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Accelerating Expectations 2020

District named to College Honor Roll

DeSoto ISD is one of the 130 districts across the United States named by the College Board to the 2015 Gaston Caperton Opportunity Honor Roll! The district is being recognized for creating opportunities for traditionally underrepresented students. The districts featured on the honor roll have expanded access to higher education by providing students with rigorous academic offerings and innovative college-preparation programs. Districts on the honor roll demonstrate significant and consistent growth in the number of underrepresented and low-income students taking college-level courses, and applying to four or more colleges.

"We are excited that our progress in getting students to participate in college bound testing has been acknowledged by the College Board," stated Dr. JoAnn Rucker, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum. "This is a major step as we accelerate expectations for DeSoto ISD!"

DeSoto ISD Celebrate Texas Public Schools February 29-March 4



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Calendar

- Feb. 29-Mar. 4 Celebrate Texas Public Schools Week
- Tues. March 1 CTPS Open House at all elementary campuses, 6:00 p.m.
- Thurs. March 3 CTPS Open House at all secondary campuses, 6:00 p.m.
- Mon. March 7 Board Meeting to discuss Strategic Plan, 6:30 p.m.
- Tues. March 8 Coffee and Conversation, Ruby Young Elem., 7:30 a.m.
- March 14-18 Spring Break, all schools / offices closed
- Fri. March 25 No school - Good Friday Holiday
- Mon. March 28 Board Meeting, Board Room 6:30 p.m.

NEWS TO KNOW

HALL OF HONOR NOMINATIONS

Nominations will be accepted January 29 through April 1 for the DeSoto ISD Hall of Honor. Forms are online for both the DHS Alumni Hall of Fame and Distinguished Service Award categories. The Hall of Honor Induction Ceremony will take place Friday, May 6 at DeSoto High School. For more information, visit www.desotoisd.org.

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2020

A district team has been developing the future of DeSoto ISD since last fall and plans to present the DeSoto ISD 2020 Plan to the Board this spring. The team of roughly 40 community and district members has met for five full days to flesh out the objectives for the next five years and create an action plan to achieve the goals. "We held summits and surveys to gain input, then had a team design the plan to take us into the next decade," stated Superintendent David Harris.

CHANGING POSITIONS

East Middle School principal Donna Blackburn was named the Project Director for the new i3 grant the district received worth \$2.9M. Northside Elementary principal Brandon Ward will replace Mrs. Blackburn at East. Mr. Ward is a former East Middle School student.



CEDAR HILL ISD

Pre-K Registration

April 4 - 8, 2016

Register your new Pre-K student

When: April 4 - 8

Time: 8:00am - 2:00pm

Where: Go to your child's elementary campus to sign up for Pre-K

Is my child eligible for Pre-K?

If you live in Cedar Hill and your child will be four years old on or before September 1, 2016, he/she may be eligible for Pre-K based on one of the following:

- Economically Disadvantaged (eligible to participate in the National School Lunch Program)
- Unable to speak and understand the English Language
- Homeless
- Current or past foster care
- Child of a member (active, deceased or injured) of the United States Armed Forces

What do I need to bring (documentation)?

- Official birth certificate
- Current immunization records
- Parent/Guardian picture ID
- Proof of residency (current utility bill: water, gas, or electric)
- Child's social security card
- Proof of income (3 most recent check stubs or W-2 form)

Where do I submit my documentation?

To complete registration, submit all documents to your child's campus.

Questions?

Contact your child's campus for additional information.

- Bray 972-291-4321
- Collegiate Prep 972-293-4502
- Highlands 972-291-0496
- High Pointe 972-291-7874
- Lake Ridge 972-293-4501
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ON THE COVER



Stephanie Drew is a woman of purpose.

Photo by Shane Kirkpatrick.

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Editor's Note

Dear Friends,

It is March, a month of many special days. For me, the first celebration is my one and only grandson's birthday. He is, of course, a fine and handsome lad and highly intelligent. He will be 5 on March 12, and there is a bike needing to arrive on time, as well as this grandma.

The second special day is March 17, St. Patrick's Day, when we wear green and celebrate being Irish, whether we are or not. Some will attend the parades or participate in eating corned beef and cabbage and dancing a jig that day.

Ten days later, on March 27, will be Easter. To me, this is a day of new promises, hope and joy. The expectation of birth and the confirmation of rebirth fills the air with the fragrance of Easter Lilies. This Easter, I am also walking in a long-awaited promise, as I anticipate the birth of my second grandchild.

From my heart and pen,

Jo

Jo Monroe

North Ellis Co. NOW Editor

joanne.monroe@nowmagazines.com



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ARTISTIC CONNECTIONS

— By Sydni Massey

Looking for new ways to reach artists in the Great Southwest, Curt Krohn, senior pastor at Faith Bible Church in DeSoto and Deedy Gonzales, music minister at the time, planned the first Southwest Dallas Arts Festival seven years ago. Local artist, Russ Reed, helped organize and find artists to participate in the church's festival. Only expecting a handful of participants, Russ was surprised when 35 artists signed up to display their work at the event. "People thought the festival was cool," Russ said. "I met a dozen new artists, and when it was over I said, 'See you next year.' Then I started thinking that there had to be a way to connect with these artists year-round, not just during the festival."

Russ gathered a group of artists who attended Faith Bible Church together. They began strategizing on how to get everyone back together. Artist and Duncanville resident, Ypie Doelman, had the idea to form a group that would meet on a regular basis and provide support and education. The Art & Faith Life Group was formed. "As an artist, there is pressure in doing well and getting your art out there," Ypie said. "Going into the group, there were those thoughts. Then our focus became not on creating good and perfect art, but on the relationships. First there is God, then each other and then the art. It is a place of encouragement."

The group meets every other Saturday night at Faith Bible Church. Everyone brings a dish for a group meal, followed by a time of Bible study and reflection. Around 25 artist families take part in the group. "Artists are just as busy as everyone else," Russ said. "Some people come for a while and then get busy with projects, but they come back. We go on cultural outings together. Sometimes, we go to gallery exhibitions, and other times we visit a museum."

Each summer, they take on one project. It's an opportunity for each of the artists to try out a new medium. One year, the group created ceramic mosaics. In 2015, they created glass







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mosaics on old windows. "We had buckets and buckets of broken glass," Russ said. "Each piece looked like stained glass. At the end of the project, we planned to display them in our gallery at the church. The windows ended up weighing over 50 pounds each, so we couldn't hang them."

For a few years, Faith Bible Church had been using art reproductions as a way to incorporate the Scriptural Way of the Cross during the Easter season. The Scriptural Way of the Cross includes 14 stations that begin with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane and end with Jesus in the tomb. In 2013, Russ was struck with the idea that the Art & Faith Life Group should create their own pieces with their own interpretations. Pastor Curt gave the group the OK, and they set to work. They were given nine months and a list of regulations. "These were no 'cows by the pond' pieces. They were very intense," Russ said. "Some of the artists used the entire time, while others had a harder time figuring out what they wanted to do."

The piece had to be 24-inch by 18-inch works on paper that could be framed behind glass. "We decided that everything



needed to be black and white to create unity," Russ said. "The goal was to give the church unique and creative images that were timeless and could stay up year-round in the sanctuary."



There are typically only 14 stations in the Scriptural Way of the Cross, and when Russ opened up this project to everyone in the group, he had 20 artists interested. This challenge did not hinder Russ, but allowed him to create something even more unique for their upcoming viewing. Scriptural passages were added to the traditional series. In the end, 16 artists followed through. Each piece had to be completed a couple of weeks before Good Friday, and the team made the goal by five days. "The pieces were hung in our church worship auditorium," Russ said. "We opened it up to the public for the entire day on Good Friday. It served as a time of meditation and prayer. Ninety-five people came, and many of those stayed for over an hour. The whole community is invited this Good Friday to view the work, meditate on the passion of Christ and pray."

Bethany Hohulin, a 16-year-old artist, attends the group with her mother,

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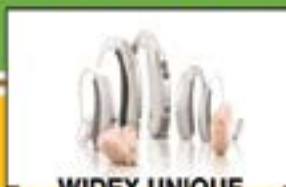


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Denise Hohulin and her daughter, Bethany, pause with Russ Reed to enjoy the exhibit.

Denise Hohulin. Bethany lives in the Duncanville school district, but is part of a local homeschool network. When it came time to participate in the Way of the Cross exhibit, Bethany drew Jesus on the cross, but looking from behind the cross with the torn veil bordering the canvas. Pencils and inks are her main artistic mediums, so the black and white restrictions were no problem for her. "There was some procrastinating over the nine months I had to create the piece," Bethany said. "I reread the story over and over again. What Jesus did was important, but I wanted to show how the people responded. I drew him overlooking Jerusalem and showed the reaction of his people."



"The material for these pieces was so heavy," Denise said. "Emotionally, it was hard for many and took longer than they thought."

Ypie's piece was Jesus praying in the garden. The piece doesn't show a peaceful garden full of pretty flowers, but one with haunting trees and thorns. She wanted to show the weight of the world on his shoulders. "It spoke to me because Jesus knew what was coming," Ypie said. "This was a hard place for him to be

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alone. There was a light at the end of the tunnel, and I wanted to show how the strength that he gained got him through.”

The Art & Faith Life Group didn't stop with their Way of the Cross creations. They wanted to share it with as many people as they could, so they created a traveling exhibition. This time there were no restrictions for the pieces. Artists could use whichever medium they preferred. As long as it fit in the building, they could create it. “This exhibit travels around to different locations,” Russ said. “Ypie made sculptures and several of our artists painted their scenes in color.”

Through fellowshipping at their bi-weekly meetings, taking in cultural events together, teaching each other new techniques and creating a unified gallery, the Art & Faith Life Group quickly became more than just a place to share art. They became a family and support each other outside the meetings. “This group is very special because we are here to encourage each other,” Ypie said. “We are doing life together.” **NOW**

Editor's Note: For more information about the Art & Faith Life Group or the Way of the Cross exhibit, email ArtFaithLifeGroup@gmail.com.

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A Fresh START

— By Katrina D. Lewis



There is a very old saying that references the eyes being windows to the soul. And though this may be true on some level, there are some stories that are so riveting and inspirational, that gazing into someone's eyes won't do them justice. Nicole Hernandez's tale is one like this. A five-year Cedar Hill resident, Nicole's current life is one almost anyone would love to live out. Happily married to her husband, Julio, and the mom of Willow, an active toddler, and Elim, a bouncing baby boy, her home is cheerful. But the journey to her peaceful existence was not an easy one.

"I've always had a heart for women and children and mentoring women — just using my background and my experiences to help them."



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Growing up in California's Bay Area, Nicole was born to teenage parents. Though they cared for each other and did marry, the strain of being young with a child to raise eventually caused them to break up, leaving Nicole to be raised primarily by her paternal grandparents until she was around 8 years old. "I was raised in a few different places. I remember growing up with family around me, but never necessarily



my parents," she said. "My parents loved each other, but were just way too young to understand what it meant to be parents. As I'm older now, I understand that, but as a child, it was hard."

After spending some time in foster care, Nicole was taken in by a distant aunt. She was happy to be back with a member of her family, but because



of circumstances beyond her control, Nicole didn't stay long. Sadly, she left with a longing for the completeness of a loving and secure relationship. Years later, little did she know she'd find one after a friendly invitation to a church service. "Someone invited me to church, and for the very first time, I actually felt real love," Nicole said. "That was just the beginning of my journey to wholeness."

Through this church, Nicole was presented with the opportunity to travel to the other side of the world. Unbeknownst to her, this journey would awaken her passion for caring for women and children who needed to know that someone cared. "I went to India in November 2002, six months after I got saved. They played a video of an orphanage at church," Nicole remembered, "and I just saw these kids and immediately connected with them. I knew how they felt, and I said I had to go. This is when I really started to have faith."

After two weeks in India, Nicole was asked to share her own personal testimony to a room full of Indian orphans. Though she was nervous about speaking, she felt she had the perfect message to share. "I got to stand before them and tell them that the Lord would never leave them or forsake them. I

"I was in excruciating pain everyday and had a lot of muscle weakness in my left leg. When you are in constant pain, your mood is bad and your outlook is poor—life just isn't the same. After a visit to Spine Physicians Institute, Rivera said he decided to undergo another back operation with Dr. Sethuraman. "It was one of the best decisions I've ever made. I put my faith and trust in him, and he did exactly what he said he would do."

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could share confidently that God is good, and even if they feel left alone, He's always there," Nicole said. "When I left that room I literally felt like I was going to pass out from the freedom and healing I felt. It just set my heart on fire even more for kids."

Once back in California, Nicole felt it was her time to find a lasting and loving relationship. After joining a Christian dating website, she began communicating with Julio, a Texan she would eventually marry after a year-long courtship. "I never thought I would move to Texas and live in Cedar Hill," she laughed. "But we were connecting, and I knew he was displaying all the things I prayed for in a man. We got married in California and spent our honeymoon driving to Texas!"

Once in Texas, Nicole knew she wanted to volunteer with an organization that focused on fostering children or helping women with children in times of need. After contacting several places, she received a call back from Bridges Safehouse, a Cedar Hill-based nonprofit transitional housing program for pregnant women and children in immediate need. The facility operates out of a five-bedroom house, servicing clients contending with potentially life-altering issues, such as homelessness or even family violence. Referrals for the facility come from local hospitals, schools, law enforcement, maternity



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Nicole initially volunteered with Bridges Safehouse for two-and-a-half years, teaching classes on forgiveness and sometimes taking clients out to eat, but she truly desired to work there full time. "I prayed and prayed, sometimes asking, 'Why isn't this happening for me?'" she said, laughing at herself in hindsight. Eventually, she got her answer when she was hired as a program coordinator. After another promotion, Nicole became the executive director of Bridges Safehouse. "I've always had a heart for women and children and mentoring women — just using my background and my experiences to help them," she said. Nicole works heavily on the administrative side as well, helping to set the vision and tone for the organization, as well as overseeing networking, marketing and fundraising efforts.

Though Nicole's first part of life was not ideal, things have come full circle since her childhood. Today, she, her mother and her grandmother all live in Cedar Hill tied together by bonds that are deeper than ever. "You don't really understand what it is to be a mom until you're a mom. As I became a mother, this flood of love, understanding and forgiveness came," Nicole explained. "You see how difficult it is and how your heart gets filled with so much passion and love for this little person. God has done a miracle in restoring my relationship with my mom and dad." Nicole's mother is even a volunteer at Bridges Safehouse.

In moments of reflection, Nicole holds tight to a single thought that has kept her, one that saved her and one she shares with the women and young girls who seek the help of Bridges Safehouse. "Even though you make mistakes," she said, "you can start fresh." **NOW**



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There are a few callings in life that require great sacrifices and, in return, impart equally great rewards. Those rewards don't always come in the form of trophies, certificates or medals of honor. For Stephanie Drew, raising her three daughters has given life back to her, and she would not exchange it for anything. Stephanie is a woman who comforts those in need, working as a caregiver at a hospital. She also serves as a mentor to women reaching for their destiny. This type of calling requires tremendous sacrifice of time and energy. Not just anyone could do what she does, and not just anyone would. So it is important for her to have a comfortable home to rest, recharge and find release from the demands of her days and nights.





— By Jo Monroe

Stephanie Drew earned her Master of Arts in Christian counseling from Oral Roberts University. She is ordained in ministry and serves as associate pastor of Kirkwood Temple CME under the leadership of Dr. Jerry L. Christian Sr. She also serves as staff chaplain at Methodist Charlton Medical Center in Dallas. Stephanie's work encompassed a summer internship at Children's Medical Center Dallas, now known as Children's Health. There came a point at which she realized her need to shift. "Seeing children in pain and suffering is hard. Thank God for those who serve at Children's Health, and that they are there to help the children," Stephanie shared.

There is a slight protocol challenge when greeting Stephanie, as she is recognized with a number of respected and honored titles. She is quite often introduced as Reverend Drew at her church, and when called for during moments of distress, she answers to the title of chaplain or pastor, but at home, Alisha, Ashley and Angelica call her momma.

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Stephanie synchronizes a balance between maintaining a house, three teenagers and the women's ministry, Purity with Purpose. A home office is a necessity for taking care of the serious side of counseling, guiding lives and handling the full-time responsibilities of a hospital chaplain. To lighten up the serious demeanor of the room, there are whimsical stained glass windows upon the window ledge behind her desk. Her bureau holds childhood photos, precious keepsakes and treasured books. While sitting at her desk, Stephanie can gaze across the foyer hallway at a colorful tapestry hanging adjacent to the photo gallery of her three daughters. Her

daughters are the reason Stephanie lives and breathes.

Their home has majestic ceilings and windows, creating a grand view of the sky and landscape. In contrast, Stephanie humbly guides her guests through her home. She has designated space in the home for raising her daughters, ministering to women and to find some rest after a prayerful shift as chaplain.

The living room is warm, and sunlight rays reveal the muted tapestry threads of the pillows and sofa cushions. A round, brocade ottoman, centered in the room, invites guests to put their feet up, relax and stay awhile. Even on a chilly winter day this spacious room feels cozy. This room serves as a lounging place for family and friends.

The kitchen appears elongated with

an extended row of cupboards and granite countertops. Centrally positioned is a generous island lending an abundance of space for Stephanie and the girls to prepare meals. The walls are painted with an exceptional finish, which takes on the texture of leather and complements the other earth tones found in the room.

Just off the kitchen is a uniquely designed table for family dining. The large outer perimeter offers plenty of space for an extra place setting or two. In the center is a large Lazy Suzan, making it easy for the family to pass the ketchup. Not far away, the appeal of slate floors leads to an elegant formal dining room that features an ornate Cherrywood china hutch.

Stephanie's favorite room is the hearth room, also located just off the

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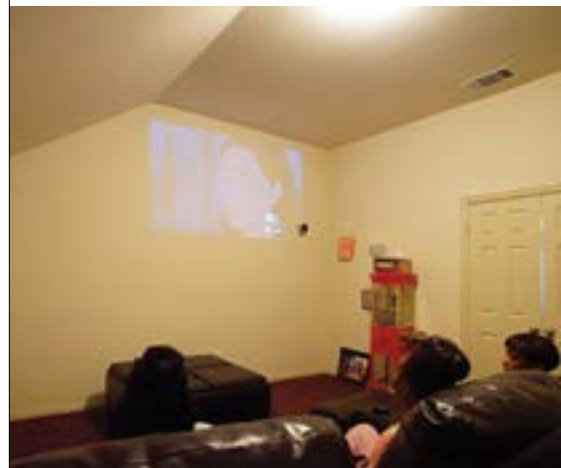
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kitchen. This English sitting room boasts a gracious fireplace framed with gray- and red-veined marble and crowned with a mantel.

Stephanie's bedroom has open space with a unique sitting area within the window ledge. This is her hiding place, her retreat and her inner sanctum. When her shift ends at the hospital, she comes home to unwind and starts her shift as momma. "Watching television — something light, whimsical and funny — helps relieve the stress," Stephanie shared.

As a mother, Stephanie is very involved in her three girls' media viewing. So there are times when the TV is off and concealed in what looks like a French





vintage cabinet. A phonograph and an ornate clock rest on top of the cabinet. When it is time to really relax and have fun, everyone congregates upstairs with popcorn in the theater room.

There is also another room designated for a different type of congregation. This great space could be used for a pool table or an air hockey table, but it isn't. Instead, it is used as a classroom in which Stephanie mentors women as they discover their purposes and develop skills to become entrepreneurs in business. Stephanie first encountered Purity with



Purpose during her studies at Oral Roberts University. She has enhanced this program and dedicated her life to offering women a place to discover God's plan for their own lives. Her daughters have inherited this same caring heart and fully support and encourage their mother in ministry.

It's not that life has been easy or that raising three daughters came trouble-free. But when the storms of life blew, and her tears came pouring down like a flood, Stephanie decided to not just walk through the storm. Instead, she danced in the rain. She embraced her life and the lives of her daughters. They are intertwined. There is a home to come to, a momma's unconditional love and a place to find refuge from the demands of life. Stephanie has truly defined the meaning of family and the purpose of her home where there is room to spread the love. **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



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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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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Rick and Laura Jaynes express their appreciation to the community.



Caring for Families

Jaynes Memorial Chapel respects the memory of your loved one. — By Jo Monroe

Rick Jaynes grew up in Paris, Texas, and his mom still lives in nearby Blossom. As a young man, he worked for a local funeral home in Paris as a part-time helper. He knew he wanted to go to college to get a degree in Christian education, but after he attended Oral Roberts University and graduated with a bachelor's degree, he didn't feel he was called into ministry. "But I did feel drawn into the funeral service," Rick shared. He later attended Dallas Institute of Funeral Service, where he enrolled in the intense chemistry and anatomy classes that prepared him for the board exam and becoming certified. "The knowledge really comes from the apprentice experience," Rick added.

After moving to Dallas in 1985, Rick went to work at a funeral home in Duncanville as a mortuary student. In 1987,

the same year Rick moved to Duncanville, he married Laura Elliott, a hometown girl. Rick Jaynes has served the Duncanville community in funeral services for his entire professional career. His father-in-law, Les Elliott, who retired from TXU to go to mortuary school, has served as the funeral director since Jaynes Memorial Chapel opened.

Laura works as a floral designer at Flowers by Sandra — her mother, Sandra Elliott's, flower shop. Rick credits Laura for expanding his awareness of the art of creating a beautiful visual memory that lingers.

After spending a lifetime as part of the Duncanville community and taking care of so many people, the community expressed their thanks by helping the Jayneses through a very

tough summer after a fire in April 2011.

"A lot of people say this is like being in ministry, and it is, in many ways. Obviously, we are here to serve people, and we take that approach. We are just serving people of all faiths and nonbelievers."

When employing Rick Jaynes and his staff at Jaynes Memorial Chapel, families appreciate the paramount expression of respect they receive. The staff is mindful that even their demeanor reflects their level of professionalism, which makes a great difference. "I am blessed with a good staff," Rick said. Jaynes has 12 employees, half are full-time, licensed professionals. The other half are support staff. "We train our staff to take everything they do for people very seriously. They also need to be able to release somberness, and it is important to have a sense of humor," Rick shared.

"A lot of people say this is like being in ministry, and it is, in many ways."

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Rick encourages private viewing for those who don't want to have an open casket or public viewing. There isn't a right way or a wrong way. "At the end of the day, you've got everything you wanted and that you needed, emotionally, from the experience," Rick expressed.

Jaynes Memorial Chapel provides the standard services families have come to expect from a funeral home. "But getting people ready to present and making them look natural is an art," Rick said. "Sometimes those differences are so subtle, but it makes all the difference in the world. We hear this a lot. This is what sets us apart." **NOW**

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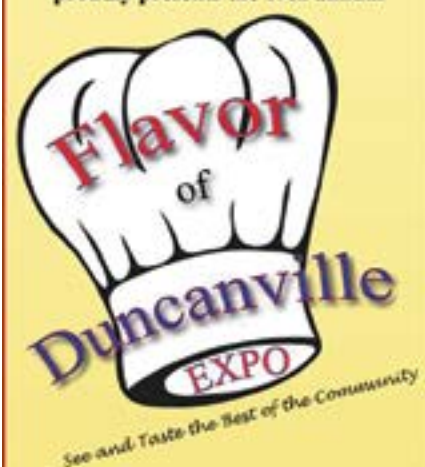
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Through March

Smokin' Blues & BBQ: pre-purchase tickets for the two-day event slated to be held **Friday, April 22** and **Saturday, April 23**. **April 22**, Night Blues Jam, \$10; **April 23**, all day BBQ Cook-off and Blues, \$20, Duncanville. Visit smokinbluesbbqfest.com or find them on Facebook. Sponsorship opportunities are still available by contacting the Duncanville Noon Lions Club.

March 3

Second Annual DeSoto Living: 4:00-8:00 p.m., DeSoto Civic Center Bluebonnet Rooms. Admission: free until 5:00 p.m., \$5 from 5:00-8:00 p.m. For more information, contact Rachel Hill at (972) 224-3565 or visit marketing@desotochamber.org.

March 13

National K9 Veterans Day Celebration – War Dog Monument: Cedar Hill Pet Memorial Park, 1210 J Elmer Weaver Frwy., Cedar Hill, service road off N. Hwy. 67. For more information, call (800) 818-8251 or visit www.cedarhillpetcemetery.org.

March 15

Model Search for the “2016 Best Southwest Everything Teen Expo”: 3:00-4:30 p.m., DeSoto Public Library, 211 E. Pleasant Run

Rd. Seeking teen models of all sizes, ages 13-18. Expo will be held **Saturday, April 2**. For more information, call (972) 230-9663 or visit www.desototexas.gov/library/everythingteenexpo.

March 18

Duncanville Senior Dance: 7:00-9:30 p.m., Hopkins Senior Center, 206 James Collins. County and western music by Jimmy Gomez, \$5 per person. For more information, call (972) 298-0667.

March 19

Sheri Borth Pancake Breakfast: 7:00-11:00 a.m., Good Sheppard Church, 915 Old Straus Rd. Breakfast \$5. You can also register early for the “Miles for Milson” 5K Charity Run scheduled for **April 9**. Early entry fee is \$25.75, but after **March 26**, the registration fee will be \$30. Visit www.davidmilsonlegacyrun.org to register online.

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 24

Golden Voices Chorus Easter Program: 10:00-11:00 a.m., DeSoto Senior Citizen Center, 204 Lions St., DeSoto. Public is welcome.

April 2

North Ellis County Business & Community Expo: contact Red Oak Area Chamber of Commerce for more information by calling (972) 617-0906.

April 6

Seventh Annual Refresh Leadership Live event: tickets on sale now. Key speakers are author and executive coach Marshall Goldsmith, 15-time NBA All-Star and TV Sports Analyst Shaquille O'Neal and Kaplan Mobray, author, motivational speaker and career consultant. Visit RefreshLeadership.com/DFW for more details and to also purchase tickets.

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



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In the Kitchen With Jennifer Berger

— *By Jo Monroe*

“While living in Michigan, I was persuaded to cook for my single friends and family,” Jennifer Berger said. Her culinary pleasure is to prepare healthy, home-cooked meals with fresh ingredients. “I especially enjoy cooking one-pot meals and comfort food,” she added.

Jennifer’s work as an analyst for American Airlines includes travel and allows for exploring ethnic and regional foods. She enjoys bringing home new ideas, and putting spins on dishes by combining different herbs and spices.

“A wintery March weekend brings on a taste for potato soup,” Jennifer shared. “So, I created a recipe that my extended Texas family and friends say far surpasses any they have had.” **NOW**

Jennifer’s Potato Soup

8 medium russet potatoes
1 lb. applewood smoked bacon (or your favorite thick-cut bacon)
1/4 cup white onion, finely chopped
1 16-oz. carton heavy whipping cream
1 32-oz. box turkey stock (divided use)
1/4 cup white flour
2 Tbsp. celery salt
1/2 Tbsp. ground black pepper
1 Tbsp. garlic powder
1/2 cup shredded cheddar

1. Peel potatoes, and cut them into 2-inch cubes. Cover them with water in a 5-qt. pot. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Turn to low and simmer until tender (about 10 minutes). Drain potatoes and set aside, reserving 1 cup of the potato water.

2. Cut bacon strips in half. Cook bacon until

crisp; chop and set aside. Reserve 1/4 cup bacon grease, and discard the remainder of the grease.

3. Sauté onions in reserved bacon grease, on low heat, until transparent. Whisk 8 oz. of the heavy whipping cream slowly into the onions.

4. Add half of the turkey stock. Add 1/4 cup flour and whisk slowly until the flour is smooth and thick (avoid overheating or boiling the mixture).

5. Add celery salt, black pepper and garlic powder.

6. Once mixture is thick, pour it over the potatoes and stir it in slowly.

7. Add remaining turkey stock, and remaining whipping cream; cook on medium heat allowing potatoes to cook through.

8. Top with crumbled bacon and shredded cheddar cheese.

SBLT Sandwich (Salmon, Bacon, Lettuce and Tomato)

1 piece salmon, bread-sized portion
Salt and pepper, to taste
2-3 slices bacon
1/2 Tbsp. honey mustard salad dressing
1/2 Tbsp. mayonnaise
2 pieces Texas toast bread
1 leaf iceberg lettuce
1 thin slice tomato

1. Preheat oven to 450 F

2. Lightly season salmon with salt and pepper, to taste.

3. Place salmon skin side down on a nonstick baking sheet. Bake until salmon is cooked thoroughly (approximately 12-15 minutes).

4. While salmon is baking, fry bacon; drain and set aside.

5. In a small bowl, mix honey mustard salad dressing with the mayonnaise and set aside.

6. Once the salmon is cooked, set it aside and let it cool for approximately 5 minutes or to desired temperature. (This sandwich may be eaten cold or warm.)

7. Remove the skin from the salmon, and place fish on the bread. Add lettuce, bacon and tomato, and spread with desired amount of honey mustard mayonnaise. Serve as desired with potato chips.

A Single Girl’s Apple Crumble

1 Roma apple
1 Tbsp. raisins
1 Tbsp. almonds
1/2 Tbsp. vanilla
1 Tbsp. brown sugar
1/2 tsp. cinnamon
1/4 cup granola cereal

1. Core the apple, and remove the peel if desired.

2. Slice or cube the apple. Mix apple with remaining ingredients thoroughly.

3. Place mixture in a small baking cup or soufflé ramekin.

4. Bake 20-30 minutes at 400 F or until apple is tender. Serve with a glass of milk or on French toast or waffles.

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



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