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General Manager, Rick Hensley

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Managing Editor, Becky Walker

Burleson Editor, Melissa Rawlins

Editorial Coordinator, Sandra Strong

Writers, Zuri Franco . Sharon Robinson

Sydni Thomas . Carolyn Wills

Editors/Proofreaders, Teresa Maddison

Pat Anthony . Angel Morris

Pamela Parisi . Beverly Shay

GRAPHICS AND DESIGN

Creative Director, Chris McCalla

Artists, Julie Carpenter . Martha Macias

Allee Brand . Cherie Chapman

Marshall Hinsley . Arlene Honza

Brande Morgan

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography Director, Jill Odle

Photographers, Opaque Visuals

Shana Woods

ADVERTISING

Sales Manager, Carolyn Mixon

Advertising Representatives,

Melissa McCoy . Teresa Banks

Rick Ausmus . Renée Chase

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Tim and Laurie Kutch
volunteer their time in their
community and across the globe

Photo by Shana Woods.

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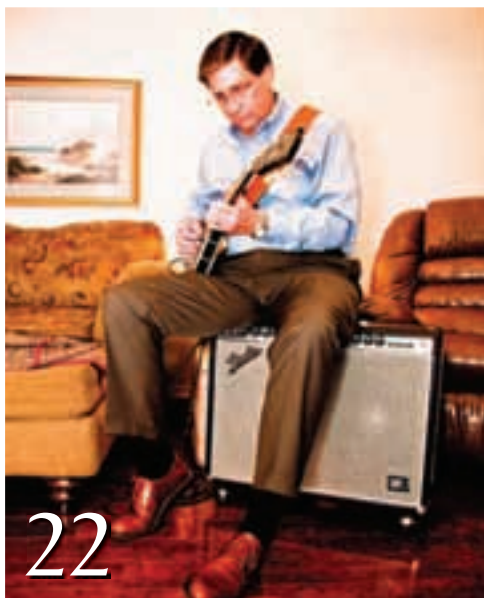
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Subscriptions are available at the rate of \$35 per year or \$3.50 per issue. Subscriptions should be sent to: NOW Magazines, P.O. Box 1071, Waxahachie, TX 75168. For advertising rates or editorial correspondence, call (817) 477-0990 or visit www.nowmagazines.com.

Editor's Note

Howdy!

How many of us have "Cinderella dreams"? Well, for now, we can live vicariously through those who are honored after years of hard work. If there is a queen of the ball this month, it is Brenda Gammon, who was recently named the newest member of the Athena Society of Burleson.

When Brenda attends the 8th Annual Athena Society Mardi Gras Gala at the Mountain Valley Country Club, you can bet she will be whistling while she works the party. The Mardi Gras Gala, hosted by the Athenas to benefit Johnson County residents and cancer patients, is sponsored by the Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders, the Careity Breast Care Center at Huguley Memorial Medical Center and Pediatric Palliative Care at Cook Children's. Funds raised by Athenas support educational opportunities for women and New Journeys Christian Women's Job Corps. By promoting the success of other women, Brenda and all the Athenas are doing great things for families in Johnson County.



Melissa

Melissa Rawlins
BurlesonNOW Editor
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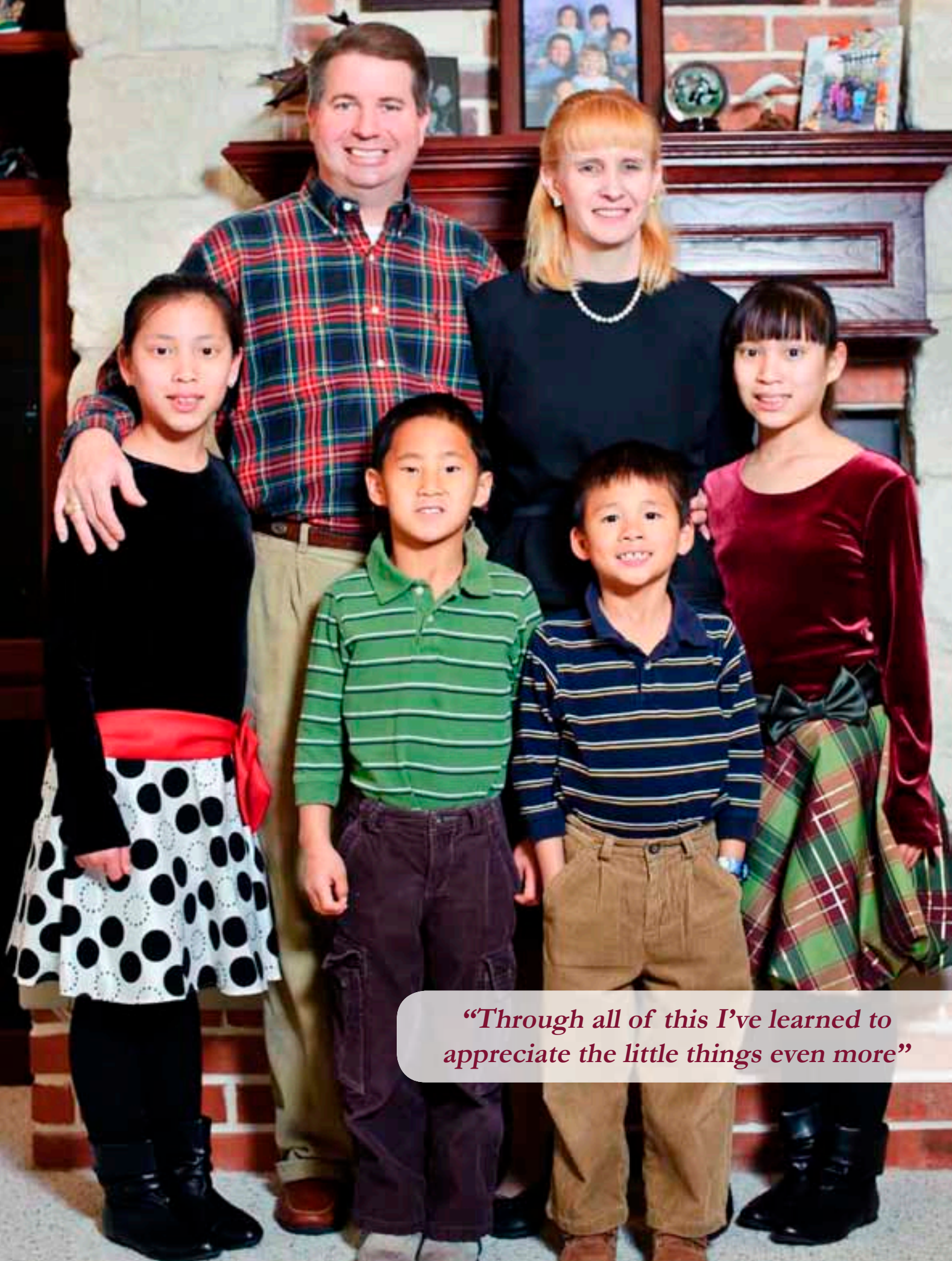
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“Through all of this I’ve learned to appreciate the little things even more”

A FORTUITOUS Accident

— By Sydni Thomas

When circumstances beyond anyone's control tampered with their plans, it took a family's childlike faith and a miraculous healing to get them across the world. Tim and Laurie Kutch have reared their family on the importance of volunteering their time to those who need it in their community and across the globe. Before adopting their children from Asia, Tim and Laurie took frequent trips there leading groups of volunteers. After a few years, they began the adoption process, first with identical twins, Jordan and Haley, now 10, and then with Caleb and Noah, now 7. "We call Caleb and Noah our virtual twins," Tim said. "They were born on the same day in the same country, but with different birth parents. They came to us two-and-a-half years apart and the fact that they were born on the same day can only be explained by God."

It was a normal Monday for Tim, with the exception that Laurie was in East Asia with a group of volunteers. He dropped

their children off at school and made a trip to the Mansfield Post Office. While Tim was sitting at the red light next to the post office, a Ford F350 driving 60 miles per hour plowed into the back of the Kutch family van, launching it onto the car directly in front of him.

On impact, Tim hit his head. His chair snapped forcing him into his son's booster seat directly behind him. The back row of seats was uprooted and disfigured. Tim, the lady in the car he landed on and the driver of the F350 were transported to Harris Methodist Hospital via air ambulance. "Everyone survived the accident," Tim said. "I was stitched up and had a major concussion, but luckily nothing was broken and no limbs were lost. My van was completely totaled. If that is the worst thing, I am OK with that. Things we can replace. People we cannot. I am so thankful that my kids weren't with me."

When Tim was brought into the hospital, nurses started going through his belongings looking for information and discovered he was scheduled to pick up the children at 3:00 p.m. Tim's parents live in a house adjacent to theirs and the nurses were able to contact them to pick up the children. His father then drove up to the hospital just as Tim was checking out. The next morning when Tim woke up in his bed, he wondered how he had gotten there. The only thing he remembered was taking his children to school and going to the post office. Through his father and police reports, Tim was able to put together the pieces of the



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previous day. "It was a miracle that I was able to check out the same day," Tim said. "I should have been dead, but it wasn't my time. I literally walked out of there with no broken bones under my own power."

Prior to his accident, Tim was in the process of planning a trip to East Asia with his twin daughters. In January of 2009, he began by sending out e-mails to orphanages asking if he could bring the girls over to work with the children. Each e-mail Tim received back declined their request. Still he kept trying and began researching flights. He planned to use frequent-flyer miles, but all of those seats had been booked months, and even years in advance. There was nothing available. "June came around and I thought I was going to have to postpone the trip," Tim said. "There still weren't any airline seats available and nobody wanted us to come. That is when I shared my concerns with our Life Group."



Life Group is a weekly meeting that Tim and Laurie attend with other members of their church. They study the Bible and spend time praying. Tim shared the trials of the trip with them on a Sunday night before the Fourth of July, and they began praying for the Kutch family. "That next morning I woke up to find 25 to 30 frequent-flyer seats had opened," Tim said. "Now we had tickets, but nowhere to volunteer. By Wednesday that same week, I had three orphanages that I had e-mailed months earlier respond wanting our help."

With details coming into place a new fear crept into the plans. From the concussion Tim suffered after the car wreck, he developed Strabismus, a condition where his right eye was not able to straighten like the left leaving him unable to see clearly. Each day he had to



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wear a special pair of glasses to straighten out his eye. If the eye was not able to heal with the help of the glasses after four months, Tim would have to undergo surgery. "As the time got closer to our trip, I started getting really concerned about my vision," Tim said. "What would happen if I was over there with these two girls and I lost my glasses or they broke? We would be stranded."

Each night Tim and Laurie have a time of prayer with their children. Since the day of his wreck, Haley prayed specifically that her father's eye would be healed. It had already been four months and the glasses had not helped the eye straighten out. Tim began making arrangements for surgery at the end of the year. On July 24, 2009, two weeks to the day from when they were to leave for China, Tim woke up early as usual and started getting ready so he could take the children to school. After his shower, he put on his glasses and everything was blurry. Thinking that maybe his eyes were not adjusted yet, he carried the glasses



with him as he went through the day. To this day, he has not put the glasses back on. "Haley was so confident that my eyes would be healed," Tim said. "I would tell her that I believe God can do miracles, but maybe this time this isn't meant to happen. As an adult, I'm a person of faith who believes in miracles, but I was trying to do everything on my own. I was not confident that God would heal my eyes. She taught me that we have to come to God with faith like a child on our knees."

Tim, Jordan and Haley's trip to the orphanage in Langfang, China, was a trip they will never forget. Both girls eagerly recounted tales of their trip from loving on children to eating new and unusual food. They are already planning their next trip. "Through all of this I've learned to appreciate the little things even more," Tim said. "I'm a very orderly person who values a schedule, but life does not work on a schedule." **NOW**



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The *Perfect Blend*

— By Melissa Rawlins



AT HOME WITH Robert Fuller and Zee Mink-Fuller

As winter set in, Robert Fuller lashed together the final pieces in the grapevine arbor in front of the home he shares with his wife, Zee Mink-Fuller. He used material from the woods around “Hawk’s Creek,” the land they share with visiting red tailed hawks.



When Robert stands on the shore of the lake he carved out of the property he owned before Zee came into his life, he looks at the house that took him 10-and-a-half years to build, and savors the fact he and Zee have created a home not copied out of a magazine, or drawn up by an architect. "More than anything," he said, "if I didn't have Zee here, it would just be a house."

Blushing and nodding, Zee added, "You gotta have God as the foundation, love as the cornerstone and make sure your doors are all open to your family and friends." But, visitors might ask, "Which door?"



Their winding driveway leads past fanciful statuary and wrought iron figures nestled in ever-blooming pampas grass to the side of their home, which is as inviting as any Hill Country bed-and-breakfast. Family enters through the back door, near the pool, not far from a fairy with a crystal ball on a post. "I was trying to incorporate God and Jesus Christ into fairies for a children's story," Zee remembered.

"It was challenging trying to figure out how to make her hold a glass ball," Robert said.

"But he did it!"

"We work together on a lot of these things."

During cold weather, Zee rests from caring for God's natural creations, the plants that in spring and summer are prolific. Turning their attention indoors this winter, the couple replaced the stair rail with cedar posts. Robert filled its knots with crushed turquoise rocks, arrowheads and hawk feathers that he found lying around their property, and Zee figured out how to mount the railing without nails, stabilizing the whole contraption with an old set of antlers and barn wood.

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home. He treasures heirlooms from his father, like the kitchen table and the couch that he has lovingly restored. She treasures other people's history — like her collections of everything from quilts, pottery, dolls and early American redware from the East Coast to old paper dolls.

The good news for this couple, who blended their lives right after 9/11, is that both Robert and Zee like unusual things. Throughout the great room, you see examples: the fireplace mantel is a red cedar tree trunk Robert hauled out of the woods behind their house. The shelves over a door and a window are from an



old oak cask they found at a winery. Zee's Indian rug collection hangs from the old frogging gig that Robert's father used as a child. Their library showcases a sweet stained glass window Zee saved from a long-ago-burned church in Paris, Texas. "It brings light in, and I sit and think of all the songs sung and sermons preached," Zee said, grateful that her Bobby found a way to put it into this special room added on when she came into his life.

"I had to get in the habit of finishing projects," Robert admitted. "It used to be that the thing I did best was make a



mess." Then he met Zee in an Arlington coffee shop. When they married, she moved in with her organized jumble, a lifetime of collections, and Robert added on. The only thing he did not do was pour the concrete and put in the septic system. It took one-and-a-half years for him to build the great room, containing the library and fireplace, in his spare time. "I turned into the plumber, electrician and stucco guy," Robert said. "Zee is the faux finisher, who can do the artsy stuff."

Zee revives herself in her hideaway, complete with her own bathroom, where they put stucco walls and brick and

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vintage moldings from an old mansion they had torn down. "It took me six layers of faux finishing to get it right," said Zee, who painted the tree on the wall. Robert painted the silhouette of Zee, dressed in a sweetly flowing period gown. The door with stained glass and a mail slot came from an English estate.

At an artist's estate sale, Zee found Jezebel. "She was probably a project the sculptress never finished," Zee explained. "I bought it, put her in the garden, and I've turned her into a bird feeder." One of the gates outside, latched with an old spur, is the match to the Egyptian gate that hangs over the mantel in the great room. "You look at something while you're at an estate sale," Robert said, "and, like Zee says, rather than throw it away, you ask yourself what you can make out of it."

Zee drags a lot of stuff home, and stores it in various sheds and barns on their property, waiting for inspiration. "A lot of times she'll say, 'I want to do something with this over here.' Well," Robert commented, "that sets my wheels turning about ways to turn it into something wonderful."

One wonderful inspiration was their

outdoor kitchen, made with leftover material from the house renovation. Zee had a large slab of old marble, which must have weighed 300 pounds, and offered it for the countertop. The doors are from an old cabinet and the lights are electrified wagon wheels. The kitchen serves the blended family well. Between the two of them, Robert and Zee have four children and four granddaughters, and when the weather warrants, the family gathers outside, blaring the stereo and cooking out.

Together, Zee and Robert work year-round on such projects, fitting them around the 40-60 hours a week that Robert works, troubleshooting for Encor Electric. Zee is an antique appraiser. She retires this year and will turn to writing columns, short stories and poetry. Currently, her writing room is upstairs with the Texas memorabilia and the oldest piece in the house, a cupboard built in the 1700s by someone who used hand-made nails. But Zee pictures herself



putting pen to paper in a different space.

"My next writing room is gonna be what, Bob?"

"What?"

Zee pointed out the window at something in the wintery distance. "A tree house? Get outta here!" Robert said, with a big smile. How much do you want to bet that next time you visit Robert and Zee, she'll make you a cup of iced tea and take you outside, past the trailing rosemary and blooming hollyhocks, to see the magnificent new room of her very own? **NOW**

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The Pennings of a *Fusion* Writer

— By Carolyn Wills

The clue that he had a gift for words came to Bart Cannon in his first year of junior college. “My English professor returned a paper covered in red ink, like her pen had bled all over. She pointed a finger at me and said, ‘You have the potential to make an A in this class.’ Her name was Peggy Brent, and she made such an impression that I made the A,” he smiled. “It was the only A in the class.”



The following year, as classmates gathered at the library intensely researching, note taking and outlining an English literature assignment, Bart sat thinking. “Three nights before the paper was due, I roughed out my thoughts,” he said. “I spent the



next two nights typing and, when I was done, I knew I would either make an A or an F." His paper, "The Significance of English Literature to a Blues Guitar Player," earned an A-plus.

As a boy, he had no idea he would one day be a writer or that his experiences growing up in Mississippi would become the "pavement" for his stories. "I wrote all through school like everyone else but, as a kid, I wasn't very self-aware," he said. Today he writes with depth, passion and humor. His stories are fast-paced, entertaining and inspiring. For the most part, they are written in the evenings, in his recliner, with Mollie the Dachshund nearby. He is a bank officer serving the Johnson County business community, an adjunct professor at Dallas Baptist University and a public speaker. Bart received the Distinguished Toastmaster award last year, the highest honor bestowed on a member of the international communication and leadership organization, and he published his second book, *From Janitor to Justice, the Life of Felipe Reyna*.

It took time to know it, but from the start, Bart's world was all about stories. "I was born at Whitfield State Hospital in Mississippi," he grinned. "That's the state mental institution seen in the movie *A Time to Kill* with Sandra Bullock. My birth was not quite so intriguing, though. My parents met and worked there, with hospital privileges as a benefit, so that is where I was born."

He grew up in Pearl, Mississippi, and most importantly, played blues guitar in a rock 'n' roll band. "Mississippi is homeland to the blues, and playing in a garage band is what I did as a kid. My last group was called The Rogues of Carthage," he explained. "My favorite guitarist is Robben Ford, and I still have my Gibson." In fact, he is learning to play the slide guitar, something he has always wanted to do. "Once I used a metal tube of my mother's lipstick trying to get that bluesy effect," he smiled. "It didn't work."

Not counting devotion to blues, it took time for Bart to grasp the full direction of his gifts. "My father said to go to college and major in business, so I did." He finished his business degree at the University of Alabama, returned to Mississippi, did a tour in the National

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Guard and approached the working world. "I looked around and saw that a career in banking meant working in an office with central heat and air, not getting rained on and everyone dressing up. I owned one sport coat when I wrote a letter to area banks and one of them hired me. That was in 1972 and, to this day, banking is all I've ever done. It has taken me from Mississippi to South Texas and eventually to Burleson. I have a good position, and I believe it is God's plan for me."

Married for 39 years, he and his wife, Karen, reared four children. "There was a time when I thought we would move to South Africa," Bart said. "It was in the early '90s and South Africa was one of the countries where I had done



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missionary work. Our third trip, I realized it was not in Karen's heart for our family to make such a radical move, so instead of the call from South Africa, we got a call from South Texas. A bank was looking for someone and after a day of interviewing with officials and explaining why they shouldn't hire me, their response was, 'When can you come?' And that's how we ended up in Raymondville, Texas, deep in the Rio Grande."

Bart's groundwork as a writer came from years of penning letters to editors, contributing popular articles for local newspapers like the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* and the *Cleburne Times-Review*, and sharing stories from personal experiences. "I'm a fusion writer," he said, "combining biography, elements of fiction, history, humor and moral and ethical principles. What I really am is a storyteller."

In his first book, *Champions through Christ, Winning the Game of Life*, Bart pays tribute to Alabama Coach "Bear" Bryant, to the struggles and victories of the Crimson Tide football team, and to the value of transforming

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challenges into opportunities in football and in life. The book was published in 2004 and, as a result, Bart was recognized by the American Christian Writers' Association as the Dallas-Fort Worth Writer of the Year.

His second book, the most recent for this Mississippi boy who seemingly grew up without a dream, ironically, tells the story of "a boy with a dream as big as Texas." *"From Janitor to Justice, the Life of Felipe Reyna"* is a biography about the son of an illegal immigrant from Mexico and his journey from humble beginnings to a seat on the Tenth Court of Appeals in Texas," Bart said. After hearing the judge speak at a Rotary luncheon in 2007, writing Reyna's extraordinary story became Bart's mission. "I jumped into deep water with this one," he said. "Whatever Judge Reyna talked about is where we started each day. I spent time



with his family and friends and asked each to tell a story about him." The result is 33 chapters of history retold. It is the story of Felipe Reyna, a man with the capacity to dream big and the ability to win against bigger odds. It is a story written out of respect and admiration by a writer with the talent to do it justice and the willingness to inspire and entertain.

"Writing is what I do when I'm not working at the bank, teaching leadership studies at Dallas Baptist University or watching Alabama football," Bart said. "I am also enjoying sharing speaking engagements with Justice Reyna." As for the future, the rocking chair is not where he is headed. "I believe life has more 'Gomer Pyle moments' for me," he smiled. "So I don't intend to retire. I'm going to re-fire." **NOW**

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— By Melissa Rawlins

If there is one thing Gregory Hoffman hates, it is having people wait. So he created Hoffman Family Practice Associates (HFPA) with three mid-level practitioners who can see a patient if Dr. Hoffman gets held up with another person. Offering same-day appointments, HFPA tries to ensure that people spend under an hour in the office — from the time they check in until the time they leave, even if they get a lab test and X-rays.

Helping people is highest on the list of Dr. Hoffman's many loves. Just like an old-fashioned family practice physician, Dr. Hoffman treats children and adults and sees something different every day. "In a typical day I'm a pediatrician, dermatologist, even a surgeon if I do minor surgeries," Dr. Hoffman said. By performing surgical procedures, like mole and cyst removal, in

the office, Dr. Hoffman keeps patients from running to two different doctors.

Dr. Hoffman and his associates will refer to specialists, if necessary, while coordinating the family's health care. An added value for patients of HFPA is their proximity to Texas Health Center and its radiology services and physical therapy. For example, a patient coming to HFPA for her well-woman physical can go right next door for her mammogram that very afternoon.

The compassionate HFPA staff relies heavily on Sandra Cox, LVN and practice manager. Sandra and the front-desk staff, licensed vocational nurses and medical assistants take extra steps to care for families visiting the clinic. Sarah Milling, physician assistant, joined HFPA at the first of 2010, when Dr.

Hoffman opened his office in Burleson. Wendy Wood, nurse practitioner, was with Dr. Hoffman at his previous practice in Joshua. Austin Burnett, nurse practitioner, has been with HFPA about five months. All 15 of the highly efficient staff members keep the patients' charts on an electronic system, giving them more time to really listen to their patients.

Many youthful athletes in Joshua and Burleson are familiar with Dr. Hoffman's caring side. He is team doctor at Joshua High School, treating sports injuries during football games and sporting events. With Dr. Von Evans, another doctor in Burleson, Dr. Hoffman sponsored a free sports clinic that served athletes from Centennial, Burleson and Joshua high schools during the last football season. Ever since moving to Burleson 10 years ago, Dr. Hoffman has been involved with youth sports — coaching all of his five children's sports teams and providing articles about children's sports injuries to the Web sites of both Brazos Valley Football Association and Burleson Youth Association.

Dr. Hoffman and his wife, Sharon, married 17 years ago. After he completed medical school and residency in Houston, the couple decided to rear their children in a smaller community. Now, they are active members of St. Anne's Catholic

“In a typical day I'm a pediatrician, dermatologist, even a surgeon if I do minor surgeries.”

Church and enjoy their involvement in Joshua and Burleson. Understanding the needs of families, Dr. Hoffman has designed his practice with a children's play area out front to make it easy to see children and their mothers at the same time.

Patients of HFPA have appreciated the convenience of evening and weekend office appointments for treating minor lacerations, colds and flus — as well as ailments that in the past might have cost a trip to the emergency room. “We see people of all ages and take care of most problems,” Dr. Hoffman said. “We want to be as accessible as possible, and we have quite long hours because people don't always get sick from 8 to 5!” **NOW**



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Get the Credit Rating You Want

— By Sharon Robinson

Customers often ask why lenders need to review their credit report before approving them for a home or car loan or a credit card. Credit reports contain a lot of valuable information about your previous financial behavior and help lenders predict whether you'll pay off any new debt. Therefore, it's important that you maintain a good credit report.

If you're just starting out, there are several ways to establish a good credit history. You could apply for a credit card or obtain an installment loan. It's smart to start out using credit cards and installment loans for small items — this gives you time to gain experience with working monthly payments into your budget. Just as credit cards and loans can help build your credit history, so too can your everyday actions. Always be sure to pay your bills on time, including rent, electric, gas, water and TV bills.

If you are interested in learning more about your credit report, Equifax, Experian and TransUnion are the three major credit reporting agencies. You can contact one of these companies to obtain a copy of your credit report or visit www.annualcreditreport.com for one free copy of your credit report from the three major agencies per year. Please use caution, some of the other credit agencies offer free annual reports after you commit to a service membership.

Unfortunately, there are times when we may find ourselves with an unfavorable credit rating. If you've found yourself in this position, there are steps you can take to improve your credit report: begin paying your bills on time, avoid taking on any new debt and work with your current creditors to repay your debts. If you are very late on your payments, consider calling a credit counseling agency instead of claiming bankruptcy. Credit counseling can assist you in reducing your debt without as much damage to your credit report. By addressing your problems early,



many creditors will be willing to work with you provided you show a sincere interest in repaying your debts.

Whether you're just now beginning to establish credit for yourself or you're trying to improve your credit rating, taking smart steps now will enable you to enjoy greater opportunities later; when it comes time for you to apply for a loan on a new home or that car you've been eyeing, you'll be confident that your credit report won't be stopping you from the things you enjoy. **NOW**

Sharon Robinson is a State Farm agent based in Burleson.



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Want to Lose Weight? Sleep on It.

— By *Zuri Franco, MD*

The demands of our busy lives and our unending connection to electronic devices makes us a society that is sleep deprived and that depends on caffeinated beverages to be able to function and achieve. Many of us are familiar with the effects of sleep deprivation: difficulty with short-term memory, attention impairment, irritability, low energy, decreased libido and immune system dysfunction. These symptoms often disappear when normal sleep is restored.

Did you ever realize that sleep deprivation has an effect on our appetites? Through research, we have learned about the hormones leptin and ghrelin. Leptin is made inside our fat cells and released in our bodies to give the brain a signal that we are full. In times of starvation, the concentration of leptin is low, thus giving the brain a signal for the need of food intake. The opposite happens when we are well-fed. Ghrelin is produced in the gastrointestinal tract and stimulates appetite. It signals your brain to keep eating.

The amount of sleep we obtain plays an important role in energy balance. Sleep restriction has been associated with

a decrease in leptin, thus increasing hunger and appetite, in particular for calorie-dense foods with high carbohydrate content. You don't feel as satisfied when you eat. Lack of sleep also causes ghrelin levels to rise, stimulating your appetite. The two combined can set the stage for overeating.

In a Stanford University study¹, about 1,000 volunteers recorded the number of hours they slept each night. Physicians tracked their weight and measured their levels of ghrelin and leptin. Those who slept less than eight hours each night not only had lower levels of leptin and higher levels of ghrelin, but they also had a higher level of body fat. Also, the level of body fat seemed to correlate with the amount of sleep. Those who slept the fewest hours had the highest levels of body fat.

Sleep loss slows the loss of fat and increases the level of hunger, making weight loss even more challenging. Most experts agree that if you are trying to lose weight, you should get at least seven hours of sleep each night. You can't substitute extra sleep for less dieting and exercise, but you will see more results for your efforts if you are well-rested. **NOW**

1. Emmanuel Mignot, MD, PhD. (2004). "Sleep Duration Affects Appetite-Regulating Hormones." *PLoS Med* 1(3): e68. doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.0010068

*Zuri Franco, M.D.
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Calendar

MARCH 2011

March 2 and 8

Crimes Against Children and Prevention Lunch and Learn: noon-1:00 p.m. On March 2, at Burleson Chamber of Commerce. On March 8, at Joshua Community Room. Guest speakers: Cheryl Price and Det. Brian Peterson of CASA of Johnson County. \$10 for Chamber members; \$15 for non-members. Lunch provided by Tastefully Unique Catering. To RSVP, call Gammon Financial at (817) 426-9100.

March 4

Empowering Seniors and Caregivers Conference: 8:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., St. Matthew Cumberland Presbyterian Church, 380 Northwest Tarrant Avenue, Burleson. Free-to-the-community education for people caring for loved ones. Because a meal will be served, please RSVP by calling (817) 558-2840 or downloading an RSVP form from www.servingthechildrenofyesterday.org.

March 5

8th Annual Athena Society Mardi Gras Gala: 7:00 p.m.-midnight, Mountain

Valley Country Club, Joshua. Tickets and sponsorships benefit Johnson County residents and cancer patients, plus educational opportunities for women and New Journeys Christian Women's Job Corps. Visit www.AthenaSocietyofBurleson.org or call (817) 295-1816 or (817) 307-8606.

March 12

Auditions for Burleson Kiwanis Club's 6th Annual Christian Music Show: 7:00-10:00 p.m. at a local church. The 2011 Stairway to the Stars Christian Music Talent Show competition is open to any sixth- through 12th-grade student in any public, private or homeschool. If you wish to be invited to audition, e-mail Wayne Davidson (bur88kiwanis@gmail.com) with your address and phone number or text the information to (817) 733-8986.

March 25

Biblical Gardening: 6:30-8:30 p.m., Burleson Senior Activity Center, 216 S.W. Johnson Avenue (next to the post office) in Burleson. This presentation describes plants from biblical times that are still around. Hosted by Burleson Town & Country Garden

Club, whose monthly meetings are open to the public. Cost to join for the year is \$20. Contact President Charlotte England (817) 295-7493 or Tracy Bryant (817) 447-0229.

March 26

"A Night in Rio": 6:00-11:00 p.m., Crowne Plaza Hotel (formerly Radisson), 100 Alta Mesa East Blvd., Fort Worth. Music for this gala event — benefiting the Burleson Area Chamber of Commerce — is provided by Trey and the Tritones. Tickets not available at door. Call (817) 295-6121 or visit www.burlesonareachamber.com.

Fabulous Forties Fling: 7:00-11:00 p.m., Texas Motorplex, located between Waxahachie and Ennis. Supports Meals On Wheels of Johnson and Ellis Counties (MOWJEC). For sponsorship information or reservations, contact the Meals On Wheels office at (817) 558-2840 or (972) 351-9943 or visit www.servingthechildrenofyesterday.org.

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



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In The Kitchen With Laura Wray

— By Adam Walker

Laura Wray first started cooking at 7 years of age, in her home kitchen full of Italian heritage near the west side of Fort Worth. She and her mother chattered and laughed while cooking together. “She always gave me little jobs to do to help with the meal preparation, and she made everything that I did, no matter how insignificant, seem so very important,” Laura recalled. For 12 years in Fort Hood, she, her mother and brother, Gino, owned and operated a family restaurant, The Appian Way, serving Italian, Greek and Mediterranean food. Many fine meals later, Laura was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis and now Gino lives with her in Burleson. They still enjoy cooking all these foods at home — on a much smaller scale, of course. **NOW**

Moroccan Lamb Sirloin

Salt, to taste

2 lamb sirloins, custom-cut off the leg

2 Tbsp. butter

3 Tbsp. vegetable oil

3 cloves garlic, crushed

1/2 tsp. red pepper flakes

3/4 cup sliced almonds

1 cup Marsala

1 Tbsp. dried parsley

1. Salt both sides of lamb sirloins.

2. Melt butter and oil together in a large skillet on medium-low heat and add sirloins. Add crushed garlic and pepper flakes to top side of sirloins and cook slowly 15 for minutes on each side, more if cut of sirloin is thick. Sirloins should be cooked until completely done.

3. Remove sirloins to a platter and keep warm.

4. Add almonds to the pan and stir continuously until lightly toasted. Add Marsala and parsley and shake pan until liquid reduces just a little and thickens.

5. Pour sauce over sirloins and serve immediately.

Appian Way Greek Herbed Feta

1/2 lb. firm imported feta cheese

1/2 tsp. fresh oregano, crumbled

1/2 tsp. fresh thyme

1/4 tsp. freshly ground pepper

1/2 cup red onion, finely diced

3 ripe medium tomatoes, peeled, seeded, cut into 1/2-inch pieces and diced

1/3 cup flat leaf parsley, chopped

3 Tbsp. fruity extra-virgin olive oil

1. Cut feta cheese into 1/2-inch cubes.

2. In a medium bowl, combine feta with the oregano, thyme and pepper. Let stand for 2 to 3 hours.

3. Just before serving, add red onion and diced tomatoes.

4. Sprinkle parsley and drizzle olive oil over top. Spread on toasted flatbread and serve as an appetizer at room temperature.

Appian Way Spinach With Cream and Parmesan Cheese

2 10-oz. pkgs. frozen spinach, thawed and squeezed of any water

2 Tbsp. butter

1/3 cup heavy cream

1/3 cup Parmesan cheese

Salt, to taste

1. Cook spinach according to package directions. Drain and squeeze out all liquid.

2. Heat butter in a medium-size skillet over medium heat. When it begins to foam, add cream and bring to a gentle boil.

3. Add spinach and Parmesan and season lightly with salt. Cook, stirring, until cheese is melted and cream is almost all reduced, 2-3 minutes. Serve hot as a vegetable side dish.

Mom's Pasta Fagioli

1 regular-size can good quality pinto beans

4 Tbsp. olive oil

2 cloves garlic, chopped (more if desired)

1 stick celery, chopped

1 8-oz. can petite diced tomatoes

1 tsp. tomato paste

Pinch of hot pepper flakes (if desired)

Salt, to taste

1/2 lb. cooked short pasta, cooked to al dente

1. Drain some of the liquid off the beans (leaving 1/3 cup) and heat in a saucepan on medium heat.

2. In a separate pan, heat the olive oil on low-medium and add the garlic and celery. Sauté and, when both are soft, add the chopped tomatoes with their juice, tomato paste, pepper flakes, 1/3 cup water and salt to taste. Simmer for 10 minutes.

3. When the beans are thoroughly hot, add the tomato mixture and cook all together for 15 minutes.

4. Crush some of beans against the walls of the pan to help make the creamy sauce that will coat the pasta.

5. Add the cooked pasta and leave the pan covered for about 10 minutes for the flavors to blend.

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



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