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ON THE COVER



*Elisabeth Pearson
conquers a dream.*

Photo by Amy Dishman.

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Editor's Note

Hello, Midlothian!

Inasmuch as spring signals the beginning of life in nature, a new baby announces the beginning of a new family. There are so many hopes and dreams for the little one. The parents hold these ideals close to their hearts as the strenuous nature of labor begins. Once again, I found myself in another labor and delivery room. This time, waiting for the birth of my second grandchild with my son, Philip, his wife, Joanna, and her mother, Cindy Mueller. What a beautiful honor to be there as he took his first breath. The room erupted into laughter and tears as the nurse placed him into Joanna's outstretched arms, and Philip embraced his family. It was a snapshot moment of a dream come true. Howard and I, along with Gary and Cindy Mueller, are so happy to announce the birth of our grandson — Harvey Ray Tryon.

Betty

Betty Tryon
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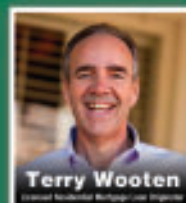
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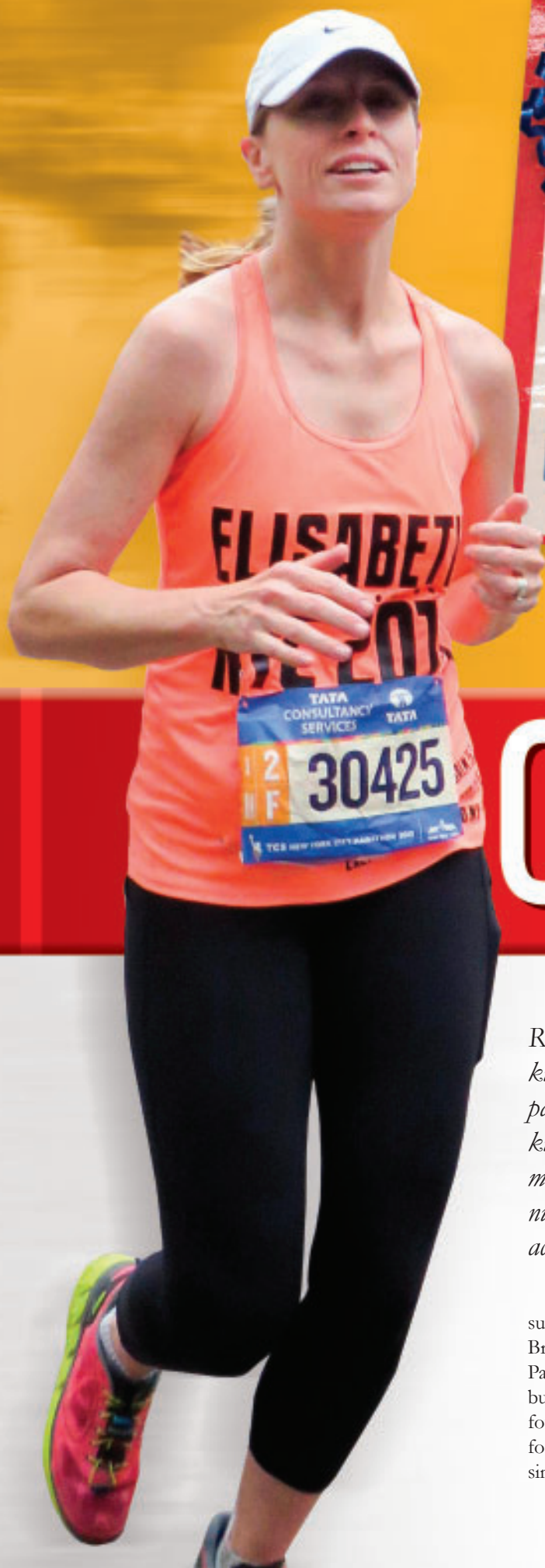
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ONCE IN

The walkie-talkie conveyed the distressing news, “Mrs. Robertson, we need you at the big playground. There is a kindergartener loose.” Actually, there was no crisis, just part of a ploy to surprise Mt. Peak Elementary School’s kindergarten teacher Elisabeth Pearson. This surprise was months in the making, since the first month of school. After nine years of trying, Elisabeth learned in April she was accepted into the New York City Marathon.

Her life up to this spectacular moment in time had its share of successes and challenges. Born in Jackson, Tennessee, her family moved to Brownwood, Texas, when she was 4 years old. Her dad taught at Howard Payne University until he retired in 2015. Her mother was also an educator, but Elisabeth resisted becoming one. “I always loved it,” she admitted, “but fought against it in the beginning. I wanted something different, so I went for my journalism degree but came back to education. I’ve been babysitting since age 10 because I love working with children.” Elisabeth received her



A LIFETIME

— By Betty Tryon

education degree at Howard Payne University. After college, she married Robert Pearson, and they moved to Puerto Rico for four years where she taught in a private school. They eventually made it back to Texas where she has taught in Midlothian for the last seven years. They have two children, Ethan and Claire.

Elisabeth began her running career as a way to continue to heal from four years of having the eating disorder, anorexia. “I’ve recovered from it,” she shared. “I started running as a stress reliever to curb the anxiety. I knew it was something that could be done on my own terms. It was something I knew I could do for myself. Running is a solitary thing and gave me time to think, reflect and to pray. I grew to really love it.”

Elisabeth started signing up for short races, such as 5K and 10K, and decided one day she wanted to try longer distances. The rest is history! She has run so many half marathons that the number eludes her. New York was her 12th full marathon. A runner doesn’t just fill out a form for the New York City Marathon and get automatically accepted. They must earn their way in and hope for a bit of luck. Elisabeth applied for nine years before being accepted. “I’ll never be fast enough for the

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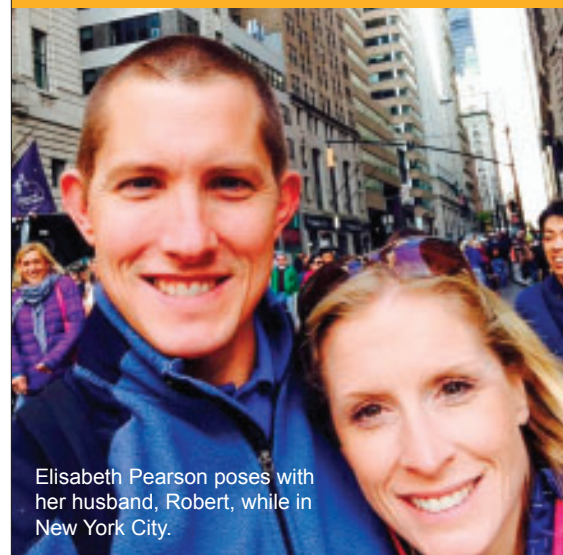
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Elisabeth Pearson poses with her husband, Robert, while in New York City.

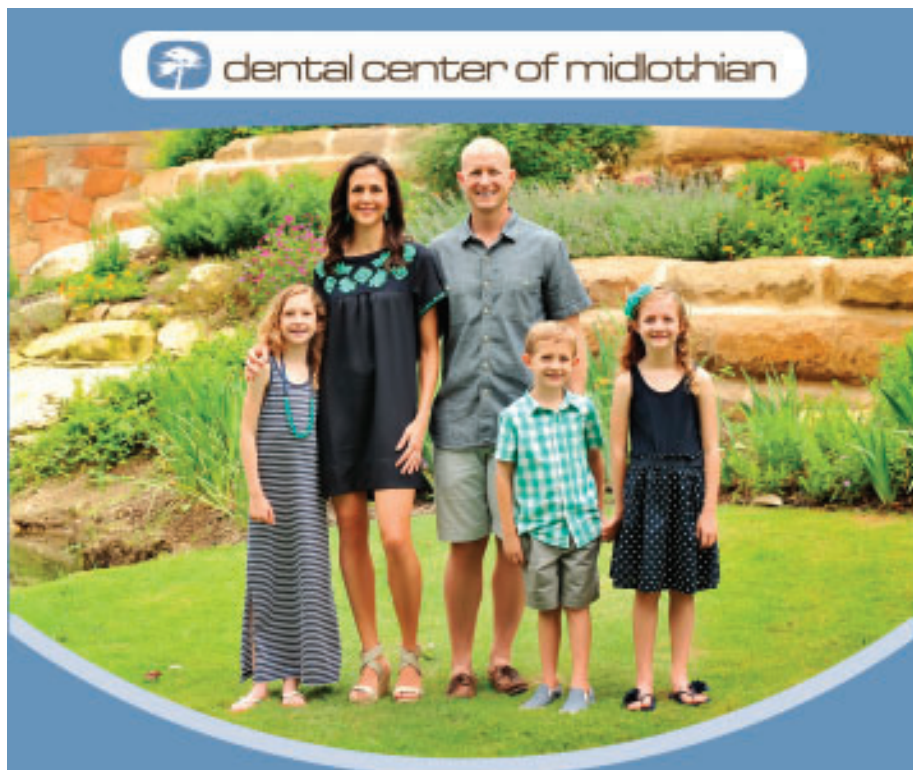
Boston Marathon,” she said. “I’m not that kind of runner. This was the race I wanted to do for my entire running career.”

The way she learned her wish had come true was when she noticed \$300 was missing from her bank account. “Usually, you get an email before they take the money out,” Elisabeth explained. But, this time the email came later. When it came, she celebrated with her husband. But it was the school’s celebration that was one for the books.

“I’m not easy to surprise, but they surprised me on this!” she exclaimed. On October 30, another kindergarten teacher asked if Elisabeth could do her morning duties because she had a



meeting with a parent. Elisabeth said, "Of course," and went to the gym. After dismissing the kids, Assistant Principal Nancy Robertson said she needed to talk to her. "I was concerned about meeting with her because my kids were going to my classroom without a teacher. But she didn't seem too concerned, and she was the assistant principal," Elisabeth laughed. "As she was trying to get her computer open, I became more and more worried about my kids being alone. On



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the walkie-talkie I could hear, 'Mrs. Robertson, we need you at the big playground. There is a kindergartener loose.' I told Nancy that's probably one of my kids because I'm not with them right now. She still didn't seem too concerned, but I was getting more and more anxious. She said, "Just come with me," and we walked to the big playground."

As Elisabeth neared the playground, she could see many of the staff outside. One of the fourth grade teachers was standing in front with speakers that had the *Rocky* theme song playing with a sign that said "Team Pearson" on it. It took a minute for what was going on to register with Elisabeth. When it did, she burst into tears. "I stood there for a minute trying to collect myself," she revealed. "They told me to start walking, and I could see the entire student body out there on the trail. Every one of my former and current students was there, and they were all high-fiving and hugging me and wearing Team Pearson T-shirts as I went around the entire walking trail. At the end of it, I saw my mom, dad and husband. My two children, Ethan and Claire, and my students were standing in front of them holding a *Finish* sign because that was the finish line."

The staff continued to encourage Elisabeth even after she arrived in New York. While there, she received text after text and hundreds of messages on Facebook. "That meant so much to

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me,” she shared. “I carried that with me during my run. When it got difficult, I thought of my students standing around and cheering me on. I don’t *need* to be appreciated, but it sure is *nice* to be appreciated. The staff was so loving and incredibly thoughtful, and I’m so humbled by it.”

Another teacher from the district, Nicole Terry, ran the race in 2014. She was able to give Elisabeth great advice about the race and the city, and she also gave Elisabeth a T-shirt with her name on it. “She knew what I was going to experience,” Elisabeth said. “Because of the T-shirt, I heard my name being shouted from mile one until the end. They would say, ‘You’re doing awesome, keep going!’”

Elisabeth was amazed at how efficient the race is and the degree to which the city supports it. “The entire city shuts down for this race,” she exclaimed. “It’s amazing! I ran through all five boroughs of New York. There were spectators probably 10-people deep the entire way. The only time there were not mass crowds was on the bridges. It’s the city that never sleeps, and for them to stop to encourage runners is just incredible. I wasn’t looking at the spectators but above their heads. We went through so many different areas. Some of the areas were quietly supportive, and some were more rowdy and celebratory. The Orthodox Jewish community was silent. It was really cool to see all the different cultures. I was thinking while running — *Don’t miss anything!* It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.” **NOW**

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VES

— By Betty Tryon



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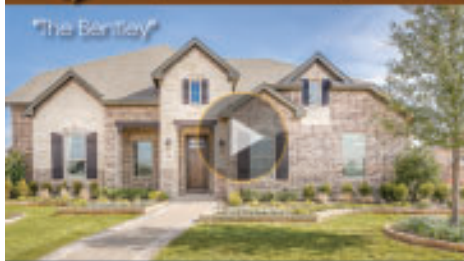


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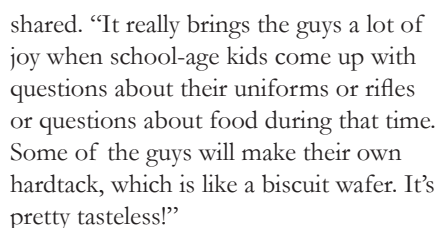
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Their style of fighting was “Napoleonic, consisting of two ranks of men, front and rear, that stood shoulder to shoulder,” Kevin explained. “Up to that time, the rifle was deadly, but not that accurate. So, if men fired together in mass, it was likely the targets down range would be hit in some capacity. During the war, more accurate muskets/rifles were being used. This made those exposed, long lines of men more vulnerable from farther distances.”

Kevin became interested in Civil War re-enactments because his father became interested in it when discovering genealogy in the mid-'90s. He studied his family tree and learned some of his relatives fought for the Confederacy and some fought for the North. He asked Kevin to come photograph some of the re-enactment events. This piqued Kevin's interest and led him to become part of the group. He has always been into history, sociology and government politics. “This was an easy way for me to have fun going camping and doing living history at the same time with a bunch of men like a fraternity,” Kevin



Kevin joined the 9th Texas Infantry Regiment, which re-enacts the history of the Texas unit of the same name 150-plus years ago. “We are re-enacting the way they lived back then — everything from their clothing, rifles, food they ate and accoutrements. They try to stress accuracy in their portrayal of the way men acted or talked. So when someone walks up to the camp, they are looking at living history like you read in textbooks.” The re-enactors are very meticulous and precise about their uniforms to the point that if someone time traveled from the Civil War to today, they wouldn’t be able to tell the difference. The authenticity extends to the artillery also. The black powder rifles are typically Enfield or Springfield rifles that are made almost identical to the way they were in that time period.

The School of the Soldier teaches participants how to represent the era correctly. “The School of the Soldier is where we have monthly drills, learn the marching orders and the look of the uniform,” Kevin explained. “As we



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grow and get new members, we try to show them the proper look and where to get the uniforms." Once a year, Kevin's company has a muster or assemblage of the troops, for an entire weekend. Muster is where they fine tune their skills. For the re-enactments, the 9th Texas Infantry, along with other groups from around Texas, come together to make up the Red River Battalion. "We are the biggest battalion in Texas," Kevin said. The re-enactments occur quarterly with one big battle each year.

During the re-enactment camps, the troops usually have two battles on a Saturday and one on Sunday. Not all of the battles are public. Some may be tactical and not scripted. "We may be among the trees and in the woods doing our own thing, and there's no way the public can observe that or watch it," Kevin explained. "But the scripted battles we do for the public are on multi-tracts of land with the crowd roped off to one side."

Civilians who visit the re-enactment camp can walk around if no re-enactment is going on. If there is a re-enactment in progress, there could be a lot of action in different places. "You just have to be lucky where you are standing," Kevin revealed. "You can have a cavalry charge in one place and/or five to 20 canons firing and infantry units facing off in various places."

In addition to the scheduled battles, the participants typically have church service. Some of the units have their own chaplain in their ranks and conduct services in their own camp. The larger group uses a tent for Sunday service.

Kevin was most impressed by the re-enactment of the Battle of New Market Heights in Virginia. "That was neat because we were re-enacting a Texas unit



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that fought at that particular battle,” he said. “The people we were opposing were comprised of the United States Colored Troops or USCT. They are a regiment of black soldiers. There are men in that group whose ancestors fought back then. The County of Henrico, Virginia, actually sponsored the event. It is really rare for a municipality to actually put on the event. The county re-created the conditions the troops fought under and showed the struggle the USCT had to overcome to eventually win that battle. We ended up running,” Kevin laughed. “The county did a fantastic job.”

Usually, the re-enactment events comprise of a few hundred participants to thousands. The largest event Kevin experienced occurred in Shiloh, Tennessee. “It was April, and it rained and it rained and it rained,” he shared. “We had 130 men from the Red River battalion, whereas our typical number is about 60. There were 12,000 re-enactors out there and 110 cannon artillery pieces, but it was pretty much rained out. Our fire pits were under water and water seeped into the tents.”

Kevin’s unit is a Confederate unit, but for the last 10 years, almost 50 percent of the time his unit will wear Federal uniforms, while fighting on the Union side. “What we are doing is no different from when you are teaching kids about that time in a textbook,” he explained. “We are literally living history without pushing an agenda. We go out of our way to remind people that we are a nonpolitical group. We don’t get paid for any of the re-enactments, since it’s just a hobby, and we enjoy doing it. We love the history part of it. We are just camping out, playing war and having a great time doing it, while being fully aware that although we can go home, 150 years ago, many of the soldiers did not. **NOW**



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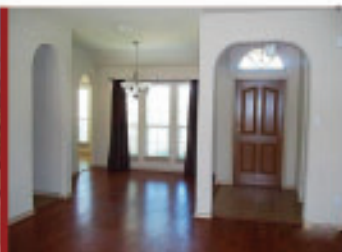
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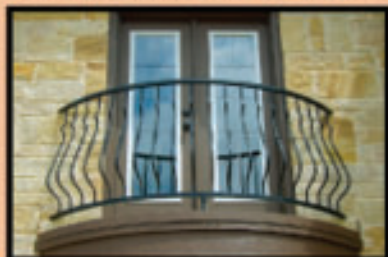
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An Odyssey of Journeys

— By Zachary R. Urquhart

People like to settle down and establish roots. It is in our blood. But for some, it takes a long journey to get to a place where settling down is possible. For different reasons, David and Tiffany Davlin spent their formative years moving around the state and country. Now, though, they are growing roots as deep as they can in Midlothian.

David lived in about a dozen towns across the state before his family moved to Dallas in time for high school. “If it’s in Texas, I probably lived there,” he laughed. “But I did all four years at W.T. White High School, so I call Dallas home.” He went to community college before joining the workforce, first as a waiter, then as a real estate appraiser. “I did an apprenticeship for a few years, and in 2006, I opened my own firm,” he detailed. He now

works on staff for Lone Star Ag Credit, specializing in farm and ranch appraisals.

Tiffany grew up in a military family, so her travels took her farther than David’s. “I’m an Air Force brat,” she said. “I lived in Maryland, but I was in Texas and Georgia for a while, too.” After high school, she headed to Austin, with a quick stop in Jefferson along the way. “I was just going to see my grandmother for a few days, and I ended up staying for two years.” While they continued traveling, they were both in Dallas when they first met at Taste of Addison. “We actually met again a few weeks later at another festival,” she recounted. “We dated for about a year, and we got married on November 22, 2003.”

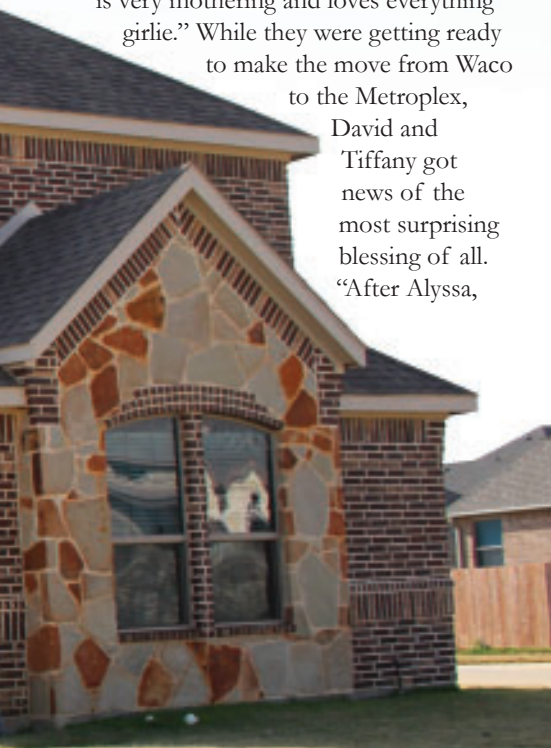
David and Tiffany bought what they thought would be a quick-flip investment house just outside of Waco, where they were both working at that point. David had his company and Tiffany





had spent six years at Blue Cross before becoming an annuity marketing specialist for Liberty Bankers Life. "We thought we would spend a month doing some remodeling," David reminisced. "We lived there eight years, and we were always working on something. There isn't a surface on that house that we didn't change. It wasn't one month, but all that work eventually paid off."

David and Tiffany were told early on that it would be difficult for them to have children, so they know each child they have is a blessing. "Andrew is 9, loves sports, camping and has a big heart," Tiffany outlined. "Alyssa is 5, is very mothering and loves everything girly." While they were getting ready to make the move from Waco to the Metroplex, David and Tiffany got news of the most surprising blessing of all. "After Alyssa,





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we thought we were done, but God had other plans. When we got pregnant with Alexander, even the doctors called it a miracle," she said. "He keeps us busy! He loves trains and disassembling things to see how they work. There is never a dull moment in our home."

When the bank moved him to this region, David and Tiffany started looking at the area. "Because of the schools, we narrowed it down to Midlothian," he explained. "We looked at about 60 homes over two weekends. We had settled

on one down the street, and then we noticed this house, which wasn't listed with MLS." As soon as they walked in, they knew they had found their home. Because he and Tiffany both work from home most of the time, the large office was a necessity.

For Tiffany, there was one more thing she all but insisted on finding. "I spent a lot of time with my aunt and uncle growing up," she detailed. "They gave me their dining room table, so I wanted to make sure we had a formal

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dining room. The table isn't anything fancy, but I always picture waking up on Saturday mornings and sitting here with my uncle at the head." After looking at many homes that had either an office or dining room, but not both, Tiffany fell in love with this house, and they moved in November of 2012.

The dining room is the first thing guests see inside a foyer leading to the office, a staircase that disappears around a wall, and a clear view of the living room and kitchen. Upstairs, the kids have bedrooms branching off of a central playroom. The boys' room features bunk beds and walls covered with sports memorabilia. "Alexander's room was at the end of the hall, but it seemed weird having the baby so far away," Tiffany explained. What was his room is now a nicely adorned guest bedroom with seafoam green and dark wood.

Alyssa's room shows off her love of all things girly, with pink and white everywhere. "We love the headboard we repainted," Tiffany described. "I was previously a CASA, and we still support the agency. We bought the headboard at their gala last year." A classic-style painting is displayed above the bed. "That was the first grown-up piece of art I ever owned," Tiffany continued. "My first apartment had a room decorated around it, and now Alyssa's room is, too."

Back downstairs, the living room and its luxurious furniture focuses attention on a beautiful entertainment center that David's brother built. "He is a master carpenter that can build anything," David detailed. "Any time we are working on





a project, I call him, and he walks me through it.” Past the living area, the kitchen is completed with granite and knotty alder cabinets. “Doing appraisals, I see lots of styles, so I made sure we went with the darker cabinets,” he explained. A notably large kitchen nook affords plenty of space for the family and serves as a threshold for the newly improved backyard, with an extended porch and rustic awning.

Across from the kitchen, David and Tiffany’s master bedroom features a large canopy-style bed and ornate, rich wood furnishings. A large master bathroom sits before the precipice of an equally expansive closet. “We like the large space, but usually, our room turns into the family room anyway,” Tiffany joked. “Sometimes, we wonder why the kids even have their own bathroom!”

Along with finding the perfect home, David and Tiffany love the community they have been able to develop in a few short years. “We were only here a few months when we had Alexander, but the church put together meals and took care of us,” she recalled. They serve on neighborhood committees and are plugged in at First Baptist Church. “We were eating in town just after moving, and we already felt like this was home.” After an odyssey of journeys that took them many places before finding each other, David and Tiffany have finally found their home for the ages in Midlothian. **NOW**

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— By Abby Rich



Emma Claire Stephens is one of the few girls her age who knows precisely what she's doing and exactly where her future lies. Several months ago, the Midlothian resident earned her United States Dressage Federation bronze medal. She was 10 years old at the time. Most recently, at the age of 11, Emma Claire earned silver medal status, thus making her the youngest in the state of Texas and in U.S. history to achieve such a prestigious honor.



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For those who don't know what the equine sport of dressage entails, maybe you've been flipping through the television channels on a Saturday afternoon and run across a competition where horses are performing intricate maneuvers as their riders sit almost motionless. The moves almost look like the horse is dancing with its rider. Well, it is a dance of sorts, and can also be set to music. But for the purpose of USDF shows, dressage is divided into eight levels: training level; first, second, third and fourth levels; Prix St. Georges; Intermediare and Grand Prix, whereas basic dressage is at the training level.

The goal of dressage training is to develop a horse's flexibility, responsiveness to aids (or cues) from the rider and balance. This makes the horse stronger and more pleasurable to ride. In reality, it conveys a good partnership between

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horse and rider, allowing the horse to be trained to its full potential.

At shows, competitors always compete against themselves, as well as other riders taking the test. The goal in competition is to improve on your own score. When riding a dressage test, competitors are evaluated by up to five judges, who give scores on every element of the dressage test. They look for obedience, suppleness, accuracy, attitude and how well the riders ride, as well as the horse's willingness and obedience to its rider's cue. The judging is not about how well the horse can memorize movement. Today, the art of dressage has evolved into one of the most highly regimented disciplines in the horse world.

To get to the competition level of dressage usually takes riders and horses years to learn, train and master, but not for Emma Claire. She is a rarity in the sport, and having only been riding horses for three years, she is one of the youngest in the genre. It all came about at the age of 8 when she was visiting her grandparents in Temple, Texas. She had never been around horses, but her grandmother's neighbor, who breaks horses, allowed her to ride one. From that moment on the little girl fell in love. So, promptly thereafter, her mom, Jennifer Stephens, found 4-C Stables in Waxahachie and signed her up for riding lessons. "Emma Claire had to learn how to handle and care for horses as well because if a horse doesn't respect you on the ground, he won't respect you when you're riding him," Jennifer stated. "It's



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important to always start off with a good, safe horse to learn basic skills, so you can gain confidence."

Emma Claire progressed in her lessons very fast and found she has a natural ability and intuitiveness with horses. With the expert help from the stable owners, Stacey Carpenter and Ryan Metcalf, Jennifer and Emma Claire learned as much about horses as fast as they could, and then purchased Lady, whom she qualified with in 2014 at regionals.

Emma Claire started learning dressage because Lady, who was previously a jumper, became injured, and she needed something that would be easier on her than jumping. Next, they purchased Tango, a lower level dressage horse. Later still, they acquired Persona Grata (A.K.A. Moose), a regal-looking Dutch Warmblood from Holland. He is a sport horse, which is great for dressage and jumping, and he is also considered a schoolmaster horse, which means he is highly experienced and has the ability to help a rider learn and perfect certain skills.

If Jennifer didn't know anything about horses when her daughter started competing, she learned quickly. Now she drives Emma Claire and trailers her horses to and from shows, loading the animals in and out, which can be a feat in itself.

It was only last spring that Emma Claire and Tango started learning dressage with the help of her trainer, Whit Watkins, who in the past has won at the Grand Prix, which is the Olympic level. Because she lives south of Waco, Whit only works with Emma Claire and her horses every few weeks versus most dressage riders who utilize a trainer three to four days per week. "Since Emma Clair doesn't have a trainer in her ear as often as most," Jennifer explained, "she has to do everything herself, and she does 90-percent of the training with her horses, versus most riders, who have a trainer ride their horses 50-percent of the time." Even though she is homeschooled,

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she is only riding three to four days per week while stretching and grooming her horses the rest of the time.

It's clear that Emma Claire has an instinctive way with horses, and particularly in dressage, where she has to feel and think her way to the next movement while giving subtle cues to her horse. All dressage movements are performed on cue by the horse and rider, but the rider needs to be the one to give the cues and not the other way around. This takes a lot of time and practice. "If it's too rehearsed in training, then the horse may perform a move too early," Emma Claire said. "They have to take cues from the rider, which takes patience, and you can't be rough in anything you do with the horse."

Another anomaly is that soon after Emma Claire learned dressage, she placed. This past July, she entered her first show with Persona Grata, and in July she scored a 65 percent, earning the scores she needed for her bronze medal. She had the highest score of all the riders in her class at the competition, beating adults and professional trainers, as well. There aren't a lot of kids her age in dressage, and when the topic comes up with other riders and competitors at a show, they are blown away at how fast Emma Claire has progressed in the art.

When asked about her goals for the future, she is confident that she'll be competing in the 2020 or 2024 Olympics. And, of course, she will continue to learn all she can and train horses for the rest of her life. But for the not-so-distant future, Emma Claire's goal is to win gold at the age of 12, which would make her the youngest in U.S. history to do so. After what she's accomplished so far, this goal is not all that lofty. **NOW**



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Blooms

When Planted

— By Melissa Swedoski

As spring unfurls its sunny beams across North Texas, many are ready to get back outside and get their hands in the dirt. Since most of the soils in the area are difficult to work with, raised box gardens offer a creative, as well as versatile, option for the backyard. From small, square boxes to large, rectangular vegetable gardens, the choices are limited only by your imagination.

Before building, determine the amount of useable room you have available. Consider how many plants, flowers or vegetables you want inside the raised garden and the square footage that can be allotted. Planter boxes, the self-contained version of garden boxes, can be placed on concrete or grass, while raised beds are best in the yard.

Material Requirements

As interest in home improvement projects has grown, so have the options. Raised beds can be made with lumber, stone, concrete blocks or almost any other material, even burlap sacks. The simplest way is to create a raised pile of soil, which gets the plants away from the not-so-good native soil and promotes good drainage. The real investment will be in the choice of soil, and in this area of Texas, ideal soil is a mix of minerals, sand, clay and organic matter, and can include a quality compost.

Pressure-treated wood or cedar are the top options for raised garden boxes, since both are easy to work with and durable against natural elements. There's also "construction heart" redwood that is exceedingly rot-resistant. Pine is a popular choice by the do-it-yourself





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crowd, but humidity and direct sun take their toll on any structure. Always pre-treat and seal the wood you select. Balance out durability with budget constraints to choose the right wood for you.

A word to the wise: You will need saws, drills, clamps, wood glue, measuring tape, paper, pencil, screws, wire cutters, shovel, staple gun, level, bird netting and/or row cover. Most raised beds are weekend DIY adventures, but stopping multiple times for a trip to the home improvement store could extend that. If you don't have large table saws, purchase pre-cut lumber that will only require sanding and sealing.

Construction

Using raised beds means growing more in less space with less work. Read seed packages to determine how much space is required for each plant, so you can lay out the garden correctly. Wider and

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deeper rows need less water and produce more, while more plants can be planted in a rectangular bed than in a long narrow bed measuring the same square footage. For a garden of plants and/or flowers, best results will come with breaking up the sod, removing it to eliminate weeds, and tilling the soil, which especially helps clay soil.

Vegetables generally need eight hours of direct sunlight to have a good harvest, so make sure you pick a location in your yard that can supply that. Make it as level as possible, well drained and near a water source. Build the frame and mark the location. Move the lumber and dig 1-inch deep holes for posts. Put the lumber back in place, and attach it to the posts. Loosen the soil to about 12 inches deep, allowing for proper drainage.

Mix the topsoil with some humus, sand and manure inside the frame, then rake it until smooth. Choose your veggies, lay them in the box based on spacing requirements and dig a hole big enough for the root ball. Plant it, fill it with soil, and then water thoroughly. Use stakes, if there is a need, and add mulch to the base of the plants for an extra boost. For this part of Texas, tomatoes, green beans,



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squash, corn, peppers and cucumbers are common, but be sure that the last freeze has occurred and the soil is slightly warmed up before planting.

In a more limited space, craft a waist-high planter box that measures 6 feet long, but only 22 inches deep and 12 inches wide. This also allows for adjustment in budget, since the frame can be made from pine wood, while only the box needs to be made out of cedar. You can have room for multiple kinds of vegetables, although in smaller quantities than with the raised-bed style.

If you prefer the full planter box style, fasten the boards using galvanized screws, since they are less likely to rust, in a rectangular shape. Put the bottom board inside the box and attach it. Create four or five drainage holes in the bottom of the box, add a layer of nylon or vinyl screen on the bottom to protect the wood, and then prime, paint or stain it. Add a thin layer of gravel to help with drainage, and then add the soil.



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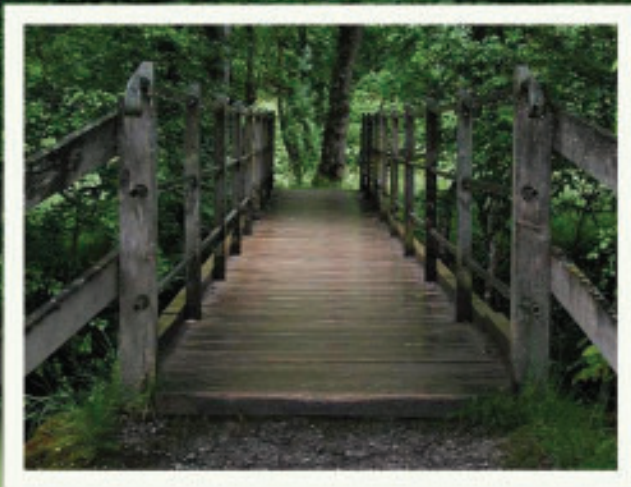


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Flowers

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When the full, hot Texas sun hits in the summer, several flowers can make your raised garden as beautiful as during the spring. From the Black-eyed Susan to the Victoria Blue Sage, colors abound. Lantana comes in a number of colors, while Dwarf Mexican Petunia brings in the lavender shade, and there's the always popular Autumn Sage as well as the Pink Skullcap.

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Liberty Cheer Gymnastics and Dance

3390 N. Hwy. 67
Midlothian, TX 76065
(972) 775-5323
Carrie Smith: (972) 322-8363
Ashley Brown: (469) 285-1186
Lyndsey Rose: (817) 714-3592
libertycheerallstars.com

Hours:

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday: 2:00-9:00 p.m.
Wednesday: 11:00 a.m.-noon; 2:00-9:00 p.m.
Friday: 3:00-8:00 p.m.
Saturday: 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
Tryouts: May 9-14, check website for more information.



Lyndsey Rose, Ashley Brown and Carrie Smith, owners of Liberty Cheer Gymnastics and Dance, have one of the finest gyms in the area.

Forever Blue

Liberty Cheer Gymnastics and Dance teaches excellence with loyalty to the blue. — By Betty Tryon

Carrie Smith, Lyndsey Rose and Ashley Brown are three Midlothians who demonstrate some of the best ingenuity in this community. All three grew up and went to school here, and after graduation, they began a cheer program that grew into one of the finest gyms in the area. Because of their efforts, Midlothian can be proud to say it has its very own Division 1 all-star program. “We entered Division 1 four years ago,” Carrie stated. “We are one of the large gyms that works closely with school cheerleading.”

Liberty Cheer Gymnastics and Dance sports a new state-of-the-art gym that more than triples the size of the old gym by going from 6,000 sq. ft. to 20,000 sq. ft. Because of the increase in size, the owners can now offer different programs, such as: All-Around Girl’s Gymnastics for all ages, Dance Studio for

hip-hop, lyrical and modern contemporary teams and All-Star Cheerleading. They have a real Marley floor for dance. With the extra room comes the ability for the studio to offer more teams and staff. They also have three full-size springboard floors and one hard mat and a parents’ room that is spacious and overlooks the entire gym floor. “Gymnastics is offered to boys after they are 5 years old, and they can be beginners,” Ashley said. “Boys can do tumbling or All-Star Cheerleading at any age.”

“We have a large foam pit, which is a sunken area filled with shapes of soft foam,” Lyndsey shared. “This is for playing and skill training.” The foam pit and two large bounce houses come in handy when the gym hosts birthday parties and have their popular open gym on Friday from 6:00-8:00 p.m. Any child can come, and many parents use it as a date night. Any cancellations

of the open gym will be on Liberty Cheer's web page.

Liberty Cheer Gymnastics and Dance has been the recipient of many awards through the years, and 2015 was no exception. "At the end of last year's season, we had won multiple national titles, including: NCA titles, Cheer Power, Spirit Celebration, Dallas Cowboys' Cheerleaders National and several multiple level championships wins. That means we didn't just beat the team we were against, we beat every division in that level."

"We are one of the large gyms that works closely with school cheerleading."

Part of the reason for the successes of the cheer program is the winning spirit of the male coaches. "They help kids get ready for college tryouts," Carrie said. Over half of the kids who graduate from the program get scholarships and cheer in college." All of their coaches are USASF or United States All Star Federation certified for levels 1-5.

Although Liberty Cheer wins often on a spectacular level, the coaches don't want all the focus to be on winning. "Winning is awesome," explained Carrie, "but we teach them that it is important to be humble when winning." As they teach technical skills, the coaches also teach life lessons. "Our biggest thing is loyalty and commitment. They bleed blue," Carrie smiled. "We co-partner with parents on commitment and life lessons." Owners are always available by text or phone to help every Liberty Cheer student be the best they can be. **NOW**



Liberty Cheer
LCA Gymnastics & Dance

LIBERTY CHEER ALL-STAR EVALUATIONS

Mon. - Tues. May 9th - 10th: All-Star Open Practice with LCA Coaches from 6:30PM - 8PM (optional but free and helpful)

Wed. - Thurs. May 11th - 12th: All-Star Open Flyers Evaluation from 6:30PM - 8PM

Saturday - May 14th: Season 11 Liberty Cheer All-Star Evaluation-Placements: \$30 with a **FREE Liberty T-Shirt!**

Athletes should use their age as of August 31, 2016

10AM - 11AM: 6-yrs old & younger
11AM - 1PM: 7-yrs old to 8-yrs old
1PM - 3PM: 9-yrs old to 11-yrs old
3PM - 5PM: 12-yrs old to 14-yrs old
5PM - 7PM: 15-yrs old to 18-yrs old

We will be evaluating tumbling and jumps at this time. Teams will not be set until July 1st and you will practice with practice groups that will be posted on Monday, May 16th. We will have All-Star Levels 1 - 5. All-Star Prep Teams and Show Teams!

There is a place for your child at Liberty!

Any questions email carrie@libertycheerallstars.com or lyndsey@libertycheerallstars.com or text Carrie at (972) 322-8363 for immediate assistance.

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Aadhyaa S. and Sheridan S. participate in J.R. Irvin's spelling bee.



Julie and Laslo Sears accept their Midlothian Chamber Plaque at Quality RVs.



Pearl Nail & Spa celebrates their grand opening and ribbon cutting celebration.



Jessica, Jennifer, Annevay and Allison proudly display the books they wrote.



Liberty Cheer Sparklers team members pose with Maverick cheerleaders.



Isabella Matthews models an outfit from Reverence Performance Dance Apparel.



Mo Hadzovic, Justin Citron and Michael Citron receive a chamber welcome.



Irvin Elite students earned a reward lunch at Chili's with their principal, Mrs. Thompson.



Louis and Cathy Ponder of Approved Home Health host an After Hours Mixer Party.

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Four Ways Interest Rate Hikes Affect Your Finances

The interest rates that shape the economy and your portfolio are increasing for the first time in nine years. After months of speculation, interest rates are officially on the rise. Federal Reserve Chairwoman Janet Yellen, the nation's top financial policy maker, and the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) voted on December 16 to raise rates by 0.25 percent. Known as the Federal Funds Target Rate, it sets the basis for what banks charge other banks to borrow money, and it is the starting point for many consumer-facing interest rates like credit cards and auto loans. The quarter-point hike sets the target rate between 0.25 percent and 0.5 percent.

For seven years, the FOMC kept rates near zero in an effort to spur growth after the Great Recession. As the economic data the FOMC watches slowly improved throughout 2015, observers turned their attention from *if* a hike would happen in 2015, to *when* a rate hike would happen. Volatility over the summer, including violent swings in the global stock markets, slowing economic growth in China and WTI oil, the U.S. benchmark, falling below the key \$40 per barrel mark, delayed the FOMC from acting. After seeing economic activity moderately pick up, the FOMC cited improvements in the job market and inflation as reasons to raise rates now and gradually raise them over the coming years. "The economic recovery has clearly come a long way, though it is not yet complete," Yellen warned after the December announcement.

Interest rates deeply impact Main Street. Here are four of the most common ways rising rates could impact you:

- **Mortgages and vehicle loans** — If it costs more money for banks to

borrow money, it's likely that extra cost will be passed on to the consumer. Whenever the Fed decides to hike interest rates, house hunters and car buyers should expect to pay a little more in interest down the road.

- **Bond values** — Generally when interest rates rise, yields rise and the price of existing bonds fall on the resale market. If held to maturity, the full principal value of the bonds is returned subject to the creditworthiness of the issuers.

- **Student loans** — Most student loans issued by the federal government are tied to the 10-year Treasury note, a debt instrument issued by the U.S. Treasury department. Here, too, higher interest rates mean you'll pay more to borrow money for school.

- **Savings accounts and CDs** — This is one area where higher interest rates are good news for consumers. When rates increase, you'll eventually earn more interest on your savings. Interest rates on CDs are usually fixed at the time of purchase.

Contact your financial advisor for more information on how interest rates play a role in your investment portfolio. **NOW**

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Jonathan Pope is a Raymond James Financial Advisor based in Duncanville.



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Why a Healthy Mouth Is Crucial to Diabetes Control and Prevention

If you are diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, your doctor most likely explains a number of habits and lifestyle changes you can make to keep your condition under control. Increasing your activity and changing your diet can not only keep diabetes from worsening, but in some cases can reverse the disease process. One thing your doctor should also encourage, which may surprise you, is how important it is to keep up your dental care. If you haven't been to the dentist in a while, now is the time!

A thorough, responsible dentist will look for signs of gum disease at your first visit and at least yearly thereafter. Diabetics will often need to be examined more often, and work to halt any inflammation of their gums in the pre-gum disease stages, if at all possible. For years, dentists have known the link between diabetes and gum disease, and each year the evidence gets stronger. The process goes as follows: Gum disease-causing bacteria proliferate, for any number of reasons, and cause inflammation in the gums (redness, bleeding, etc.). These inflammatory cells circulate in the blood stream, and tell the endocrine system there's an injury somewhere. In turn, the endocrine system releases more sugar into the blood, so the individual has the energy needed to combat this injury. Unfortunately, if the individual has plaque and tartar on their teeth, their gums can't heal themselves on their own. And diabetics have a more difficult time with wound healing — yes, gum disease is a wound, about the size of the palm of your hand — so even small injuries (plaque and tartar

are the injury) cannot get better without intervention. Sadly, nondiabetics with gum disease are more likely to progress to diabetes than those with healthy gums. Once you are diagnosed with diabetes, the severity of your gum disease determines how likely you are to die from your condition.

Thankfully, as serious as gum disease is to diabetics, there is good news! Research indicates that treating your gum disease can significantly lower your A1C, making it easier to control your blood glucose levels. In turn, properly managing your diabetes will make it easier to control your gum disease. So you are more likely to keep your teeth as you age and avoid the multiple other systemic problems that can occur with gum disease. Be sure to tell your dentist if you have recently been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. If you haven't seen a dentist in a while, there are many excellent dentists in our community who are ready to help you! **NOW**

Sources:

<http://www.joponline.org/doi/abs/10.1902/jop.1997.68.8.713>.

<http://care.diabetesjournals.org/content/28/1/27.short>.

<http://care.diabetesjournals.org/content/33/5/1037.short>.

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March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

DivorceCare: 6:30-8:00 p.m., First United Methodist Church, 800 S. 9th St. For more information call (972) 723-3993.

March 5

Ellis County Women's Expo/Business, Health & Wellness: 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center. Tickets: adults \$5; children under 10 are free. For more information, call (972) 937-2390 or visit www.waxahachiechamber.com.

March 6

Liberty Cheer All-Stars Showcase & Auction: 2:00-6:00 p.m., 3390 N. Hwy. 67. Admission is \$10 cash, and children 6 and under are free with complimentary valet parking. Dress in your Sunday best and athletes in uniforms. Event includes food, refreshments, vendors, athlete entertainment, music and a huge raffle. For more information, visit libertycheerallstars.com.

March 12

Ellis County's Miss Heart of the USA: 2:00 p.m., Courtyard Midlothian Conference Center, 3 Community Dr. All contestants must bring a minimum of 10 non-perishable food items to benefit The Manna House. Basic entry fee for Ellis

County is \$45. For more information, visit misshheartoftheusa.com/elliscotx.

March 17

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

March 19

Ellis County Master Gardener Lawn and Garden Expo: 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center. The \$5 event includes guest speaker Neil Sperry, plant sales, 200 vendors, children's interactive projects, college scholarship fundraiser and more. For more information, contact expo.ecmga@gmail.com.

March 21

Writers' Circle: 6:30 p.m., A.H. Meadows Public Library, 923 S. 9th St., Midlothian. Do you have a secret dream to be a writer, but don't know where to start? Or have you been writing for a while, but need some honest feedback? This new group is open to the public to provide support, motivation and writing tips. For more information, contact Sarah at WritersCircleMidlo@gmail.com.

March 24 — June 2

14th Citizens Police Academy: 6:00 p.m., Midlothian Police Department, 1150 N. Hwy. 67, Ste. 300. The Academy is to give citizens who live and work in Midlothian an opportunity to learn about police work in general and is available to those 16 and older. Contact Billy Seals for more information at (972) 775-7611.

March 26

Easter at the Ranch for Families with Special Needs: 2:00-4:00 p.m. Easter egg hunt, arts and crafts, games and refreshments. Come visit with the Easter Bunny and the ranch animals.

April 23

Rowdy Run 5K: 8:30 a.m., Kimmel Park. USATF-Certified Course and Chip-Timed run/walk benefitting the MISD Education Foundation and MISD Rowdy Runners Club. Register online at www.tinyurl.com/rowdyrun5k. For more information, contact chelsi_frazier@misd.gs or (972) 775-8296.

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



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In the Kitchen With Carol Toberny

— *By Betty Tryon*

One of Carol Toberny's past cooking pleasures was making croissants from scratch. Every Friday, she would start a new batch, and then refrigerate it. On Saturday, she would begin the process of rolling, turning and folding the dough to increase the number of flaky layers. Sunday was the big day to bake and enjoy 18 delicious croissants.

"As a vegetarian, I like lots of flavor in my foods. Some of the spices I use most often are ground cumin and cumin seeds, coriander, oregano, turmeric and cinnamon. I also cook with a lot of fresh herbs, onion and moderate amounts of garlic." Occasionally, Carol cooks meat for her husband who helps her operate Ginger Bread Station Used Books in Midlothian. **NOW**

Butternut Squash Soup

Makes 2 quarts.

1 Tbsp. unsalted butter or olive oil
3 cups sweet onion (Vidalia or Walla Walla), coarsely chopped
2 1/2 lbs. butternut squash, peeled, seeded and cut into 1-inch pieces
3 sprigs thyme
1-2 tsp. brown sugar (optional)
Salt and pepper, to taste
1 3/4 cups vegetable broth
1 3/4 cups water
Sour cream (for topping)

1. Melt butter in a pot over medium heat. Cook onion, stirring occasionally, until softened and golden, about 15 minutes.

2. Add squash, thyme, brown sugar, salt, pepper, broth and water. Increase heat to high; bring to boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer until squash is soft, 12-15 minutes. Discard thyme.
3. Process in batches in a blender until smooth.
4. Season with additional salt and pepper.
5. Ladle into bowls and top with a dollop of sour cream and sprinkle with chopped thyme.

Kim's One-pot Spaghetti Dinner

12 oz. linguine
12 oz. cherry or grape tomatoes, halved or quartered if large

2 cups onion, thinly sliced
3 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
1/2 tsp. red pepper flakes
2 sprigs basil, plus more for garnish
2 Tbsp. olive oil
4 1/2 cups water
Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste
Freshly grated Parmesan cheese, for serving

1. Combine pasta, tomatoes, onion, garlic, red pepper flakes, basil, oil and water in a large straight-sided skillet.
2. Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat and boil mixture, stirring and turning pasta frequently with tongs, until pasta is al dente and water nearly evaporated, about 9 minutes.
3. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Divide among 4 bowls; garnish with basil. Serve with additional olive oil and grated Parmesan.

Pam's Hershey Bar Cake

1 stick unsalted butter
2 cups granulated sugar
4 eggs
2 1/2 cups cake flour, sifted
1/4 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. salt
1 cup buttermilk
1 tsp. vanilla
12 oz. HERSHEY milk chocolate candy bars, melted

1. Cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy.
2. Add eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition.
3. Add dry ingredients alternating with buttermilk and vanilla, beginning and ending with dry ingredients. Fold in HERSHEY bars.
4. Bake in a greased angel food or Bundt pan at 350 F for about 1 hour and 10-15 minutes. Cake is done when toothpick inserted in the middle of the cake comes out clean.
5. Let cool in the pan on a rack 10-15 minutes before removing from the pan. Serve as is or with a light dusting of confectioners' sugar.

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

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