the Cockerell family, women are a powerful presence in our lives. It is also Music in our Schools Month, and Jason Nix is helping to plant musical seeds in our community that are sure to take root.

Thankfully, to quote Hal Borland, "No winter lasts forever; no spring skips its turn." Get out there and enjoy some sunshine! And all you sleepy heads — remember to turn your clocks forward one hour March 14 for Daylight Saving Time.

Your friend,  
*Jaime Ruark*  
MansfieldNOW Editor



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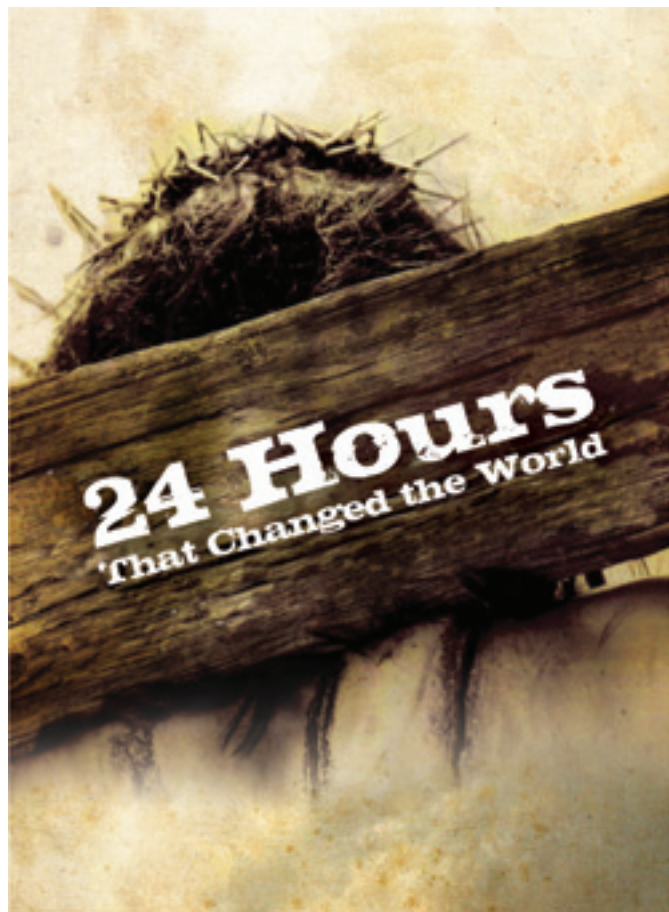
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# A Theme of Hope

— By Jaime Ruark

*In everyone's life there are those moments where what is truly important comes shining through and everything else falls to the wayside. While everyone experiences life in their own unique ways, there are common threads that bind us. There are also certain universal things in life that, in one way or another, touch us all and leave us forever changed.*

For Shea Allison, that life-changing moment came when Shirley McClenny, the mother of her best friend, Robyn Rager, was diagnosed with cancer. "She was just such an amazing person, an incredible woman," Shea expressed. "She never faltered in her fight. She told us, 'I'll fight as long as I can.' And she did. She fought to the end." When Shirley lost her fight with the disease, Shea had an epiphany. Influenced by the woman she credits with having incredible strength, grace and humor, Shea decided to take up Shirley's fight and carry on where she could not.

Shea decided to join in the American Cancer Society (ACS) Relay For Life. "It's an amazing organization, and I just wanted to be involved in some way," she said. "So many people have personal reasons to fight this disease. It has touched so many lives, and there's just no reason why we can't help find a cure." Shea, who now volunteers as the marketing chair for Mansfield's 2010 Relay, soon found herself surrounded by some amazing women, including Erika Scrimshire, a community





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manager for ACS. Erika has worked with Shea and many other volunteers to help organize this year's event, scheduled to take place next month, April 23-24, at Rose Park. "Relay For Life is the largest cancer fundraiser in the world," Erika noted, explaining that the relay is a global activity to celebrate the lives of those who have battled cancer. "It's really such a great community event. We make it a celebration of life, and it's a perfect way to fight back against a disease that has claimed so many."



Cancer survivor Linda Statum (center) celebrates life with her daughters, Jennifer Statum (left) and Renee Chappell (right).

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Relay For Life began in 1985, when a Washington surgeon named Dr. Gordy Klatt ran and walked around a track for 24 hours to raise money for ACS. According to the Relay For Life Web site, the relay now boasts "more than 3.5 million people in 5,000 communities in the United States, along with additional communities in 19 other countries." At a Relay For Life event, teams of people camp out at local high schools, parks and fairgrounds and take turns walking or running around a track or path. Because cancer never sleeps, relays are overnight events and a team member must be on the track at all times. "We invite everyone to participate. The only requirement is a \$10 registration fee. After that, teams raise money by setting goals and generating sponsors. There are sponsorship levels, from Bronze up to Diamond, so really, everyone can be involved," Erika detailed.

The theme for the 2010 Mansfield Relay is "Support More Birthdays." Because over 1 million people nationwide will be diagnosed with cancer this year, this theme was chosen as a message of hope. "That's really what this is all about.

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That is one thing Shirley always had — hope. She would set herself goals, and I think hope was what helped her to reach many of them,” Shea said with emotion.

Starting at dusk and ending at sunset, each part of the relay event is symbolic. The light and darkness of the day parallel a patient’s emotions and the physical effects of treatment. The relay’s symbolic ceremonies remind participants of the ACS’s message: “Celebrate, Remember and Fight Back.” That message of hope is carried out throughout the night. “We kick everything off with a Survivors Lap. That is usually a pretty emotional part of the event. It is where survivors, who are the true guests of honor, celebrate their



Lana McCleskey and her daughter, Shea Allison, hug as they prepare to help cancer survivors fight back at Mansfield’s Relay For Life.

victories over cancer and we recognize their caregivers who have given their time and support. That lap starts everything off,” Erika said. “Then, after the sun has set, we move on to the Luminaria Ceremony, where we light luminaries to honor and remember the loved ones we have lost.” The last ceremony is the Fight Back Ceremony, where participants renew their commitment to save lives, continue the fight and support more birthdays.

While this will be Shea’s first relay, she has heard stories from others who have participated in past events. Recalling her first relay, Erika shared, “I was overwhelmed by the camaraderie and the



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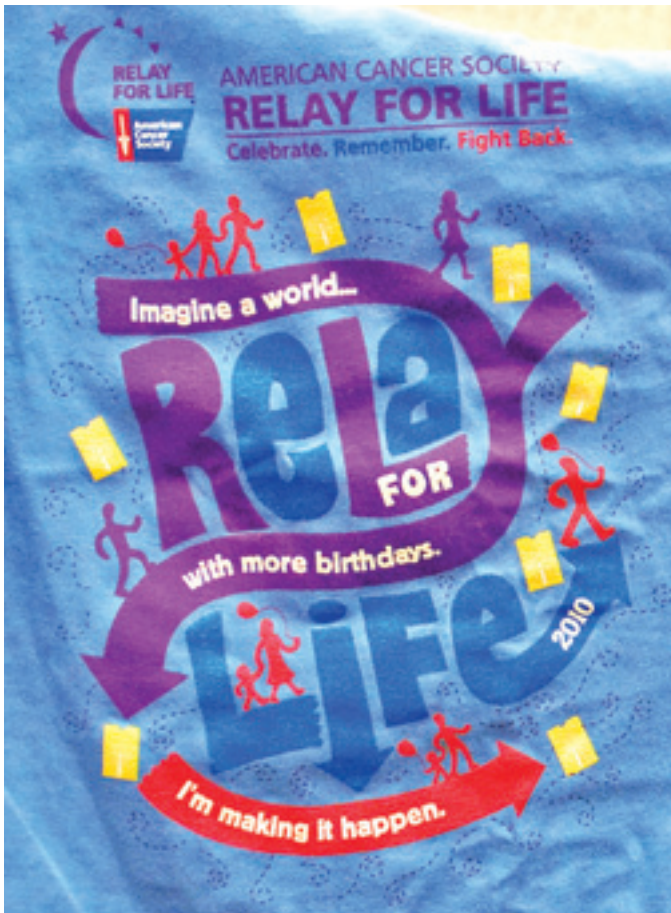
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sense of community. I think it's really cathartic for the families, too. There is just this sense of a greater purpose and a common reason to come together." Shea has been working for months to get the word out. "I've been contacting local magazines, radio, TV, news stations, trying to get local eateries involved," she said. "Of course, I've gotten my whole family in on it with me. I'm just so looking forward to being a part of this year's event."

Both Shea and Erika are humble about their behind-the-scenes work with ACS and Mansfield's Relay, quick to point out other volunteers whose time and efforts are just as important. Cancer has been a common bond in many local lives, providing many with life-changing stories such as Shea's. Kim Pratt, sponsorship chair and nine-year cancer survivor, said, "I wanted to get more involved this year with the committee and put more effort in helping organize this meaningful event. The first time I attended a relay was two years ago. I was overwhelmed with several emotions: joy to see so many survivors, sadness as we remembered those we have lost, and encouragement for those currently under treatment."

Jennifer Statum, online chair and daughter of two survivors, recalls her first relay, also at Rose Park, as an "inspirational and moving" event. "Since my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer and my father with prostate cancer, our family has done all we can to support the cause for a cure for cancer," Jennifer shared. Linda Statum, sponsorship chair and three-time cancer survivor, added, "I had been diagnosed with stage 3 breast cancer in 2000 and wanted to honor others who may not have been as fortunate as I was to survive." Renee Chappell, relay chairman, became involved because she knows "firsthand the impact that cancer can have on families, and if we can fund research, one day we will have a cure for this terrible disease."

Celebrate, remember and join in the fight against cancer. The relay is sure to provide yet another one of those life-changing moments for those who attend. **NOW**

To join these amazing women and their families and be a part of Mansfield's Relay For Life event, visit their Web site at [www.relayforlife.org/mansfieldtx](http://www.relayforlife.org/mansfieldtx).



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# *The* Family Legacy

— By Alex Allred

*The irony of Jim Cockerell teaching at Legacy High School and his son, Taylor, attending the same school is not lost on those who know the Cockerell family. They are, if nothing else, devoted to the meaning of legacy. Jim and his wife, Melody, were busy parents rearing three active daughters. Sarah was the family musician, and Molly and Brooke were rising stars on the soccer field with their father acting as coach when Taylor came into their lives.*



Front row: Max Haws and Melody Cockerell  
Back row: Taylor and Jim Cockerell



At Home With  
**Jim and  
Melody  
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"I thought we were done," Jim said of his family. But when Jim and daughter Brooke made a trip to Abilene to visit Jim's father, they were in for a surprise. "It was always a ritual to go see Dad and visit Mom's grave while we were there." On this particular trip, however, "Dad was giving away all the family heirlooms. He gave me a watch and said, 'I want you to give this to your son.'"

When Jim explained that he and Melody were done having children, Jim's father simply smiled and said, "That's fine," still insisting that Jim give the watch to his son. Exactly one week later, Jim's father passed away and exactly one year later — to the day — Taylor was born. "Dad definitely knew something," Jim said.

In fact, the legacy of the Cockerell men had already been put into play when Jim found his true passion with motorcycles. While Jim rode in college, he stepped away from the bikes while his young family grew, but he was eventually drawn back. "I can't explain it," Jim smiled. Beyond the tremendous sense of adventure, the open air, the challenge of man vs. machine and the opportunity for this history buff to take long road trips, stopping along the way to read historical markers, there was something else. Truly, the love of motorcycles can be traced back to the 1930s, prior to WWII, when Jim's father was a highway motorcycle patrolman. "This was when the motorcycles had a stick and a clutch," Jim laughed.

Not surprisingly Taylor, a rising star on the soccer field, is also a bike and history enthusiast. As he approached his senior year this past summer, he and his father




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took a road trip to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, to embrace all the things they dearly love – history, patriotism, the open road and their own legacy.

On the other side of the family tree, Melody Cockerell invited her parents to come live with her own family in their retirement years. “It was just something I always wanted,” she said of her parents. And the timing was perfect. With the girls grown and gone, the five-bedroom, three-bath, ranch-style home perfectly suited Jim, Melody, Taylor and Melody’s parents, Max and Mary Haws. Although Mary died in 2008, the home is very much alive with her legacy.

“We’re all about family,” Melody said as she explained the significance of each piece of furniture. Earth tone colors of sage, cream and rust are used to color the walls and entryways



**Although Mary died in 2008,  
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while the hand-scraped hardwood floors and custom-built fireplace strategically placed in the center of the home all blend perfectly with Mary Haws' antique furniture. The formal living area and dining room are decorated with Mary's furniture, including the impressively large mirror, which once belonged to Melody's grandmother.


Two rooms previously used by the Cockerell girls now act as a bedroom and "sanctuary" for Max. While the bedroom is modestly furnished with the very things he and his wife shared together during their marriage, the sitting room is

a tribute to his wife, family and country. As a Machinist Mate 3rd Class in the U.S. Navy during WWII, history books, awards and memorabilia line bookshelves and walls, but all are secondary to his devotion to Mary, a once Hollywood-gorgeous woman with a quiet and sweet soul.


"He misses her every day," Melody said. Still, Max is not one to sit around. "He knows more people than we do," Jim said. Since moving in with his daughter, Max has taken Mansfield by storm. "Every Sunday, he takes five families out for dinner," Melody said. "If you walk

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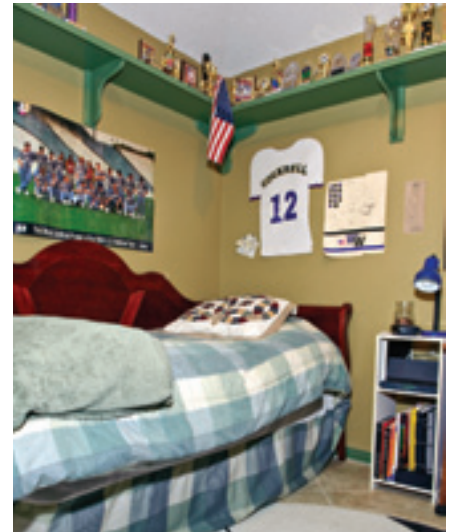


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into Tom Thumb or Taco Bueno or Regions Bank and ask who Max is," Jim laughed, "everyone knows!"

"He is always giving back," Melody said proudly. In fact, it is an act of giving that has extended to the Cockerell home. "He has been very generous," Melody said of her remodeled kitchen.

With knotted alder wood cabinets, two stainless steel ovens and a gorgeous free standing island with built-in cabinetry and microwave, and a one-of-a-kind marble granite top, perhaps "generous" is an understatement. Of course, good old-fashioned ingenuity and resourcefulness also played a role in the redesign of their kitchen and family room. As a teacher at Ben Barber Career Tech Academy, Melody had many friends who could help with designing a pot filler as part of the backsplash to her stove and the remarkable island.

A son-in-law helped cut and fit wood strips in the vaulted ceiling of the family room, while Jim installed the cement hearth for the fireplace. Overstuffed furniture, cast-iron bar stools with a breakfast nook table and drapery are the perfect compliments to those modern kitchen appliances. But even here, amidst the contemporary setting, legacy rules



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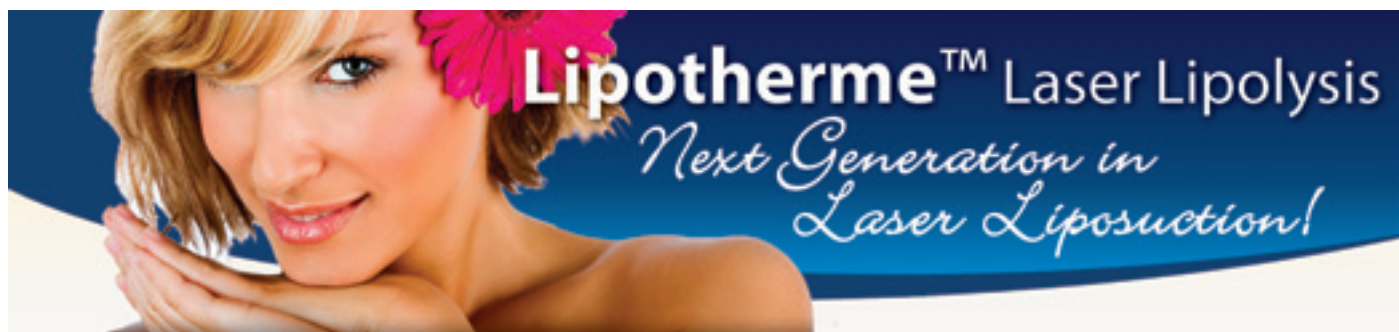
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supreme. Among the family portraits and family heirlooms is a DVD created by Taylor in honor of Veteran's Day. As an assignment for broadcast journalism at Legacy High School, Taylor directed and hosted a short film starring his grandfather, Max Haws. As the film opens, Max pulls up to the curb at the high school and is greeted by Taylor. Inside the school, Max talks about being on the USS *Miami* when it was hit by a torpedo. He talks about his devotion for his country, the fear he felt while fighting



in a war he was presumably too young to truly understand and the love of his family. As he speaks, teenagers flock around him to hear more about his life. The dialogue is not scripted, but comes from the heart between grandfather and grandson. Never are Melody's words more clear: "It is all about family."

In 1992, when Jim and Melody had their home custom built, "there were only three other houses here," Jim joked. Slowly, they watched the neighborhood grow around them, made new friends and established family traditions. But never could they have imagined the legacy they would build, making the title of Taylor's film all the more appropriate: *The Legacy They Left Behind*. **XXXX**

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Baby Cole Malouf snuggles on the couch with his two best buds: his doggy and his daddy Craig.



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**Physicians from left to right:**  
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# Good Music, Done Honestly

— By Jaime Ruark

**“We just sang honest truths from our hearts and we were proud of that.”**

Jason Nix comes from a musical family, so perhaps his fingers were always meant to coax beautiful sounds from, as he put it, “just about any instrument with strings.” Having spent the last three years putting his talents to glorious use at Mansfield’s First United Methodist Church, Jason has seen his musical style blend and change. While the contemporary worship hymns of today may seem a far cry from the punk rock songs he favored during his teen years, and the sanctuary quite different from the downtown Houston clubs he once jammed in, the core of who Jason is has always come through his music. “I just want to play good music, done honestly,” he said.

As a pastor’s child, church and music were an ever-present part of Jason and his siblings’ lives. “My parents were actually part of a traveling Southern Gospel group. I was almost born on a tour bus; my two older siblings were. I’m one of five kids, and we are all musically inclined to something. It’s just been the most comfortable medium for me to connect with,” he shared.

Jason’s church worship leader began teaching him guitar when he was 10 years old, but a passion for music was not ignited in him until a bit later. “When I was 15, I met some other friends that were into music, and we formed our first band,” he remembered. “That’s when I just fell in love with it and started devoting a lot of time and effort.” With a rueful laugh, Jason will admit to the name of his first band, the Britton Electronics, a “punk rock band of sorts” that caused him to realize he had a long way to go creatively, stylistically and most definitely technically.

Returning to a more formal study of music, Jason



began guitar lessons again for a few years. Later, as the world of music really began to open up, he started branching out, testing his skills with other instruments, such as the mandolin, bass guitar, violin, drums and piano. Then, in December 2007, Jason followed his younger brother, Josh, to Mansfield to start a band. "Even though it's broken up now, I liked it here so much I decided to stay," he recalled. While the band, made up of Johnny and David Brower, Andrew Suggs and Jason and Josh Nix, may no longer be in existence, memories of those fun times still linger, along with an EP (extended play) they released full of songs written by the Nix brothers. "We called ourselves The Roustabouts. People would ask us if we were a Christian band, and I would always tell them, 'We are Christians in a band.' That fact was, of course, going to be evident," Jason said. "We just sang honest truths from our hearts, and we were proud of that."

Jason now sings and strums that honest truth in Saturday night worship services, leading a band made up of acoustic, bass and electric guitars, drums and piano. "Contemporary worship is a way to express a part of ourselves we

## "We are Christians in a band."

don't usually tap into. I think there's a side of people that wants to sing and cheer and get excited, like how you feel when you're at a basketball game. There's a part of us that we don't get to open up too often, but when we do, it makes us more open to what God might be trying to say," Jason said. "For a while my goal was to make sure everything was perfect and make the music sound new, make it rock. Now I'm finding out that it's more about having people open their hearts and focus on God."

AIM First, First United Methodist's outreach program designed to develop creative and artistic talents, has become another way for Jason to share his love of music. "Everyone seems to think you have to attend church to be a part of AIM, but really it's just an extension of

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# Rheumatology

## Sonia Bajaj, M.D.



Sonia Bajaj, M.D., a board-certified rheumatologist, practices at her office located on the Huguley Memorial Medical Center campus. Having a rheumatologist located at Huguley provides more convenient and better service to Huguley patients. Dr. Bajaj provides diagnosis and treatment of disorders that affect joints, tendons, ligaments, connective tissue and bones. Common rheumatologic conditions include arthritis, lupus, vasculitis, osteoporosis and gout.

Before opening her Huguley practice, Dr. Bajaj practiced rheumatology in Tucson, Arizona for four years. She is a member of the American College of Rheumatology. Dr. Bajaj completed her rheumatology fellowship and her internal medicine residency at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She fulfilled her internship requirements at Hahnemann University, Monmouth Medical Center in New Jersey.

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the church, like the mission center,” he explained. “We have a drama department and an arts department and music, of course. I mainly teach guitar lessons, but AIM has a little bit of everything. We have classes for every age and pretty much every talent level, and we have private lessons, as well. A lot of kids are just trying things out, so if we can plant a musical seed — it might not grow into



anything significant until years later, like it did with me, but it's there.”

Jason plans to release his own EP in June 2010, and has been working on a church worship CD as well, but his involvement with AIM is perhaps an even bigger source of pride. “There is an end goal. That's something I try to drive home to the students. We're helping them cultivate these gifts so they can be used. It's pretty neat to see things come full circle. My worship leader planted seeds in me, taught me the difference between performance and worship, and now I get to start planting those same seeds,” he said. “Every kid has something creative they are good at. It's those creative outlets that make us individual and unique.” **NOW**

# Pain Management

## Christopher Chun, M.D.

Christopher Chun, M.D., has an interventional pain management practice at Huguley Memorial Medical Center. He offers a multi-disciplinary approach to pain management, attacking it from all angles. He uses conservative treatment options to manage pain such as medication, physical therapy, and neuropsychology; but he also offers invasive non-surgical options to treat pain such as injections, radiofrequency ablation and spinal cord stimulation.

Dr. Chun graduated cum laude from Pacific Union College in Angwin, California with a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry. He earned his Doctorate of Medicine at Loma Linda University School of Medicine, in Loma Linda, California, where he also completed his internship, residency in anesthesiology, and fellowship in pain management. Dr. Chun is a member of the American Society of Anesthesiologists and the International Anesthesia Research Association.

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Source: Congressional Record. (2003, May, 21). *Mercury in Medicine - Taking Unnecessary Risks.* [www.document] URL: [http://frweb.gateaccess.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getpage.cgi?position=all&page=E1030&dbname=2003\\_record](http://frweb.gateaccess.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getpage.cgi?position=all&page=E1030&dbname=2003_record)

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# The Poteet Posse

— By Adam Kobut

Taekwon-Do has done a lot for Chris and Annette Poteet. Aaron, their youngest, was the first to show interest in the sport over five years ago; that resulted in the rest of the family following suit. Now, the Poteets — Chris, Annette, Aaron, Mindy, who is a recent TCU graduate and current UNT graduate student, and Derek, who is a Marine currently serving in Afghanistan — are all black belts. Annette, specifically, has seen a significant health change since starting to practice the sport. “I’ve lost 100 pounds since I’ve started doing this,” she said. “The health benefits are just amazing. I never thought that as I had adult children, I’d be able to do the splits, kick over my head and compete with teenagers. That’s where we’re at with this now, so it’s definitely made us stronger and healthier.”

The sport of Taekwon-Do also brings the family closer together. The Poteets refer to themselves as the Poteet Posse. “As the kids were growing up, having three children in the art, we

had something we could talk about, something that everyone was working toward together,” Chris said. “Yes, I do think it helped us become closer.” In

Gymnastics in Mansfield, and dream of one day owning and operating their own martial arts gym. For now, though, Chris and Annette both have full-time jobs,

**“I think it has a little bit of something for everybody.”**



2008, the Poteets were announced the “Family of the Year” by the International Taekwon-Do Federation. Families from around the world applied.

Chris and Annette, with the help of Aaron, have also started teaching martial arts to both children and adults at Spirals

he in heavy equipment sales and she in criminal research.

The Poteets compete as a family a couple times a year, often merging family vacations with competition and trainings. “We’ll go, and we’ll train or compete, and then we’ll take a skiing trip,” Annette



said. "If it's in the summer we might go tubing."

Something about the draw of martial arts as a sport encourages people to start and stick with it. "I think it has a little bit of something for everybody," she said. "I think a lot of parents bring their kids in because of the discipline, because we



do expect kids to show respect and to be disciplined in class. We also encourage and support academic success. For adults, there's something about being able to have goals, because the art is so goal-oriented. There's always a goal; there's new kicks; there's a new pattern and self-defense to learn. There are competitions to train for. So there's always something that's obtainable, but it's broken into such small pieces, that you're not a black belt the next day, you're a black belt three to four to five years later, after you've trained and put a lot of time in. But you feel so accomplished at each stage. Getting that yellow belt is exciting, going to a competition, and whether you get a first, second or third you've reached a goal."

Martial arts also gives people the chance to physically get into shape. "It's nice to train and see results, even if the road there might be difficult," Chris said. "I think with us, at the level that we're at now, it's also about seeing how far



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**Clayton H. Culp, D.P.M.**



Clayton H. Culp, DPM, has a foot and ankle surgery practice in Burleson. A podiatrist, Dr. Culp has extensive training in all aspects of foot and ankle care, including diagnosis and treatment of bunions, hammer toe, flat foot, foot and ankle pain, neuroma, arthritis, ingrown toenails, infections, and foot and ankle fractures.

Dr. Culp graduated from Texas Christian University with a Bachelor of Science degree in biology. He earned his Doctor of Podiatric Medicine degree from Temple University School of Podiatric Medicine in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He completed his three-year residency in foot and ankle surgery at Kaiser North Bay Consortium in Vallejo, California, where he served as chief resident his final year. A member of the American Podiatric Medical Association and the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons, Dr. Culp has presented his research at professional conferences.

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Even Aaron is amazed by the changes he has seen in his life after beginning to



**"There's always a goal;  
there's new kicks;  
there's a new pattern and  
self-defense to learn."**

practice Taekwon-Do. He was always a good student academically, he said, but the discipline he has learned through martial arts makes it that much easier to change anything that needs changing in his school life. "[Martial arts] teaches you self-control and perseverance," he said. "It also raises your confidence quite a bit." Aaron is in eighth grade, and is a peer mediator, something he would never have done without the confidence given to him by martial arts.

When the day comes that the Poteets are able to start their own gym, they would like it to be in Mansfield. Chris and Annette both grew up locally in Midlothian and Venus and currently reside in Midlothian. "Mansfield is a growing town," Chris said. "There are a lot of people in Mansfield. It's a great city. The people here are friendly, and we really enjoy it." **NOW**



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## Making Over Mansfield

Dr. Thornton and his staff do it all, the full gamut of cosmetic surgery.

— By Jaime Ruark

Comfortable decor, warm lighting, the peaceful sounds of a calming waterfall and soothing music all combine to give Mansfield Cosmetic Surgery Center the feel of a tranquil, inviting European spa. Located in a newly built, Mediterranean-style, office-based surgical facility, Dr. Michael Thornton offers patients a wide array of cosmetic surgery procedures. As a fellowship-trained and board-certified cosmetic surgeon with more than 12 years of combined surgical training and operative experience, Dr. Thornton was voted one of 2008's "Top Docs" in the *Fort Worth, Texas* magazine. Why trust yourself in the hands of anyone else?

As a native Texan, Dr. Thornton knew from a young age that he wanted to be a surgeon. After earning his bachelor's degree from Baylor University, Dr. Thornton attended the University of

North Texas Health Science Center in Fort Worth to obtain his medical degree. "Then I moved to Michigan for my general surgery residency and spent five years in the Detroit area," he shared. "I spent one more year in Baltimore obtaining fellowship training in trauma and surgical critical care before moving back to Dallas, where I worked as a trauma surgeon for four years." While Dr. Thornton enjoyed his burgeoning career, he felt the pull of his creative talent tugging him toward a gratifying career in cosmetic surgery.

In 2007, Dr. Thornton furthered his training and expertise through an accredited, one-year advanced fellowship in total body cosmetic surgery. Ready to apply his skilled hands and creative nature to what he recognizes to be a progressive, growing area, he anxiously awaited



The foyer and waiting room of Mansfield Cosmetic Surgery Center create a soothing atmosphere; Medical Assistant Tina Gross and Dr. Michael Thornton.

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completion of his current state-of-the-art facility and opened his cosmetic surgery practice in the Mansfield area in 2008. "I was excited to begin seeing patients from all the surrounding areas, because we really are located in a perfect, central spot, just outside the bubble of the big city," he noted.

Skilled in facial plastic surgery, rhinoplasty, cosmetic breast surgery, liposuction, body contouring surgery and skin rejuvenation, Dr. Thornton and his staff also offer exclusive, cutting-edge services, such as Lipotherme™, a minimally invasive laser-assisted

### Dr. Thornton offers a wide range of procedures to help rejuvenate and renew his patients from the outside in.

liposuction procedure. Requiring only local anesthesia, this is a new Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved device used to remove stubborn fat from targeted body zones. Done in-office, the procedure is fast, safe and effective, and as the least invasive of all lipolysis procedures, it requires minimal downtime.

Dr. Thornton offers a wide range of procedures to help rejuvenate and renew his patients from the outside in. Post-bariatric reconstruction following massive weight loss is available, as well as an endless array of non-surgical aesthetic procedures, such as: Botox®, Dysport™, Restylane®, microdermabrasion, IPL/photofacials, chemical peels, facials and waxing. "I have an associate, Mark Bishara, who specializes in male and female hair restoration and hair transplant surgery, so he brings something extra to the practice," Dr. Thornton said. "We do it all, the full gamut of cosmetic surgery."

Being able to offer so many procedures sets his practice apart, as does his caring and friendly staff. "Everything about us, from our office to how we deal with our patients in a caring and personal manner, is designed to ease your mind. That's what we're here for," he shared. "We're like a little family, and just like your family members, we want to take care of you — inside and out." **NOW**



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# Obstetrics & Gynecology

## Jason W. Neef, M.D.




Jason W. Neef, M.D., has an obstetrics and gynecology practice at Huguley Memorial Medical Center. A board-eligible obstetrician and gynecologist, he cares for women at all stages of life, including pregnancies and well-woman check-ups. He offers several treatment options for both medical and surgical problems including multiple minimally invasive procedures.

Dr. Neef completed his obstetrics and gynecology residency at University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas, where he received the 2006 Academic Excellence award. He earned his medical degree from the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston Medical School. He holds a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in finance from Texas Christian University in Fort Worth.

Dr. Neef holds memberships in the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the Texas Medical Association. He accepts most insurance plans, including Medicare and Medicaid.

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# Guiding Forces

— By Jaime Ruark



Ask Sharon Austin how she became an educator and she will admit that while there were some definite guiding forces in her life pointing her in that direction, she remained unsure of her path for quite a



while. “My grandmother was a teacher, my mom was a teacher, my aunt was a teacher,” she listed. “Every time we had career day at school, I said, ‘Sure, I’ll be a teacher.’ But for some reason, when I was

little I just never really thought that was what I was going to end up doing.”

A different force in Sharon’s life finally awakened that desire. “God just put a love of teaching in my heart. Every bit of my career has been directed by God,” she expressed. Finally feeling the call to be an educator, Sharon earned her undergraduate degree from Western Illinois University and like the women in her family before her, she began her teaching career. “Now after all these years, it’s what makes my day. I love coming to work and being with the kids, seeing them change and grow and letting them know that learning is a lifelong process.”

After teaching for a few years, Sharon decided to earn some alternative certifications. “I went on to get my Gifted and Talented certification and my ESL [English as a Second Language] and Early Childhood certifications,” she said. When Sharon moved to Mansfield, she felt herself once again guided, this time to Mary Orr Intermediate School. “God has always guided me along to the next path; I can look back and see His direction. This time, He guided me to work with fifth-and sixth-graders. I was scared to death about going from my little first-and second-graders to the big kids,” she laughed, “but I loved them just as much.”

Sharon credits the principal who was there at the time, Donna Shepherd, with helping her make the transition smoothly. “She had this way of helping people to be the best they can be,” Sharon expressed. Donna became yet another guiding force in Sharon’s life, opening up a door she had not previously considered. “She told me, ‘These kids love you. Have you ever thought about being a counselor?’” Sharon recalled. “I’d been teaching for nine years by this point, and it had never, ever crossed my mind before.”

Returning once again to her own lifelong process of learning, Sharon earned her master’s degree in counseling from Tarleton State University. She has made Mansfield her home for more than 12 years now and is currently in her sixth year as counselor at Elizabeth Smith Elementary. “You know,” she said, “along with all my classroom education, I’ve



## Education **NOW**

always learned so much from the parents and the students that are around me. There have been so many opportunities for growth and opportunities to learn from them and my fellow teachers.”

Sharon’s students know they can rely on her ready smile and personal greetings when they walk in the door each morning and the guarantee that she will always make time for them. “I make sure I know every kid’s name — all 557 of them. Not every student fits into the same mold,” she advised. “I worked with a student who needed some more individual, one-on-one care. He was dealing with some issues outside the classroom, and I just gave him positive reinforcement. He’s now married and still remembers me and gives me hugs when he sees me.”

While counseling brings with it a specific set of guidelines and responsibilities, Sharon has found that her role outside the classroom is not that much different as it was inside. “It’s all about talking with the kids. I’m like the mom away from mom, pushing them to do their best and find the positive, but I’m also going to fuss at them when they don’t do the right thing,” she said. “Also, while I might not get to have as close a relationship with a whole classroom of kids, I’m now creating closer relationships with their families,” she added. Working with parents enables Sharon to work through and around a student’s problems or disabilities so that they can achieve their goals.

Just as Sharon had important guiding forces in her life, she has in turn become a guiding force in the lives of her students. One of her favorite stories to tell is of a new student, a little boy with a scared look on his face as he sat in the office awaiting his first day at school. “I started talking with him and discovered that he was ‘the bad kid’ in his past schools, always getting into trouble. I told him that the cool thing about today is that he was starting fresh and nobody knew about his past. He could start completely over and decide who he wanted to be,” Sharon remembered. “That kid was the best kid. He worked really hard, got good grades and his teachers loved him. He turned himself completely around. Sometimes that’s all it takes, just giving a child that choice.” **NOW**

# Endocrinology

## Imran Patel, M.D.



Imran Patel, M.D., an endocrinologist, opened the Institute of Diabetes and Endocrine Disorders at Huguley. Dr. Patel has extensive training in glandular conditions including diabetes, thyroid disorders, metabolic disorders, male reproductive health, and abnormal production of hormones.

Board certified in internal medicine and board eligible in endocrinology, Dr. Patel has ten years’ experience as an endocrinologist, most recently with John Peter Smith Hospital in Fort Worth. Along with patient care, Dr. Patel’s career has included research and teaching. Dr. Patel worked on the landmark diabetes prevention study with world-renowned endocrinologist Dr. Abbas Kitabchi at the University of Tennessee.

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# Who's Cooking **NOW**

## In The Kitchen With Linda Records

— By Faith Browning

Over the years, Linda Records has learned that you can have large family gatherings wherever you might live. "We never lived near extended family, and I wanted our children to experience the love and security of a large family," Linda said, "so I started cooking for the multitude. In God's church there were always people that I wanted my children to know, and Sunday after church was a perfect time to bring everyone together."

When Linda moved to Mansfield, her family found the Word of Life Family Church, where Linda volunteered as hospitality director. "We started having home-life groups, where everyone would have a place to go for lunch after church on Sunday," she explained. "My family and I have been so very blessed over the years of extending our family beyond measure." **NOW**



### BARBECUE MEATLOAF

**5 lbs. ground beef**  
**1 bottle of your favorite barbecue sauce**  
**2 pkgs. onion soup**  
**1 lg. onion, chopped**  
**1 bell pepper, chopped**  
**1 Tbsp. salt and black pepper**  
**3 eggs, slightly beaten**  
**1/2 cup evaporated milk**  
**1-2 cloves crushed garlic**

1. Mix all ingredients together saving 1/4 of the bottle of barbecue sauce for later.
2. Press meatloaf into a large cake pan.
3. Bake at 350 F for 45 minutes; drain off excess grease.
4. Add 1/3 cup water to the leftover jar of barbecue sauce; shake and pour over the meatloaf. At this point, cover and put in the refrigerator. When ready to bake, place it uncovered in oven for 20-30 minutes until it is nice and hot.

### HAM AND BEANS

**2 small pkgs. dried beans (pinto, red, white, any kind you like that are dried)**  
**1 ham bone or ham hock (just enough to flavor the beans)**  
**1 Tbsp. salt and pepper (add more to your taste)**  
**1 lg. onion, chopped**  
**1 jalapeño, finely chopped (I take out the seeds.)**  
**1 Tbsp. cumin**  
**1 Tbsp. garlic powder**  
**1 Tbsp. paprika**

1. Soak dry beans overnight in 6-8 cups of water; with at least 4 inches of water covering the top of the beans.
2. The next morning, drain the beans and add fresh water (make sure the beans are covered with at least 5 inches of water) and all the remaining ingredients.
3. Bring to a boil; cover and reduce the heat to very low. Allow three hours to cook.

### SQUASH CASSEROLE

**2 pkgs. frozen yellow squash (slightly thawed)**  
**1 can cream corn**  
**1 can chicken broth**  
**1 can cream of mushroom soup**  
**2 cups Pepperidge Farm Stuffing Mix**

1. Mix all ingredients together the day before; cover, place in fridge.
2. When ready to bake, set this out to bring to room temperature.
3. Place in hot (400 F) oven and bake uncovered for 20-30 minutes or until top is lightly browned.

### SPINACH SOUFFLÉ

**1 large bag frozen spinach**  
**1 med. onion, finely chopped**  
**1 stick butter**  
**3 large eggs**  
**1 tsp. garlic**  
**1 tsp. ground thyme**  
**1 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese**

1. Microwave squash for 3-4 minutes; squeeze out excess water.
2. Sauté onion in butter.
3. Mix all ingredients together; place in pan that can go from fridge to hot oven. (I use a metal cake pan.)
4. When ready to bake, place it in a hot (400 F) oven for 30 minutes.

### SOUR CREAM AND CHIVES MASHED POTATOES

**5 lbs. potatoes, peeled (I like to use red.)**  
**2-3 cloves garlic, chopped**  
**3-4 Tbsp. chives, chopped**  
**1 stick butter**  
**1 8-oz. carton sour cream**  
**Salt and pepper, to taste**  
**1/2 cup evaporated milk**

1. Boil potatoes in salted water until fork tender.
2. Sauté garlic and chives in melted butter

2-3 minutes over low heat.

3. Drain potatoes; with an electric mixer whip all the ingredients together.
4. Pour potatoes into an ovenproof pan; cover and place in the refrigerator. When ready to bake, remove from refrigerator and allow potatoes to return to room temperature. Place it in a hot oven uncovered for 20-30 minutes, or until hot.

### CAROLINE'S POUND CAKE

**3 cups flour**  
**1/2 tsp. baking soda**  
**1/2 tsp. baking powder**  
**3/4 tsp. salt**  
**1 cup margarine**  
**2 cups sugar**  
**4 lg. eggs**  
**1 tsp. vanilla**  
**1 cup buttermilk**  
**Powdered sugar (optional)**

1. Preheat oven to 350 F.
2. Coat a tube pan with margarine; dust with flour, shaking off the excess.
3. Mix together flour, baking soda, baking powder and salt; set aside.
4. In a mixing bowl, with an electric mixer, beat together the margarine, sugar, eggs and vanilla. Beat until light and fluffy.
5. On low speed, add flour mixture alternately with buttermilk.
6. Bake 60-70 minutes at 350 F.
7. Let set for 15 minutes and then turn out on a cake dish. Sprinkle with powdered sugar if desired.

*I made this for my elderly mother-in-law in an attempt to get her to eat. I found an old recipe of hers and decided to follow the recipe exactly. For example, I used margarine and not real butter, as I normally would have. She took one bite and started to cry, and said, "Oh, it's just as I remember it back in the '40s when everyone was on a budget, and you used whatever you had." That is another reason I love to cook, it makes great memories that are much needed in difficult times.*





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# A Foundation for Hope

— By Betty Tryon, R.N.

When the body turns on itself, it can be as devastating as outside forces. Autoimmune diseases are diseases where the body actually targets normal cells for destruction — a haunting prospect for a system created to protect and defend the body from harmful invasion. Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is an example of things gone awry. However, today with the vast amount of resources available for the research, treatment and supportive care of patients with MS, the picture is far from bleak. The course of MS varies greatly from person to person with progression of the disease and relapse of symptoms. The range of disease progression can go from benign symptoms with little or no disability to a severe progressive form of the disease.

Some of the symptoms experienced with MS are weakness in one or more limbs, double or blurring of vision, tingling, dizziness or loss of balance and tremors. In multiple sclerosis, the brain and spinal cord are damaged by the body's own immune system. In the simplest terms, a protective sheath called myelin covers your nerves, and in a process called demyelination, the body attacks and damages the sheath. The purpose of the myelin is to facilitate the transmission of electrical signals along the nerve cells. The disruption of this communication pathway is what results in symptoms of MS, such as loss of muscle control with impaired mobility, speech, vision and balance.

Facing possible immobility or disability can be overwhelming. Information can provide a foundation of hope that life can be as normal as possible. For those coping with this disease, perhaps the most important resource available to

them is a health care provider specializing in the treatment of multiple sclerosis. When developing a treatment plan, educating family and close friends to this disease will be beneficial in allowing the patient to live a more productive and active lifestyle. Joining support groups and even using online chat rooms devoted to this issue can be greatly beneficial to a patient's well-being. Many of these resources serve a great need for family members who must learn how to cope with the changing environment of MS. Communicating with others who deal with this can be a source of comfort, strength and support. In talking to others, many will find there is great reason to hope and, even to rejoice, at the many breakthroughs in this area.

With the assistance of fundraisers, research continues to rapidly advance for more viable therapies, new drug treatments and possibly a cure. Being aware of the manifestations of this illness can help prepare you to be as active as possible every day. **NOW**

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





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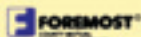
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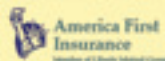
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# Plant for the Future

**Water the  
plant each day  
for seven days  
to give it a little  
extra chance.**

— By Nancy Fenton

March is the right time to start thinking about planting your landscape. Most plants come either in pots or bare rooted. Pot-grown plants often need a few days in the shade outside to “harden off” if they have been grown in a greenhouse. Water as needed and give them a chance to adjust to the changing temperatures before you shock them again by planting them.

Wet to wet is the usual thought in planting, so soak the potted plant right before you plant it. Dig a hole not much larger than the pot — about two inches larger than the diameter of the pot usually works. Separate the roots gently, cutting only if the ball is tightly packed. Set the plant in the hole so the top of the root ball is even with the surface of the soil; then push soil around and over the top of the root ball. Water well and stand back!

Woody plants, which are planted in unimproved soil like our yards, need a much wider hole (three to five times the width of

the pot.) Break up the root ball as before and spread the roots out. Plant high and backfill with the soil that came out of the hole. Water well and make a large basin like ridge around the plant to funnel water to the roots.

Bare-rooted plants need a large hole to enable you to spread out their roots. Remember to soak the bare roots. Make a cone in the center of the hole and spread out the roots evenly. Once again, plant high and push soil gently over the crown of the plant. If you are unsure which end is up, do not worry. The plant knows, and will send shoots up and roots down! Water the plant each day for seven days to give it a little extra chance. Fertilizer is appropriate after the first signs of new growth. **NOW**

*Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener.*





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## Happening **NOW** —

### All Month

Thinking about getting a pet? Check out the Mansfield Animal Control. New hours. Weekdays: 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. No longer open on Saturdays.

### Monday-Friday

Young At Heart meeting (for residents ages 55 plus): 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Mansfield Activities Center. (817) 453-5420, ext. 2227.

### Every Monday

Basic line dancing for seniors: 10:30-11:30 a.m., Mansfield Activities Center.

Bingo: 11:30 a.m.-noon, Mansfield Activities Center.

Story Time for Tots, for infants to 3-year-olds: 10:30-11:00 a.m., Mansfield Public Library.

### First and Third Monday

Planning and Zoning Development Commission meeting: 6:30 p.m., Mansfield City Hall.

### Second and Fourth Mondays

City Council meeting: 7:00 p.m., Mansfield City Hall, 1200 Broad St.

### Every Tuesday

Small business counseling provided by SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives): 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Mansfield Chamber offices, 114 N. Main St. By appointment only. (817) 473-0507.

Rotary Club meeting: noon, Spring Creek Bar-B-Q, 1724 Hwy. 287 N.

### First and Third Tuesday

Training Academy for Dental Assistants' free informational session: 5:30 p.m. (972) 842-2999.

### Third Tuesday

Senior Citizens Advisory Council meeting: 10:00 a.m., Mansfield Activities Center. Participant meetings are held immediately following from 11:15-11:30 a.m.

Mansfield Economic Development Commission meeting: 6:00 p.m., Mansfield City Hall.

Park Facilities Development Corp. meeting: 7:00 p.m., Mansfield City Hall, 1200 E. Broad St.



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Dr. Choudhary has extensive training in gastroenterological and biliary endoscopic procedures. He is one of only 277 Fellows of the American Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy. The American College of Gastroenterology and the American Medical Association, among other organizations, have honored Dr. Choudhary with many awards and recognitions.

Dr. Choudhary completed his residency in internal medicine at Bellevue Hospital Center and New York University Medical Center in Manhattan. He did a three-year fellowship in gastroenterology and hepatology at Yale University Gastroenterology Program in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and he received advanced training in therapeutic gastrointestinal endoscopy at Tulane University Medical Center in New Orleans.

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## Happening **NOW** —

### Every Wednesday

Children's Story Time for ages 3-6 years:  
10:30-11:00 a.m., Mansfield Public Library.

### First Wednesday

Zoning Board of Adjustment meeting:  
6:00 p.m., Mansfield City Hall.

### First Thursday

ABWA Empowering Women Express  
Network monthly meeting: 5:45 p.m.,  
Midlothian Conference Center, 1  
Community Circle, Midlothian. RSVP to  
Daphne Brewer at (972) 723-6551.

### Every Friday

Mansfield Kiwanis Club: 6:45 a.m.,  
Methodist Mansfield Medical Center, 2700  
E. Broad St. (817) 473-9886.

### March 2

Cowboy Celtics from Alberta Canada at  
Farr Best Theater, 109 N. Main Street.  
Doors open at 7:00 p.m. Show starts at  
7:30 p.m. Tickets: \$15.00. David Wilkie and  
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the ocean. For more information or tickets,  
please call Rhonda at (817) 453-1700 or  
e-mail Rhonda@Farrbest.com.

### March 5

Mansfield Area Chamber of Commerce  
New Member Orientation Breakfast:  
7:30-9:00 a.m., Mansfield Area Chamber  
of Commerce, 114 N. Main. For more  
information, contact Tami at  
frontdesk@mansfieldchamber.org.

### March 7

Texas Muscle Car Club Challenge at  
Texas Raceway, 3830 S. New Hope Rd.  
Kennedale. Gates open at 8:00 a.m. T/T  
start at 9:00 a.m. \$25 to race; \$10 to watch.  
Children 12 and under are free. For more  
information, visit [www.texasraceway.com](http://www.texasraceway.com).

### March 14

Daylight Savings Time.

### March 15-19

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Spring Break Kids Zone: 8:00 a.m.-6:00



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# Happening **NOW**

p.m., Mansfield Activities Center. Games, crafts, guest speakers. Registration includes Animal Extravaganza and Mad Science demonstration. Daily sack lunch needed. \$110/child, ages 6-12.

## March 16

As the Page Turns adult book club: 6:30 p.m., Mansfield Public Library. March's book: *Wednesday Letters* by Jason F. Wright.

## March 17

Saint Patrick's Day.

Lunch N Learn: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Mansfield Area Chamber of Commerce, 114 N. Main. For more information, contact Tami at [frontdesk@mansfieldchamber.org](mailto:frontdesk@mansfieldchamber.org).

## March 20 and 25

Methodist Weight Management Institute weight-loss workshop at Methodist Mansfield. To register: [www.methodisthealthsystem.org/weightmgmt](http://www.methodisthealthsystem.org/weightmgmt) or (214) 947-0004.

## March 25-27

DeSoto Art League presents James Spurlock Art Workshops: 9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. at Ellis County Art Museum, 501 W. Main. Cost: \$195/members; \$200/non-members; \$100 deposit due Mar. 5. Limit 10/class. (972) 217-1546 or [sandy@sandyreese.com](mailto:sandy@sandyreese.com).

## March 27

Ellis County Master Gardeners 10th Annual Lawn and Garden Expo: 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center, IH-35E and 287 Bypass. Speakers, workshops, plant sales, door prizes and more. Cost: \$3. Children 12 and under free. (972) 825-5175. [www.ecmga.com](http://www.ecmga.com).

## April 17-18

Auditions for the Mansfield Community Theatre's production of *My Fair Lady*. Saturday: 10:00 a.m.; Sunday: 2:00 p.m., First United Methodist Church. Follow the signs to the choir room.

## April 23, 24

Relay for Life, Rose Park, 217 N. Walnut Creek Dr. For more information, visit [RelayForLife.org/mansfieldtx](http://RelayForLife.org/mansfieldtx).

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

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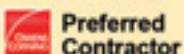
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