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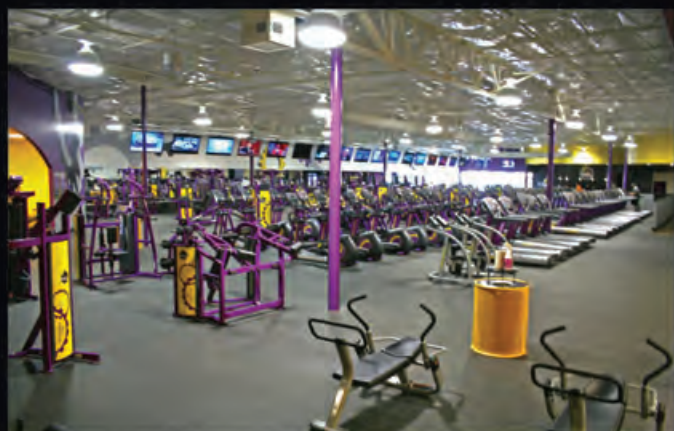
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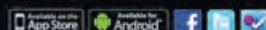
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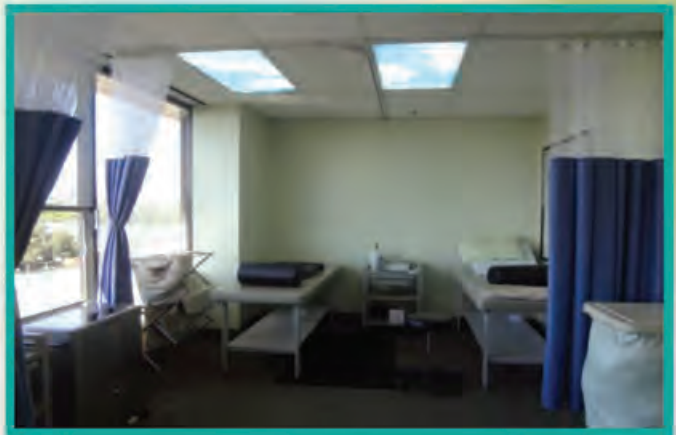
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ON THE COVER



Keisha Thomas-Heard was a perfect match to donate a kidney to her cousin, Gwen Wilson.

Photo by Opaque Visuals.

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Editor's Note

Hello, my Southwest Friends!

I am continually humbled at the thought that thousands of people read *SouthwestNOW* Magazine every month ... what an incredible sphere of influence! In truth, every one of us has a sphere of influence — whether it's our own toddlers or teenagers, those whose cars we service, the ones to whom we give medical aid, counsel, education or financial advice. Whether you are an officer of the law or the court, a server in a restaurant, a librarian or a voice teacher, a bus driver, a hospice provider, a funeral director, a house painter or Realtor, a sales person or an obstetrician — each one of you touch people's lives on a daily basis.

How do we influence those around us? What do we offer? Perhaps it's hope, encouragement, a solution, a listening ear. Maybe you give time, compassion, friendship, dignity. Maybe your smile, your service, your patience will be the exact influence someone needs today.

Beverly

Beverly Shay
SouthwestNOW Editor
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2013

SEASON OF EVENTS

APRIL

A Lesson Before Dying | April 5-28
African American Repertory Theater
DeSoto Corner Theatre

Dallas Black Dance Theater | April 13
DeSoto Arts Commission | 3PM
Fred Nickles Auditorium

MAY

Hansel & Gretel | May 3-5
NIA Kids
DeSoto Corner Theatre

Fences | May 24-June 9
African American Repertory
DeSoto Corner Theatre

Richardson Symphony Orchestra
May 26 | 5:00 PM
DeSoto Arts Commission
DeSoto Amphitheater | Free

JUNE

Thurgood | June 21-July 7
CrossOver Arts Theater
DeSoto Corner Theatre

JULY

The Three Musketeers | July 12-28
CrossOver Arts Theater
DeSoto Corner Theatre

DeSoto Art League Gallery
DeSoto City Hall

Movies in the Park
Madagascar III | July 19
Outdoor Amphitheater | Free

Little Mermaid | July 26
Dive-In Movie at Mosely Pool
\$3.00 Pool Admission

AUGUST

Wreck-It Ralph | August 1
Outdoor Amphitheater | Free

Holka Polka
August 7-18
CrossOver Arts Theater
DeSoto Corner Theatre

SEPTEMBER

Fiesta Latino DeSoto | Sept. 15
DeSoto Arts Commission
Town Center Amphitheater
Free

Homeschooled | Sept. 6-29
(TACA New Works Grant Fund)
African American Repertory
The Corner Theatre

NOVEMBER

DeSoto Choral Classical Series
November 2013 (TBA)
St. Anne's Episcopal Church

DECEMBER

Ebony Scrooge | December 6-29
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One Switch at a Time

— By Zachary R. Urquhart

America has seen its share of strange fads in the past 50 or so years. Many people have a pet rock stuffed deep into their catch-all drawer, probably sitting next to the remains of their troll doll collection. And what woman's closet is complete without a pair of hot pants ready to be dusted off, just in case. For years, some people have referred to a new way of life as a fad. But "going green" is much more than a modern-day hula hoop. With a passion for conservation and a position where she can help make things happen, Melissa Stephens is trying to make green the new black.

Melissa serves as the assistant city manager for Cedar Hill, a town that is quickly becoming a leader in green efforts. Although she moved here shortly after graduate school, she is not from the area, originally. "I was born just up the road," she said, "six hours north on I-35, in Wichita, Kansas." Melissa attended Kansas State University (KU) for her undergrad, where she started out majoring in operatic singing, only to switch to political science. "Some of the people I thought were really good were struggling to find work, so I changed majors to give myself a better chance after school," she explained. "I still sing, but mainly just in the shower." When she graduated, she immediately enrolled at the University of Kansas, where she earned a Master of Public Administration. "I wondered what could be done with a poli-sci degree?" she remarked. "I took a placement test, and it said nurse or public administrator. And KU is the highest-ranked MPA school in the nation."

As Melissa was finishing her graduate degree, she went to Philadelphia for a conference. "I had several job interviews and narrowed it down to Reno, University Park and Cedar Hill," Melissa recalled. "I was in downtown Philly, and I ended up meeting Alan Sims, the city manager of Cedar Hill. He was a KU alum, too. I ended up coming down here." Melissa interviewed in March 2003 and started as a management analyst two months later. She then progressed to the position of assistant to the city

"We are continuing to look for ways to serve the community and be responsible, while operating under limited resources."

Cedar Hill **NOW**

manager and finally, to her current role as assistant city manager.

As part of her job, Melissa was tasked with looking into waste reduction for the city in 2006. "I started out looking for ways to increase recycling. We changed trash collection companies, among other initiatives, and started looking at our energy usage around the same time," she remembered. "We began working closely with our electric companies to find ways



to save and conserve." What started as a small project has now blossomed into a major cost-cutting endeavor.

A big part of what Melissa has done to help turn Cedar Hill into an example of green efforts is in her ability to get money, specifically grants. "In total, the city has been awarded \$1.6 million in grants, which all started with the development of the city's Sustainability Action Plan. From there, we have done a lot," Melissa explained. As part of their action plan, the city has continued to focus on waste reduction. "We have given residents a full-size, 96-gallon recycling bin. We dropped the number of trash

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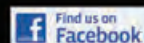
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days from two to one, and as a result, we have seen over a 250-percent increase in the amount of recycling across the city."

Waste reduction is just a small part of Cedar Hill's initiatives, though. Cedar Hill has integrated renewable technology into the very infrastructure of the town's inner workings. "Our government building has several examples of going green. We have a 152-kilowatt solar panel system on the roof, along with a



4.5-kilowatt wind turbine, which was also paid for with grants," Melissa shared. "Even the combining of the city and school districts into one building is an example. Now citizens are only paying taxes for one building instead of two."

While there are several examples of renewable energy and reduced waste at the Cedar Hill Government Center, one unique feature serves as a "green-print" other towns may soon replicate. "We have four electric car docking stations here. Two are for public use, and two are for our two electric cars," Melissa explained. "Our city is only 34 square miles, so these cars can go through the whole town a few times before they need to be recharged." Cedar Hill's two green cars are easy to spot, because they actually are green. They are wrapped with decals signifying their example as a next step in the growing conservation movement. "We figured putting the public recharge stations so close to the theater would help, too," Melissa expounded. "They can plug in their car, go over to see a movie and come back ready to hit the road again."

While her passion for what she does is immediately evident, interestingly, Melissa had no particular background in environmental conservation. "I didn't

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Holy Week Schedule

Palm Sunday Services

March 24 at 9:00 a.m. (Contemporary) & 11:00 a.m. (Traditional)
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March 24 at 7:00 p.m.
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Holy Thursday Service

Communion Served
March 28 at 7:00 p.m.
Chapel

Good Friday Service

March 29 at 7:00 p.m.
Sanctuary

EGGStravaganza Saturday

March 30
Pancake Breakfast 8:00-10:00 a.m.
Aldersgate
Petting Zoo 9:00-11:00 a.m.
Commons Area
An Easter Story
11:00 a.m. in the Gym
11:15 a.m. Egg Hunt
Commons Area

Easter Sunday Services

March 31
9:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.
Sanctuary

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have experience beforehand, but that is this business. One of my early projects was building a new animal shelter,” she stated. “I had no idea all of the plumbing and drainage details you have to take into account, but I learned. You have to become an expert in lots of new things.”

When she is not busy connecting the dots to make things happen, Melissa has a whole life outside of the government building. She loves kickboxing and traveling with friends. She is also a loving mother of two. Amaya is in pre-K at Bray Elementary, and Zoe will start there



next year. They go to church at Pantego Bible in Fort Worth, and Melissa stressed her reliance on her GPS, her “God Positioning System.” Her girls, though, are also a constant reminder of why she does what she does. “We are continuing to look for ways to serve the community and be responsible, while operating under limited resources,” she said. “I want to make sure my kids are breathing the same, if not better air when they grow up.”

Melissa’s ancestry is native Cherokee Indian, so she was brought up with a greater respect for the land than most. She brings that attitude into deciding whether or not to move forward with each new step of Cedar Hill’s green efforts. “Every project we look at has to make sense on three levels,” she explained. “Socially — do people want it? Environmentally — does it make a difference? And economically — will there be a return on investment?” When the answer is yes to all three, she works hard to make things happen. From dramatically increasing Cedar Hill’s recycling to installing state-of-the-art green technology, Melissa has come a long way from just up I-35. **NOW**



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Informational Meetings -- 6-7:30 p.m.

- Tuesday, February 19 - McCowan MS
- Wednesday, February 20 - East MS
- Thursday, February 21 - West MS
- Thursday, March 7 - Freshman Campus

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Security changes taking place

Following a meeting with DeSoto Police and district security, changes are taking place on all district facilities to further enhance security for students and staff. Most noticeably, all district exterior doors have been marked with a red or green triangle to inform guests of campus entrances. Red triangles instruct visitors that the door is not an entrance and to proceed to the main entrance. Main entrances are marked with green triangles welcoming guests to the campus. All guests must check in at the main entrance and acquire a visitor's badge. DeSoto Police have begun campus assemblies at all elementary schools to work with students and staff on measures that must be taken to further enhance safety. All staff and students are reminded to not open exterior doors and to follow all security directives at all times. To maintain the safety of every student and staff member, we must be diligent in securing all district facilities.



Increased engagement with all

As the district pursues Full Engagement 2015 - a goal to achieve 360-degree engagement with staff, students, parents and the community - Superintendent David Harris has launched several new initiatives. Starting this spring is a new DeSoto ISD Community Advisory Council with members from all cross-sections to open dialogue about the future of the district. In addition, open forums have been held with small groups of students, staff and parents. Along with internal engagement, the district has expanded engagement with the community with involvement in civic organizations, attendance at community functions and participation in various events. DeSoto High School will soon see new monitors around the campus to keep apprised of events and deadlines at the campus and in the community. Finally, video projects are in the works for district involvement in community televised talk shows.



District counselors were celebrated at the Board Meeting during Counselors Week.

Calendar of Events

Sat., March 2, 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. - 8th Grade EXPO, Freshman Campus
March 4-8 - Celebrate Texas Public Schools Week
March 11-15 - Spring Break (all DeSoto ISD closed)
Mon., March 25, 6:30 p.m. - DeSoto ISD Board Meeting, Board Room
Fri., March 29 - Teacher Preparation Day; No School for Students
Sat., April 13 - Education Foundation Gala & Auction, Hilton Garden Inn
Fri., May 3, 5 p.m. - Hall of Honor Induction Ceremony
Mon., May 27 - Memorial Day Holiday

News to Know

Calling all eighth-grade students: Don't miss the first ever **8th Grade EXPO** on March 2 at Freshman Campus. Join with students from all three middle schools to learn about high school courses, clubs and extra-curricular activities while team building with the Class of 2017.

DeSoto ISD has renovated a hall in the former Belt Line Elementary School to expand the **WINGS program**. Where I Now Gain Success (WINGS) is a dropout recovery program for students age 17-25 who have dropped out of a Texas public school. Students complete courses through the computer-based program to earn their diploma from DeSoto High School.


Signing day for athletes was held February 6 with 21 student athletes signing full scholarships to play sports in college. Financially, these scholarships equal approximately \$3M. An academic signing day will be held again at DHS later this spring.

Is your student interested in **engineering**? Initially started at DHS, engineering clubs will soon be offered at all middle schools and elementary schools. Check with your campus on how your student can get involved.

The district, along with the City of DeSoto, is offering students a unique opportunity to become **Mayor or Police Chief for a Day**. This spring, students in grades eight and eleven can apply for Mayor for a Day. High school students interested in law enforcement can apply for Police Chief for a Day.

Nominations will be accepted through April 4 for the **DeSoto ISD Hall of Honor**. Forms are online for both the DHS Hall of Fame and Distinguished Service Award categories. The Induction Ceremony will take place May 4 at DHS. For details, visit www.desotoisd.org.

STAAR Testing: Testing dates coming this spring include April 1-4, April 23-26 and May 14-15. End-of-course tests will be taken over two weeks in May. Details are available online.



Sherry Link (L) and Sandra Hetherwick (R) served as receiver and donor nurses on the UT Southwestern transplant team for Keisha Thomas-Heard and Gwen Wilson.

A Perfect Match

By Dianne Reaux

Throughout their lives, Gwen Wilson and Keisha Thomas-Heard had a lot in common. They both grew up in South Dallas. They loved going to school, were both strong in their faith, and they were cousins. When they were young, the two girls didn't get to see each other very often, and as a result, they weren't very close. But as high school students, that changed.

Keisha is definitely the more animated cousin, bubbling with enthusiasm as she speaks. "In 10th grade, I attended Carter High

School," she said. "Gwen was a senior at Carter, but I didn't know it. One day we happened to pass each other in the halls, and we've been close ever since then." Gwen, who is the more soft-spoken cousin, nodded in agreement.

Attending the same high school turned out to be a wonderful opportunity for the cousins to get to know each other, and their interaction evolved into a genuine friendship. They became close, sharing the ups and downs of their tumultuous teenage years and learning that life wouldn't always be a bed of roses. Their bond served as a safe harbor as they matured and navigated different seasons in their lives.

Growing up had been painful for Gwen, not figuratively, but literally. "As a teenager, I would always hurt. My mother would

call my aches 'growing pains,' and with no reason to think otherwise, everyone believed her," she recalled. "But, one day I was at an outdoor concert at Six Flags, and I fainted. The doctors couldn't figure out what was wrong with me. It took almost a year for doctors to diagnose my illness, and when they did, it was lupus." Over the years, lupus eventually took its toll on Gwen's body.

Lupus is a chronic disorder in which the body's immune system goes into overdrive by producing too many antibodies. The antibodies begin attacking healthy parts of the body, such as the joints, skin, kidneys and lungs, causing pain and inflammation. The damage inflicted by lupus can cause the patient to have to contend with other medical issues as well.

"If you are ever in a position to consider donating an organ, the most important step you can take is to be tested. You never know, you may be someone's perfect match."

"Gwen came and told me that she needed a kidney transplant," Keisha shared. Her voice softened with emotion as she reflected back on that difficult season. "When Gwen told me, an old saying I'd heard as a child immediately came to mind — 'Give them their flowers and roses while they are alive.' It was something I usually heard at funerals, but in that moment, the meaning was profound."

The first person to be tested for donor compatibility was Gwen's mother, Wanda Whitehead. While they waited for the results, Keisha was a constant bastion of support. "Keisha would always tell me that if anything went wrong, she would be there for me," Gwen recalled. Keisha's support never wavered, and Gwen would desperately need it.

The tests revealed that Gwen's mother was a viable match, and the pace of

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events quickened. But once the surgery was scheduled, the speed that initiated the transplant journey slowed to a heartbreaking crawl. Over the course of a year, Gwen's transplant surgery was scheduled and canceled three different times. The first cancellation was due to a sinus infection Gwen developed. The surgery was canceled again when spots showed up on an X-ray of Gwen's lungs. But the final cancellation was the cruelest. Testing prior to the surgery revealed the presence of red blood cells in Gwen's mother's urine. Red blood cells can be indicative of precancerous activity, and out of an over-abundance of caution, the transplant team decided to cancel the surgery again. Each surgery cancellation was accompanied by its own set of anxieties and fears, and the constant rollercoaster of emotions was overwhelming.

Gwen was devastated, but that fiery cousin of hers refused to yield to defeat — Keisha would not let Gwen give up. She was there for her cousin, just as she'd promised. Keisha filled out her own set of donor forms, and within one week she received word that she would be allowed to test for organ compatibility. And then, the waiting started over again.

During the wait, both women wished they had paid more attention during their high school science classes. Keisha couldn't remember her blood type. Gwen wasn't sure of hers either. But Keisha said, "I knew my blood type was O something. I knew that I could be a

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blood donor to anyone, but not anyone could donate to me.” Although neither cousin would admit it, they were both apprehensive about the results.

“Usually, matches are found with immediate family members — like with Gwen and her mother. But I was a cousin — a second cousin,” Keisha said. They and their relatives prayed, and both women held fast to their faith. When the results came back, everyone was stunned, even the transplant team. Not only were the second cousins a match, they were a *perfect* match.

The surgery was immediately scheduled for Tuesday, September 11, 2012, but Gwen noticed a persistent headache and began to worry she was suffering another sinus infection. She called the lead transplant coordinator with a sick, sinking feeling that her surgery would be delayed yet again. Initially, the team did consider postponing. But they instructed Gwen to go to the emergency room where a physician would be waiting. “The doctor didn’t find any evidence of an infection, and he told me to leave the ER immediately,” Gwen recalled. She wasn’t sick, but the waiting area was full of people who were.

Pre-surgical tests revealed no issues, and the transplant operation was cleared to begin. “Once the transplant was completed,” Gwen stated, “Keisha’s donated kidney began to work immediately. The longer an organ is out of the body, the longer it takes to re-acclimate itself to its job. In my case, the organ was out of my cousin’s body and immediately placed into mine, so it started working right away.”

Both women hope sharing their story will help others become more aware of organ donations. “Many people are hesitant about donating, because they fear their remaining kidney will fail them,” Keisha stated. “But as a donor, if you ever need an organ, you are placed at the top of the donor list.”

“Donor testing is important, too,” Gwen added. “If you are ever in a position to consider donating an organ, the most important step you can take is to be tested. You never know, you may be someone’s perfect match.” **NOW**

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THE BEST-KEPT SECRET

By Beverly Shay

Each branch of the military has a junior branch: The Air Force has the Civil Air Patrol; the Marine Corps has Young Marines; the Army has ROTC and the Navy has the Sea Cadets. According to their Web site the mission of the Sea Cadets is "... through organization and cooperation with the Department of the Navy, to encourage and aid American youth to develop, train them in seagoing skills and to teach them patriotism, courage, self-reliance and kindred virtues."

According to Petty Officer 2nd class, Christian Dickens' mom, Barbara, that translates into a wonderful experience. "This is the first thing Christian has loved and stuck with for four years now. I have watched him develop as a person, as well as become disciplined and able to collaborate as a team member. This training has given him the opportunity to become the leader he is. He knows both how to follow and how to lead and maintains honor in both."

What Christian has liked best are the training camps — he has been to Illinois, Ohio, Florida, California, the Great Lakes and South Padre Island. The Sea Cadets also offer foreign exchange training. The first camp is always a recruit training camp: a two-week boot camp run by Navy personnel. "I got interested because my mom knew a man whose daughter had been in the program. I plan to apply to all five military academies, but I hope I get into the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland," Christian remarked. He would like to go to law school, as well, to study business law.

Evan Harris, an E-3 seaman (just below petty officer), is a commander over E-1 and league cadets (ages 10 1/2 to 13 1/2). For him the draw to join was to learn about ships, an interest he has long held. "I was 9 or 10 when my mom told me about

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the Sea Cadets. When my sister joined, I really got interested," Evan stated. "I plan to become a millionaire," said the young man who attends John Dubiski Career High School. "I would like to study architecture and engineering, so I can design ships and airplanes."

Evan's mother, Linda, fully believes in this program. "It provides a solid foundation for the cadets, whether they are interested in going into the military or not. They gain such confidence and leadership skills, and they are well prepared for college. It helps them both to get into higher education schools and to qualify for scholarships," she remarked. "I have watched Evan's character develop — really, he is a better Evan."

But no group like this would be successful without excellent leadership. Evan and Christian and their moms are quick to applaud their commander, Pat Fields. Linda and Barbara remarked about

Naval Sea Cadet commanders Pat and Howard Fields instill core values such as honor, courage and commitment into young men like E-3 Seaman Evan Harris.



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how passionate Pat and her husband, Howard, are with each of the cadets in the program. Christian acknowledges that while every unit receives the same type of training and attends the same camps, there are differences due to different commanders and officers. "We have the best," he said.

Pat is originally from Pennsylvania. She and Howard moved to Duncanville in 1977, when he took a job with Dixico as an ink tech, matching colors for their products. He has been in the printing industry since 1973. Howard also retired from the Navy in 2001. Pat has been working for Allianz Insurance for 35 years.

Howard, who in his military career saw many of the Sea Cadets, always thought the kids took too long in the chow line at the Naval Air Station in Grand Prairie where he worked as a boat mechanics mate. He also worked in the engineer room on ships and did aviation work on the F-14 Tom Cat. "I was pretty generous about letting the pilots borrow my planes," Howard joked. He did come to appreciate the Sea Cadets, though, and urged his first son to join the group. "He wasn't interested. He wanted to be a fireman. But my second son was a Sea Cadet for four-and-a-half years and then served in the Navy for five years and, later, earned a business degree."

Both Pat and Howard agree the rewards of volunteering as leaders for the Sea Cadets are in seeing these young men and women succeed. "We get to see former cadets at weddings and other events, and it is such a privilege to see who they have become and know you played a part in that," Pat remarked. One of their "kids" went on to become a Navy SEAL. "When he came back to visit us, he said it was our persistence that enabled him to pull through," Pat remarked, with evident pride. "In

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Both Evan and Christian have shown 100-percent commitment in participation and attendance. "We tell our cadets that their priorities are family, then school and then the Sea Cadet activities," Pat said. Both young men are proud of their uniforms, which include BDUs and the Navy dress blues and whites, (modified for Sea Cadet wear). Sea Cadets are often seen functioning as color guards at the Decatur Veteran's Memorial laying wreaths.

"I like the variety of exposure we get. Boot camp was rough, but I liked it," Christian remarked. "We've been exposed to engineering, coast guards on their cutters, firefighting, construction with Habitat for Humanity, leadership, planes and transit lines."

Evan's favorite part of his training, so far, has been learning more about aviation, including basic mechanical parts of the airplane and time up in the tower. But his greatest interest is to learn about ships, especially how they are built. "I joined so I could learn about all these things, but I know I am much bolder as a result of this experience. I have learned a lot about responsibility, respect, chain of command and how to deal with problems," Evan said.

The units of the Naval Sea Cadets are all run by volunteers from all walks of life. "It's the satisfaction and pride we get from seeing these young men and women grow — that's our pay," Pat remarked. "The Sea Cadets is really one of the best-kept secrets, but we'd like to see that secret get out." **NOW**

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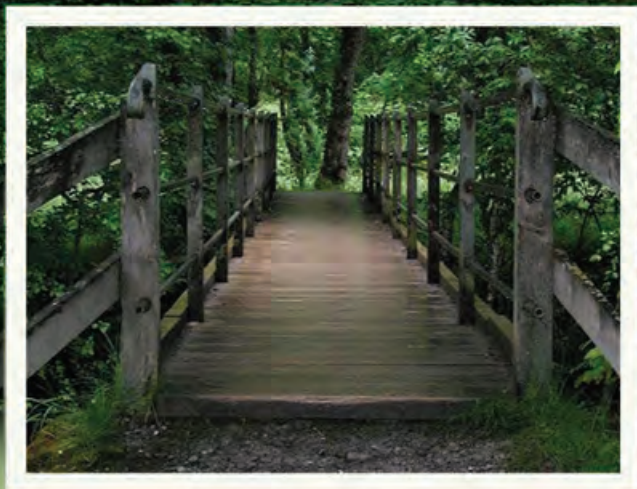
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Life on the MOVE

— By Beverly Shay

They never planned to live in DeSoto, Texas. The journey to their gorgeous home involved a world of travel. “People come to our home and inevitably say, ‘Look what the Lord has done!’ I always smile, because that is exactly what I said the first time I walked in the door,” Rosa Johnson

remarked. The 3,700-square-foot, five-bedroom, four-and-a-half-bath home struck the Johnsons as grand. “I have always wanted a grand home. When we were unpacking kitchen items, we discovered it was a grand home — constructed by Grand Homes! God gave me the desire of my heart.”

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RICHARD &
ROSA JOHNSON



Texas is a far piece from where they met. Richard and Rosa’s relationship started out through a family connection in Hampton, Virginia. “Who would have thought when I agreed to babysit for a neighbor’s grandchildren I was actually investing in my future? The children’s father decided I would be ‘perfect’ for his brother, Richard, who was stationed in Germany with the



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Air Force,” Rosa recalled. When Richard returned to the states, he was stationed nearby at Langley Air Force Base in 1965. “I had just graduated from nursing school and brought some of my nurse friends to a party given in Richard’s honor. He and I really didn’t click, although I did think he was cute!”

Although nothing romantic sparked between them at that time, they did become friends, and for the next six months they talked about everything.

“He was very sophisticated and had already traveled so much. He’d been in France before going to Germany,” Rosa confided. Having enlisted right after he graduated from high school in ’59, Richard had already been in the military for eight years. On February 3, 1967, they married, and then began a lifetime of travel together.

“Eleven months after we married,” Rosa said, “Richard was stationed in Vietnam for 15 months. Then he was home for a year — home being located in three different states — Tennessee, Virginia and Arkansas!” Rosa began the saga of their life on the move. 1970 saw him back in Vietnam for a 13-month tour. By the time he retired as Chief





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Master Sergeant from the Air Force after 30 years, Richard had reached the highest grade given to an enlisted man: E9. "Only one percent of personnel in the Air Force achieve that grade," Richard remarked. He worked as aircraft mechanic on B-52s and C-130s, and for 10 years, he flew all over the world as a flight engineer supporting various missions. Following the end of the Vietnam War, he cross-trained as a dental assistant at Sheppard Air Force Base, in Wichita, Texas.

With three small children, ages 3 months, 17 months and 11 years, the Johnsons moved to Japan in 1975, where they lived for three years. "Then we moved to New Jersey for three years — three years too long!" Rosa laughed. "But I did go to Bible school there, and that was good." Over the next several years, they found themselves in California, back to Japan — "so beautiful there" — and Scott Air Force Base, near Belleville, Illinois, where Richard retired in 1989.

"As we considered retirement, we felt God was leading us to California. Sacramento was a good place to work and raise our two teen-aged daughters. Living in one place for 18 years was quite a change, but Richard's job in dental insurance still kept him traveling," Rosa remarked. His work, initially in customer service, led to working with contracts, compliance and, eventually, training seminars all around California. Frequently, his family travelled with him. Meanwhile, Rosa, an LVN, managed to still work a part-time job while caring for her parents, as her father dealt with Parkinson's and her mother's blindness due to glaucoma.

Once again, they faced retirement. "As I prayed, I felt God saying He wanted us to move just outside Dallas, but I didn't tell Richard, which was ironic, since he knew first, but was waiting for me to hear from God. The kids didn't even know. Over a period of 18 months, we made several week-long trips, looking around, wanting to hear from God exactly where we should be," Rosa recalled. They found a house in Cedar Hill in April '07 and had already signed papers and put down earnest money, when their Realtor called and said, "I want you to come see this house."

"I didn't really want to see it once he

told me it was a repo,” Rosa remembered. “But we went, and when I walked in the door, even with the floor being bare cement, I knew it was my house!” She turned to Richard and said, “Look what the Lord has done!”

“We came here looking for one new house and left with two, and one needed a lot of help,” Richard remarked, recalling the challenge with a twinkle in his eye. “We were able to get out of the commitment to the Cedar Hill home. It took a few months to repaint the entire interior, repair the flooring in the family room and get the wiring repaired — all the appliances had been taken from the kitchen and all the windows needed screens.”

“We found out the room we call the playroom, the builder had called the children’s retreat,” Rosa explained. “It’s a big house, but there is room for everyone!” Their three children, Cyrus, Latecia and DaNita, are each married with six children between them. The girls live in California, and Cyrus, now retired from the Navy, lives in Virginia, and his grandchildren live in Georgia. “Every other Christmas they all come here, so we needed room for all of them,” Rosa said.

Both Richard and Rosa are hard put to decide what they like most about their home. He loves the architectural design. She loves the arches. The nooks and crannies, most of them arched alcoves, are perfect for showing off their collections of cloisonné and Chinese art. The kitchen is another favorite. “We redid all the countertops in quartz and put in a tile floor,” Richard remarked. He pointed out the tapestry Rosa made in rusts, browns, cream and gold hanging above their fireplace. “We love every one of our 38 windows,” he quipped. He also loves the media room and the pool table at the top of their curving staircase.

Richard, happily enjoying his retirement, makes genealogy his hobby. They are active in their church, The Potter’s House, where they both work with Texas Offenders Reentry Initiative, and Rosa is part of the Acts II Evangelism outreach. Richard also volunteers one day each week at Methodist Charlton Medical Center. “We believe God has blessed us,” Richard said, “so we can be a blessing through giving back of our time, talents and treasures.” **NOW**



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— By Beverly Shay

If you, or a loved one, are experiencing diminished hearing or reduced understanding of what you are hearing, Auditory Hearing Services can help with your hearing health care. Keith Wiggins earned his fitting and dispensing license with the state of Texas in April 1997, following an internship with Miracle Ear. He currently has two locations, Duncanville and Sulphur Springs, where he provides complete, affordable diagnostics, sales, fittings and service for all brands of hearing aids.

“When you come into our office, we obtain a thorough hearing and health history, discussing work environment, accidents or medication that can affect hearing, perform tests and conduct a diagnostic evaluation to determine the degree and nature of

hearing impairment,” Keith explained. “With that information, I can then either give a medical referral or provide the most effective hearing aid to improve your hearing. Most hearing loss is incurable and irreversible, but with the ever-improving technology available, hearing can nearly always be improved.”

When Keith began his training in 1997, the average hearing aid had a 6.7-year life span and was equipped with three transistors. Today, the life span remains the same, but the aids have upward of 480 transistors, with new digital technological improvements introduced about every 22 days. Features include Bluetooth capacity that enables hearers to connect directly with their phones and electronics or even, through neck-loop streaming, to connect

directly with sound systems in places like Bass Performance Hall in Fort Worth. "It's almost like having an inner surround-sound system," Keith remarked. Even with all the advancements, hearing aids can be affordable and come in multiple sizes and styles and with amenities, such as multiple memory or preset volume controls.

"There's no fix for hearing loss, but we can certainly augment the hearing you have left," said Keith, who has a strong desire to see people able to enjoy social interaction, regardless of loss of hearing. "Sometimes our evaluation indicates the loss is due to a buildup of earwax, which can be easily remedied. We can teach people how to keep that from being a recurring problem."

Hearing aids do need to be serviced regularly with cleaning. The design of aids these days allows replacement of the digital processor or detachable receiver, as needed, if the wearer finds their hearing weakening or notice they are understanding speech less. "I see hearing improvement as a partnership between myself and the patients. For the patient, it begins with wanting to improve their hearing, willingness to continue wearing the aids and follow-up visits for adjustments and service," Keith stated. "I tell them improvement is sometimes gradual, because your brain must be retrained to receive the signals the aids provide. I will have patients return every two weeks for a month, then every six weeks for a while, based on their responses to the aids."

Keith initially trained in accounting, but being more of a people-person, he found sales a better fit, working for numerous companies in sales and marketing management over the years. He and his wife, Janet, have been married for 40 years and have one son, Brad, who works with a large property management firm and recently signed a recording contract.

"I sold my sales and marketing business, which had me traveling internationally, to be with my son when he went through a serious illness," Keith shared. "Following that, I trained for my present position. I have to say, it's very satisfying helping people to regain a normal lifestyle through improving their hearing." **NOW**



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Diego Ruiz Jr. prepares for a cruise around the neighborhood.



Tech Services Clerk, Joyce Moore, is hard at work for the DeSoto Public Library.



Prince Fakunle, Trent Oliver, Jalon Shade and Hollivan Cody work on a project at their engineering design and problem solving class at Cedar Hill High School.



Cedar Hill children mark the 100th day of the year at Canterbury Episcopal School earlier this semester.



DeSoto High School alumna, Ryann Campbell, celebrates his birthday dinner with family friends and pets.



God's Tabernacle of Deliverence elder staff members Earl Thomas, Barbara McElwee, Tanae Europe and Sir Christopher Boyd at Family Christian Book Store in Cedar Hill.



Jean Berrier purchases a stuffed bear from Carla Spradling at Ben Franklin's Apothecary in Duncanville.



Robert Estell and Jeff Aycock enjoy a friendly game of ping pong at the DeSoto Recreation Center.



Third-grade Duncanville students receive their 2012 Junior Spirit of a Champion awards after creating short digital media presentations on how their school demonstrates good citizenship.



Bishop Clement Bandy studies his Bible at Blue Cow Coffee Company in DeSoto.

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Economic and Investing Outlook for 2013

Market and Economic Review

At this time last year, there were several risks that could negatively impact the economy and investments. Those risks included: Europe entering a recession, China having a “hard landing” (a severe economic slowdown) or the U.S. economy slowing too much. Europe does appear to be in a recession, China did avoid the hard landing (although, its economy has slowed) and the U.S. economy slowed last year, especially in the fourth quarter. Despite all of this, the stock market did well.

Investment Outlook

Current risks to the stock market include a slowing economy that is subject to unanticipated economic shocks (such as a spike in oil prices or failure by Congress to get a resolution on the debt ceiling) and deterioration in Europe’s or China’s economy. These risks may be offset by an improving housing market and the Federal Reserve’s (Fed’s) monetary policy. The Fed will continue to maintain its near-zero interest rate policy, perhaps until 2014.

Investment Strategies

Given current earnings estimates for the Dow Jones

Industrial Average (DJIA) and the S&P 500, a total return of 8-10 percent may be reasonable. If the DJIA breaches the 14,000 level, you should evaluate your portfolio to see if you need to reduce your stock holdings. Likewise, if the DJIA declines below 12,000, it would likely be a good buying opportunity.

Bond investors face a difficult environment. With interest rates so low, investors are looking for higher yields in more risky “high yield” bonds or longer maturities. Both of these strategies subject the investor to higher risks (default risk and interest rate risk). Investors who have investments in bond mutual funds may be able to reduce risk and pick up additional yield by considering certain annuities that focus on income generation.

Many of these annuities allow you to accumulate interest at a higher rate than most bond funds and will give a higher payout when you start receiving income. **NOW**

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Uncontrolled Sugar

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

In the olden days, doctors were required to perform extraordinary and distasteful tasks for the sake of their patients — one of which was to taste the urine of their patients to determine if they had diabetes. If the taste was sweet and other observations were consistent, a diagnosis of diabetes was made. Doctors were able to come to the conclusion that sweet-tasting urine was an indicator of diabetes, because when blood glucose (sugar) levels became too high (hyperglycemic), the glucose would spill into the urine making it “sweet.” No doubt, physicians were tremendously relieved when a more civilized method of diagnosis became available!

One type of diabetes is called type 2 diabetes, the most common form of the condition. In type 2 diabetes, the body still produces insulin — a hormone that makes it possible for glucose to move from the blood and into the cells to provide energy. Without insulin to allow entrance into the cells, the glucose stays in the blood and causes hyperglycemia. In type 2 diabetes, the body produces insulin, but not in a sufficient amount, or the body is unable to use or recognize the insulin.

Many people with diabetes are unaware they have this condition. When symptoms are present, some of them are: an increased thirst, a more frequent need to urinate, infections are more difficult to heal, blurred vision, fatigue and weight loss. If the condition continues to

persist, serious and life-threatening complications may occur. The risk to the kidneys increases as long as the condition remains undiagnosed and may result in kidney disease with perhaps permanent damage to the organs. Another serious complication is the diabetic coma (hyperosmolar nonketotic diabetic coma). The blood sugar rises to astronomical levels, and as a result, the kidneys work overtime to filter it out of the body. This crisis situation leads to extreme dehydration. If left untreated, the person lapses into a coma. Unfortunately, this condition has a 59-percent death rate.

Anyone can develop diabetes, but here are some risk factors that make some individuals more susceptible: those over the age of 45, obesity, inactivity, family history of diabetes, those with high triglyceride levels and high blood pressure.

Diabetes type 2 has no cure, so the most prudent course is prevention. Prevention is simply following the advice most people have heard all their lives about living in a healthy fashion. Eat healthy, exercise and watch your weight. If you do develop diabetes, your health care adviser can guide you to the solutions best for your health. **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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March 2

8th anniversary of Cedar Hill Recreation Center and Neighborhood Services Citywide Block Party: 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., 310 E. Parkerville Rd. First 750 people receive free T-shirt. (972) 293-5288 or cedarhilltx.com/anniversary.

March 4

Southwest Dallas County Parkinson's Group's support meeting: 6:30-8:00 p.m., Trinity United Methodist Church, 1302 S. Clark Rd., Duncanville. Exercise/speech classes available. (972) 298-4556.

March 5, 19, 26

Home School DVD Series: Inventors of the World: 2:00 p.m., Duncanville Library 5 The Wright Brothers; 19 Henry Ford; 26 George Washington Carver.

March 9

Annual Festival of Tables: 10:00 a.m., Oak Cliff Woman's Club, 3555 W. Kiest Blvd, Dallas. Fundraiser and raffle with speaker Rose-Mary Rumbley. Cost: \$20; raffle tickets: two for \$5, (214) 337-7734.

March 11 — 13

Spring break activities, Cedar Hill library: 11: interactive puppet performance by Kim Lehman: 10:00 a.m.; 12: Tail Wagging dog show featuring trained therapy dogs: 1:00 p.m.; 13: discover the fun side of science: 1:00-4:00 p.m.

March 12

Family storytime and crafts: 7:00 p.m.

March 16

Cedar Hill's Walk the Light Arts Festival: 5:00-11:00 p.m. inside historic downtown businesses. Artists display/perform their craft. walkthelight.org.

March 21

Women's History Month performance: *Black Women Standing Tall, Standing Proud* by Toni Simmons: 7:00 p.m.

March 23

Cedar Hill Baseball Association Opening Day: 10:00 a.m., Valley Ridge Park, 2850 Park Ridge Dr. cedarhillbaseball.com or (972) 480-5252. Easter Egg-stravaganza: 11:00 a.m., DeSoto Town Center.

Princess Tea: 2:00 p.m., Cedar Hill Library. Wear your best princess attire. RSVP: (972) 291-7323 ext. 1312.

Tail Waggin' Tutors: 2:00-3:00 p.m., Duncanville Library.

Easter at the Ranch for families with special needs: 2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m., Paws for Reflection Ranch, 5431 Montgomery Rd. Free for families with special needs: ranch animals, Easter egg hunt and family games. Donations welcomed. (972) 775-8966.

Green Run: 5:00-9:00 p.m., Uptown Village at Cedar Hill: 5K run/walk, entertainment and after-party on the Village green. Admission: \$25/runner. cedarhilltx.com/greenrun or (972) 291-5130.

Ongoing

First Sundays

The Duncanville United Group meetings: 5:00-7:00 p.m. at varying locations each month. For location, contact: duncanvilleunited@yahoo.com.

Wednesdays:

3D Voice: Public Speaking for Children, ages 10-14: Wednesdays: 6:00-7:00 p.m. Cost: \$60/4 wk., Cedar Hill Recreation Center, 310 E. Parkerville Road. Develop Self-confidence through learning public speaking basics. (972) 293-5288 or cedarhilltx.com/classes.

Third Thursdays

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

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

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In The Kitchen With Elizabeth Walker

— *By Beverly Shay*

“I love to cook and watch the expressions on people’s faces as they enjoy it,” Elizabeth Walker admitted. “I didn’t really study cooking, unless you count my mother and grandmother.” Elizabeth mostly cooks for her family, and her favorite style of cooking is her own!

“I started helping my mother when I was 6, and by 13, my sister and I were starting supper when my mother got home from work,” Elizabeth recalled. “One of the funniest stories about cooking was when my mother and aunt asked my grandma for her bread recipe. They had to watch her make it and measure what she put in, because Grandma never measured anything!” **NOW**

My Peanut Butter Cookies

- 1 1/4 cups brown sugar**
- 1 cup peanut butter (I use Jif.)**
- 1/2 cup shortening**
- 1 egg**
- 2 Tbsp. milk**
- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour**
- 1 tsp. baking soda**
- 1/2 tsp. salt**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 375 F.
- 2.** Cream together sugar, peanut butter and shortening; beat in egg and milk.
- 3.** Stir together flour, baking soda and salt; add to creamed mixture.
- 4.** Shape into balls about 1 1/2 inches in size; place 2 inches apart on ungreased cookie sheet. Flatten in crisscrossed pattern with fork.
- 5.** Bake 10-12 minutes or until lightly browned.

Grandma’s Bread

Makes 2 loaves or one pan of rolls.

- 1 pkg. (1 Tbsp.) yeast**
- 1 tsp. sugar**
- 1/4 cup warm water**
- 3/4 cup milk, scalded**
- 3/4 cup water**
- 2 Tbsp. shortening**
- 2 heaping Tbsp. sugar**
- 1 Tbsp. salt**
- 1 beaten egg**
- 4 cups flour**

- 1.** Soften yeast and 1 tsp. sugar in 1/4 cup warm water (110 F).
- 2.** Mix milk, water, shortening, sugar and salt; cool to lukewarm. Add milk mixture to yeast; add egg. Mix in flour until a soft dough forms. Punch down; cover and let rest until it doubles in bulk (about 1 hour).
- 3.** Punch down or knead. Let rest again until doubled in bulk.

- 4.** Place dough on floured surface; knead about 5 minutes. Shape into loaves or rolls. Place into greased pans. Let rise till doubled. Bake at 375 F for 20 minutes, or until golden brown.

Ginger Cookies

Yields 3 dozen cookies.

- 3/4 cup shortening**
- 1 cup sugar**
- 1 egg**
- 1/4 cup molasses**
- 2 cups flour**
- 2 tsp. baking soda**
- 1/4 tsp. salt**
- 1 tsp. cinnamon**
- 1 tsp. ginger**
- Sugar (to coat)**

- 1.** Cream shortening and sugar; add egg and molasses; beat well.
- 2.** Sift flour with soda, salt and spices; add to shortening mixture.
- 3.** Shape into balls about 1 1/2 inches in diameter. Roll in sugar.
- 4.** Place on ungreased cookie sheet about 2 inches apart. Bake at 350 F for about 12 minutes.

Pink Candy

- 1/3 cup margarine or butter**
- 1/2 cup Karo Red Label syrup**
- 1 lb. sifted confectioners’ sugar**
- 1 tsp. vanilla (or flavoring of choice)**
- A few drops red food coloring**

- 1.** Stir margarine, syrup and half of the sugar over low heat until bubbly. Quickly stir in remaining sugar, flavoring and food coloring.
- 2.** Remove from heat; stir until mixture just holds its shape. Pour onto greased platter; cool until lukewarm. Knead and shape into balls or flattened circles.

White Chocolate Latte

Make by the mugful.

- 1 Tbsp. white chocolate chips**
- 1 Tbsp. instant coffee**
- 3/4 cup milk**
- 1/4 cup half-and-half**
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla**
- 1/2 tsp. rum flavoring**

- 1.** Place first 4 ingredients in mug; microwave 40 seconds or until hot enough to drink.
- 2.** Add vanilla and rum. Stir and drink.

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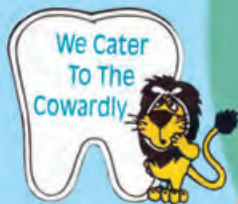
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