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April 2008

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Contents

April 2008, Volume 5, Issue 4

6



Centennial Celebration

10



Beautiful, Bountiful Bluebonnets

At Home With Doug and Betty Dickinson

16

ArtsNOW
An Abstract Edge

18

SportsNOW
Boys Will be Boys

22

BusinessNOW
Getting to Know You

24

EducationNOW
Make Room for Baby



*On the Cover:
The Texas State flower is the pride of Ennis during the annual Bluebonnet Trails Festival.*

Photo by Rod Cordsen.

26 Around TownNOW

32 FinanceNOW

30 Who's CookingNOW

34 HealthNOW

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Ennis NOW

Editor's Note

Hello, Ennis!

When you step out on the Bluebonnet Trails this month, keep an eye out for Doug and Betty Dickinson's bluebonnet acres. Be sure to get a taste of spring, wildflower style, at the 57th Annual Bluebonnet Trails Festival, sponsored by the Ennis Garden Club, April 18 - 20. Drop by the Ennis Convention and Visitors Center for bluebonnet maps and updates.

This month marks a huge milestone for the Ennis Sokol. Adult gymnastics instructor Chuck Kalat heads up the Sokol's 100th anniversary committee and gives us a look back at Sokol history and a look forward to anniversary celebrations.

Would you like to support Celebrate, Remember, Fight Back, the 4th Annual Ennis Relay for Life? Contact event chairman Amy Martinez at (972) 875-8710 for information about forming a team or participating. The April 25 event raises funds for the American Cancer Society.

Take time to see the bluebonnets!

Kelly Kovar

EnnisNOW Editor

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Centennial Celebration

— Kelly Kovar

Like many people involved with Sokol, Chuck Kalat has strong sentimental ties to the history of the movement and is dynamically involved with its present activities. Sokol is an organization deeply rooted in Czech history. The Sokol movement was founded in 1862 in Prague to promote physical, moral and cultural development; thus its name, which means “falcon” and pictures a sharp mind and active body. “The Ennis Sokol was started in 1908,” Chuck, chairman of the Ennis Sokol’s 100th Anniversary Planning Committee, said.

The Anniversary Celebration weekend, April 19 – 21, will give current and past members the opportunity to reunite and reminisce over the past and look toward a strong future in Ennis. “We are hoping there will be several hundred here for the reunion. We have 350 members, and we will be sending out 500 invitations, including past members,” Chuck said, mentioning that current or former members can contact the Sokol if they need to update their address to receive an invitation to the reunion festivities. “We hope past members will reconnect with people here and maybe they will have children or grandchildren that would like to be involved. We are hoping that the reunion will generate interest in Sokol again.”

“For most of us, Sokol has been a family thing,” Chuck



“We thought we would try Texas, with the intention of moving back if it didn’t work out. We have been here about 25 years.”

explained. “Your whole family can be included. My wife and I both grew up in Chicago, and we were just looking for a change in our life. We thought we would try Texas, with the intention of moving back if it didn’t work out.” The Kalats did not find a need to move back. “We have been here about 25 years. Texas is nice; it is a little more open and the weather is much better than Chicago.” Chuck is a computer programmer and his wife is a homemaker. The Kalats were involved with Sokol in Chicago, and were already friends with Lil and Larry Laznovsky, president of Ennis Sokol, since Lil is from Illinois and Larry is involved with American Sokol, which has its headquarters in Chicago. “We’ve been friends with Larry and Lil since they got married,” Chuck reminisced. It was only natural when the Kalats moved to Texas, that they would unite at Ennis Sokol with their old friends.

“I did gymnastics through high school, and I have been teaching Sokol gymnastics ever since,” Chuck said. “I am the national men’s director for the American Sokol.” The Kalats used to teach the children’s gymnastic classes,





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and now they work with adults. "Jan, my wife, helps me teach the adult class at the Sokol."

The Kalats have two grown children. "They are both members and have stayed involved with Sokol. My daughter comes once a week to the adult class. My son taught here for a while before he got married. They are in their mid-30s now, and they are still interested in Sokol," Chuck said proudly.

Chuck and Jan enjoy many of the Ennis Sokol activities, including its involvement with Polka Fest. "There is a city-wide polka committee, and we [Sokol] have some representatives that sit on that. Larry goes to a polka-fest meeting monthly. One of the halls is the host hall each year. We have a committee that does decorations and one that does the kitchen. It takes a lot of time and a lot of people to get the different events going."

Year-round, Sokol has many family activities. There is Wednesday night Bingo, a clubroom for socializing and the hall is used for dances and all kinds of social events. "A lot of people bring their kids for the classes," Chuck said. "We have classes for adults through children, if you want to do gymnastics. We have six or seven instructors who do kids' classes. My daughter teaches women's gymnastics. Altogether, we have 10 or 12 instructors, ranging in age from 18 - 60s."

The big event this year, however, promises to be the Anniversary Celebration. "Larry asked me to chair the anniversary planning committee," Chuck indicated. "I'm an organizing freak. I have different people in charge of things: decorations, the program, etc. I just get them together and help make decisions. Lil Laznovsky is in charge of the reunion, Debbie Slovak is in charge of the banquet and Kim Hajek is doing decorations and entertainment for the whole weekend."

The three-day event will include a free Friday night reunion of all past and present members of the gymnastic classes. "We are going to try and get everybody out on the gym floor for a

very short, 10-minute, low-impact activity, so we can have a giant class. I'm looking forward most to the big gym class," Chuck said. "I hope that really is successful. I would like to really see that big floor just full of people." A social with sandwiches and refreshments will follow.

Saturday's event is a semi-formal, catered celebration-banquet at the hall. Invitations will be sent out to members. The sit-down dinner will be followed by a short program of speeches by national and district Sokol representatives. Entertainment will include folk dancers and hand balancing demonstrations, with music and dancing to follow.

Sunday will feature the annual exhibition of local gymnastics. Barbecue will be provided and members are encouraged to bring side dishes. "We have a big program and we pass out service awards for members, marking five-year integrals. We have two 55-year memberships to award."

"Older Sokol units, like the one in Ennis, were named after Czech patriots," Chuck explained. "Our official name is Sokol Karel Havlicek Borovsky." Karel Havlicek, from the town of Borova, was a courageous Czech journalist who stood up against oppression. He was an inspiration to the 25 original charter members of the Ennis Sokol. "We are trying to determine if any of these [original members] still have family involved. We are trying to trace their descendants and recognize them," he continued. "From that small group, the Ennis Sokol has grown to its present size of 350 members." Chuck is especially pleased with the number of young people who are involved. "That is the future," he said. "My kids and I will all be at the reunion. We have a lot of friends here and we have really enjoyed the social aspect of Sokol. I'm looking forward to the anniversary celebration. It is a once-in-a-lifetime event. I think everyone is pretty excited about it."

Editor's Note: For more information about Ennis Sokol's 100th Anniversary, see our community calendar.



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Beautiful, Bountiful Bluebonnets

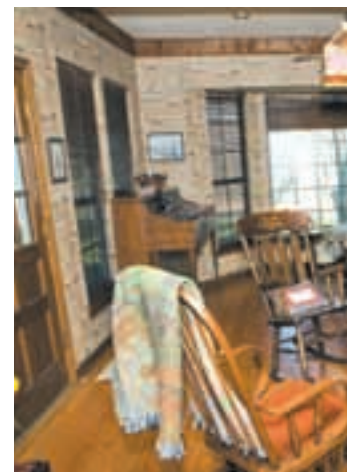
— By Sandra McIntosh

Imagine, if you will, what it would be like to meander down a long drive into a beautiful oil painting in rich shades of blue. That is how most of the expected 7,000-plus visitors for the Ennis Bluebonnet Trails, sponsored by the Ennis Garden Club and held throughout the entire month of April, will more than likely feel as they journey to the home of Doug and Betty Dickinson. The couple's two-story, four-bedroom, four-and-a-half-bath home was built in 1981, just a few years after Doug and Betty purchased their land. Prior to their move from the city, they had made several friends in the Ellis County area, so moving to the country just seemed right. "We had been looking for five to 10 acres with a creek," Doug said. "We saw this property and fell in love with the vast rolling hills and the view. We ended up making the investment to buy all 127 acres."

Doug and Betty put their heads together when drawing up the plans for their new home. "We designed the whole house on paper," Doug remembered. "We gave the plans to the architect and the building began." After a year of construction, the couple, along with their two children, finally moved in during March of 1981. "The house was



**At Home With
Doug and Betty
Dickinson**





very modern,” Betty said, “but the conveniences we were accustomed to in the city were not easily accessible in the country.” They both laughed as they remembered those early years when the road leading to their home was dirt and the water was retrieved from a well or bought in bottles from the supermarket. “Knowing we were going to soon be moving in, we ordered phone service in January of



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1981," she said, further explaining this was when party lines were popular and cellular phone service was yet to be discovered. "We didn't get phone service until June of that same year." Needless to say, the children found the move a bit difficult. "They were spoiled," she added. "They were used to the city life."

To see the property now, in all its blue splendor, one would not believe

how bad it looked in the beginning. "The Johnson grass and wild sunflowers were the extent of the landscape," Doug said. "When we plowed up the land, the bluebonnets just evolved." As the bluebonnets seemed to miraculously appear year after year, Doug began to educate himself on the Texas state flower. He learned that when he plowed the land, he uprooted the dormant seeds that had been planted deep within the



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soil. "I learned the best ways to make them spread," he explained. "Birds and wind are the natural movers of seed, but I found I can accelerate the process by mowing at just the right time." When most people are mowing the bluebonnets down after the season, Doug and Betty are sitting back patiently going through what they deem as "the ugly period." They have learned from experience that this ugly time will produce a wonderful crop the following year, as evidenced by the

beauty seen at the Dickinson home today.

The 4,900-square-foot home is void of heavy window treatments and large, oversized artwork. The den, where the couple entertains family and friends, is wall-to-wall paneling with built-in bookcases that frame the brick fireplace. What makes this room so spectacular is the view on the opposite side of the glass. "The acreage is in full bloom," Betty said, also mentioning the large area beyond the back deck and patio Doug no longer mows because of the

massive patch of bluebonnets. "They are as intoxicating as they are beautiful," she added.


Bridge is their card game of choice, and they have played many a close game in the game room. What Doug calls the "Spit and Whittle Club" is the focal point of the room. Several chairs are placed in a circle. An antique brass spittoon is strategically placed on the floor, while antique pocket knives that are just for show are displayed on a small table in the center. "That one

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rocking chair is over 200 years old," Doug said, as he turned the rocker over to show how it was constructed. "It's held together by wooden pins." The oak flooring, original to the home, was specially milled, and a schefflera grows within the sunken planter box in the master bathroom. The home's 45 windows may also limit what decor goes on the wall, but Doug and Betty would not trade the view to the outdoors for anything. "We have been able to bring the outdoors in," Betty said.

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the home include: six upstairs dormers, an upstairs hallway that was designed to replicate the galleries of long ago and the "kids' room" for the couple's three grandchildren. Memorabilia, both handed down through the generations as well as new finds, include: a sewing machine which belonged to Betty's mom, an antique china cabinet in the formal dining room that dates back to the 1800s, an original Douglas Powell pencil drawing purchased before his work became so well-known and last but not least, an antique piggy bank that Betty received as a gift when she was 4 years old.

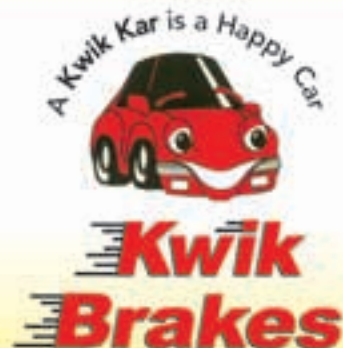
Doug and Betty lived in the center of one of Ellis County's best kept secrets until two years ago, when members of the Ennis Garden Club asked them to be part of the annual Bluebonnet Trails event. It was a win-win situation for both the Garden Club and the Dickinsons. "Cars just line up as far as the eye can see," Doug said. "People who visit are so gracious. In fact, last year we had a couple on vacation from the Philippines stop by. A few days later, they brought us a bottle of wine as a thank you."

On April 21, Doug and Betty will celebrate 46 years of marriage. "We no longer go out on our anniversary," Doug said, as Betty just smiled, for she knows all too well that on that day, she and Doug will still be hosting an ongoing bluebonnet party. **NOW**

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**ARTS
NOW**

An Abstract Edge

— By Kelly Kovar

Tiffany Myers, May 2007 graduate of Ennis High School (EHS), is a budding young artist. She does representational art, yet with a contemporary, edgy style. "I think my style kind of attracts younger people to art," Tiffany said.

She often works in pencil or oil pastels, but has experimented with some unusual mediums. For an EHS art class, she worked on a painting depicting the back of a formal wedding gown. "This piece is done with wine and coffee," Tiffany explained. "I got the idea out of one of my dad's wine magazines; there was an article about a lady that paints with wine and coffee." The maroon and red colors in the painting are red wine, the lighter colors are white wine and the brown is coffee. "I boil down the wine to get the alcohol out of it, and then it becomes kind of like a watercolor." The work is done on watercolor paper and takes a long time to dry. Tiffany recalled that the unusual medium was a bit of a surprise to her instructor, but she also mentioned that it is a favorite piece of her mother's. "I got the idea for the picture from a wedding magazine and I added aspects of my sister's wedding dress," she added.

Currently enrolled at Navarro College, Tiffany is looking forward to continuing her art studies there under the tutelage

of Rachel Moore, head of the Navarro College Art Department. "I got a \$500 scholarship to Navarro for one of my art pieces," she said. "I'm going to take art classes in the fall semester."

She learned the value of formal art instruction from her high school career.



"I was born in Ennis, and we have also lived in New York, Virginia and Maryland, and now we are back in Ennis. Maryland is where my art really burst out," she recalled. "I used to be in a photography class in Maryland, and my photography teacher was actually an artist who had been painting forever. He actually started me on art. He noticed that I would just draw things and he asked me if I had ever painted before. I was scared of what it was going to look like, but he got me to try." Tiffany's first painting is worth noting, her style already evident. Her subject was a personal favorite: the human figure. She stretched the canvas herself, and painted a woman in a formal gown, but in a very casual pose. The dramatic, striped background immediately alerts the viewer to the contemporary tone of the painting.

After two years of photography and a year of introduction to art basics in Maryland, Tiffany found herself back in Ennis after a family move. In her junior year art class at EHS, she was required to create two portfolios, one of which had to be a concentration. Tiffany chose self-portraits for her concentration. "Judges like self-portraits," she confided. "I am really good at people, and I decided to do myself; I would always have a

ARTS NOW

guaranteed model. You send in the two portfolios to a school in New York. They grade over 22,000 portfolios there, graded on a scale of 0 – 6. I got a three and a cash prize.”

“I did a lot of drawing my junior year,” she remembered. “This drawing, of me looking up at the camera, with a rose, is my dad’s favorite. I took a photograph and then overexposed it in Adobe Photoshop. Then [I] did a pencil drawing of the result. In my junior year, I entered it in an art show at Navarro College, and I got third place. Then, I entered it in one of the Waxahachie museum shows my senior year, and I got first place.”

High school provided Tiffany with lots of experience doing portraits, but she has been creating artwork since childhood, starting with horses and then moving on to drawing fairies. She attributes her artistic inspiration to her family. “When I was younger, basically I drew whenever I could pick up a pencil. My sister used to draw Precious Moments and my older brother would draw cars. My brother is who really inspired me; he was really good at art. My mom’s father, my grandfather, is artistic. He did oil paintings, and my mom inherited some of his artistic abilities,” she said.

Nowadays, Tiffany draws inspiration from nature and likes to work from photographs. “I get a lot of ideas for artwork from magazines, and when I go on vacation, I usually take a sketch book,” she continued, always full of new plans for creative paintings. “I like color, and I am going to work on a new painting of different colored flowers — purple, cyan blue, yellow, green and red, maybe even orange. They are going to be falling, and each one’s color is going to be dripping off into another flower to make a different color. I like modern art. I like abstract art. When it comes to art, I am a perfectionist. It has to look good in my eyes for me to be able to like it.” **TONJA**

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Sports NOW



— By Kelly Kovar

The Vasquez boys, Hunter, Noah and Michael, are ready to take you to the mat!

If there is anything boys like, it is wrestling. Sure, they play football and baseball and soccer, but put two boys together and enough room to move around, and they are bound to be trying out their wrestling moves on one another. So when 10-year-old Michael Vasquez and his cousins Hunter, age 11, and Noah, age 7, heard about the opportunity to join a local wrestling club, they were eager to give it a try. "Hunter and Noah were talking about wrestling after they started, and it sounded like fun," Michael said.

"Michael started in November and his cousins started a month earlier," his dad, Mike Vasquez, said. Not only did they find a great sport, but they are also having more fun than they bargained for. Since they began competing, they have already won several gold and silver medals.

Noah said he likes wrestling and is pretty good at it, and his modesty is accompanied by a fistful of medals and a nice trophy. At the Texas State Wrestling Championships at Fair Park Coliseum in Dallas, Noah and Hunter just won first

place in their rookie divisions, and Noah even took second place in the open division. Noah and Hunter's parents are Chris and Susan Vasquez. "I think wrestling is real good for them; it teaches them to compete, and it teaches them discipline, makes them strong," Chris said.

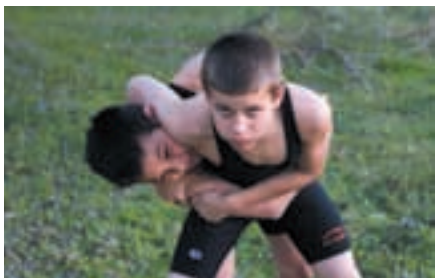


"I'm a big football guy, but wrestling is a lot tougher than football. It is physically demanding, but they are trained not to do illegal moves that would hurt somebody," Mike added. His son, Michael, recently achieved fourth place at the state wrestling championships. "The team they are on is great; they placed second as a team in the Houston nationals. Their coach is legendary," he continued.

All three boys have joined the Ellis County Mat Dawgs Wrestling Club, which is coached by club leader Jack Lawrence. "They have

the best coach in the state of Texas," Mike said. "The club has state and national champions. The boys have the best wrestling partners you could have and all the kids teach each other stuff." Jack coaches 16 boys, aged 6 - 13. Any wrestling

Sports NOW



fan knows that Jack is a champion wrestler who was Texas High School State Champion in 1977, 1978 and 1979. He was on the MacArthur High School wrestling team from Irving, Texas, and was High School All-American in 1979. After a wrestling scholarship to Oklahoma State University, he went on to see his fame spread beyond the wrestling world in 2001 when he was inducted into the Texas Wrestling Hall of Fame. "Jack is giving back to wrestling by coaching the club; he doesn't charge us a dime. He is 12-time state wrestling champion, K - 12; four-time national Junior Olympic champion four years in a row; [and the] only guy out of Texas to ever get a scholarship to Oklahoma State University (OSU)," Mike said.

The Mat Dawgs are governed by Texas USA Wrestling, which is affiliated with USA Wrestling, the national governing body for the sport. This is not the wrestling you may have seen on television on Saturday night, but the actual sport of wrestling, which is a nationally respected program. The boys go to practice three times a week, learning wrestling moves. "My favorite move is called the Boa Constrictor," Hunter said.

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Sports **NOW**

The Vasquez boys have traveled all over competing. "We take turns taking him to competitions," Jennifer Stanford, Michael's mom said. "He loves it. I was a nervous wreck when he first started, but it has been a good discipline, and he is doing really well. He has definitely gotten in better shape than he ever has in any other sport." In competition, the boys wrestle for three minutes, broken up into one-minute slots. "He can win by either scoring more points or by a take-down," she explained. Children are divided by division, according to age, and then within each division, by weight. "I won the Winter Games, which was held in Frisco," Michael mentioned.

Mike added that there were contestants from all over the state at the competition in Frisco and also at competitions they attended in Austin and Houston. "He won Houston, and he got third in Austin," Mike said.

This past December, the Vasquez boys competed in the Dollamur Cotton Bowl Classic, the biggest wrestling tournament in Texas. Youth wrestling teams from all over the country came to compete at the Fort Worth Convention Center. Michael placed sixth and Hunter and Noah both won gold medals in their divisions. Next, they traveled to Houston for the Houston National Tournament, and all three Vasquez boys took home a gold medal for the Rookie Tournament. Noah and Hunter even competed at the next level, the Open Division, where Noah took first place and Hunter captured a fourth-place win.

As all three boys continue to rack up win after win, their skills and dedication are increasing. "I've played football, baseball and soccer," Michael said, "but, I like wrestling the best. It is fun competing, and I'm good at it." Independent competitions appeal to Hunter. "You can't blame anybody else if you lose," he said. **NOW**



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Business NOW



Getting to Know You

— By Sandra McIntosh

Most people would agree that a home is a reflection of the individuals living within it. Betty Glaspy, owner of Interior Ideas, understands just how important it is to have a relationship with her clients prior to making decorating decisions for a new home or a remodeling project. In fact, she has nearly 30 years of experience in the interior design business. "We are very client-oriented," Betty said. "We always make the effort to know our customers by name."

Interior Ideas opened its doors for business in downtown Ennis more than 25 years ago. The shop's original location was directly across the street from its present location at 211 West Knox Street. As the shop grew, Betty began to acquire more and more of the building that at one time was home to Ennis State Bank. Now she owns the entire building, but she does not work

alone. "I have a wonderful staff that work extra hard to satisfy our customers," Betty said, referring to both the walk-in and regular clientele." Suzanne Rhoten, longtime store manager, quickly interjected that they go above and beyond when it comes to customer service and satisfaction. "We don't hesitate to give customers a call when we receive an item we know they will just love," Suzanne explained further. "Betty and I will even pick things up at market if we see something that reminds us of a client."

This personal touch, and knowing the tastes of each customer, may very well be what keeps their customers coming back time and time again. La Juan Schlegel, Mary Caverly, Jan Glaspy and Ashley Cox make up the rest of the team at Interior Ideas. You can be assured that with a staff this size, everyone has their specialty. "Mary

is an expert at decorating Christmas trees," Betty said, as she pointed to a photograph of last year's holiday decorations. "She also is gifted when it comes to flower arrangements." La Juan is quite the artist. She is best known as "the lady who can oil paint the bluebonnets" in the Ennis area and beyond. "Most of her work these days is commissioned," Betty added. "She also teaches classes here at the shop on Saturdays. Everyone here has their niche."

Fifteen years ago, Betty decided to go one step further in customer satisfaction with the Wildflower Café, a quaint, cozy tea room open Monday through Saturday from 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Over the years, it has become a mainstay to the downtown area, and with April designated as the month for bluebonnets in Ennis with the trails and festival, Betty and her staff are geared up and

Business NOW

ready for the crowds that are sure to visit again this year. "We have always worked closely with the ECVB [Ennis Convention and Visitors Bureau]," she said. "We also appreciate the hard work that the Ennis Garden Club puts into this month-long event."

When talking with clients about decorating ideas, the sky is truly the limit. Home accents come in all shapes and sizes. Available items include, but are definitely not limited to: home and personal fragrances, plush stuffed animals, baby books, unique jewelry, lamps, furniture by names such as Hickory Chair and Jonathan Charles, handmade ceramic pieces by Vietri, Nativity creche collectibles from Fontanini and special acquisitions from Betty's trips abroad to Europe. "We have something for everyone," Suzanne said.

Betty thoroughly enjoys working with customers who have collections. "It's my greatest pleasure," she



interjected. Betty also believes that lamps are important to any room and a bit of whimsy goes a long way. "Lamps add ambiance," she explained, "and whimsy puts a smile on your face." Interior Ideas is open from 9:00 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday. To schedule an appointment or for more information, call (972) 878-6868. **NOW**

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Education NOW



Make Room for Baby

— By Kelly Kovar

Some say education begins at birth, but in Suzanne Tarkington's experience, it begins even sooner. She is a certified childbirth educator, and has the pleasant job of teaching expectant moms how to care for their babies and how to prepare for delivery. "I have had 99 percent of the moms that come through the class say, 'That class helped me so much' and I think that is wonderful," Suzanne said. As a labor and delivery nurse for 18 years and a childbirth class teacher for five, she is well-equipped to train new mothers. Suzanne has one other important qualification; she is, herself, the mother of four children.

The free classes run year-round in six-week sessions held on Monday evenings. Classes are also offered on weekends and in Spanish by Minga Camarillo, a labor and delivery nurse. "Usually in the first class we get to know each other," Suzanne said. "The class watches a VHS or DVD of a normal delivery, and then we will talk." The second class covers comfort techniques for labor and includes a tour of the childbirth center at Ennis Regional Medical Center (ERMC). "We teach focusing and relaxation during labor. I give them different techniques, and I tell them to go home and try them out and see which technique helps them relax." In subsequent classes, moms can learn about other topics including baby care and infant CPR.

"I have one of the nursery nurses come one night and she teaches them how to bathe their baby, diapering and swaddling with blankets," Suzanne said, explaining that she also brings in a guest speaker one night to teach breastfeeding. "As long as they have questions that they need to know, we are here for them. One of my former students said she never knew it would be so easy. It was the best thing she has ever done."

One of the more entertaining classes is the night the dads come and try on the "empathy belly," Suzanne said. "They are going to see what it is like for their wives to be pregnant. You put it on and it is weighted; it weighs 35 pounds. The dads can try sitting down and getting up in it. I want them to kneel down and try to tie their shoes. It is going to be a learning experience."

Every night, expectant moms go home with something, such as a gift bag with baby items. "When we do the baby care, they are going to go home with caps and mittens. They never leave out of my 'house' empty-handed," Suzanne added with a laugh. "Moms get a labor and birth book to take home on the first night."

"I have always had really good feedback on the classes," Suzanne mentioned. "They really enjoy it, and they really learn. I encourage questions over anything. It doesn't have to be about the class we are in." The classes are open to anyone, and mothers are welcome to call Suzanne anytime with questions. "We don't usually see people repeat for second babies. But, absolutely, they can if they want to. Any mothers, even if they didn't have a baby here, can call me for help with breastfeeding. Any time, day or night, people can come up here and we will help them. They don't have to check-in; just call to make sure somebody is here that can help them, and come to the childbirth center."

Suzanne continued, "I started into nursing because I have twin boys and when they were born they were premature, and I was honestly impressed with the nurses that took care of them. That is what I decided I wanted to do." When they

Education NOW

were about 8 months old, Suzanne, at age 32, started studying to be a nurse. Today, she has a daughter who is 34, a son who is 32, the twins who are 21, and Suzanne has become the clinical director of the childbirth center at ERMC. She helps Brenda Dennis, the director of the child birth center, education, employee health and infection control.



Suzanne Tarkington finds joy in helping expectant mothers learn how to care for their babies.

"One thing we are hoping is to see an increase in the number of moms who come to the classes," Brenda added. "We have lots of different programs we can offer. We can do a sibling class [where] we talk about how your mom having a baby will impact you and how you are still very special. We have little coloring books, Play-Doh and treats for the siblings. We tell all of our moms, 'We are here 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you have any problems, don't hesitate to call, if you want to come back up here.'"

"Suzanne really has a knack for teaching the classes," Brenda said. "You go past the classroom and you hear this screaming laughter. They all want Suzanne to be there when their babies are born."

Mothers who are at least eight weeks from their due date can sign up for classes by calling the hospital. "I really do hope that more people come," Suzanne said. "The more the merrier. I think the classes are fun, and I think my students think so, too."

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Around Town NOW



Martin Luther King Celebration Oratorical winners, top left, proudly displayed their certificates. Ennis girls donned Swahili costumes, top right, for a song and dance in *Hear Tha' Sound, Feel Tha' Beat*. Johnnie Roberts, second row left, offered toothpicks to Bonnie Smith and Mesha Kriska at a ladies gathering held at Baylor Baptist Church. Kim and Jason Janssonius, bottom left, enjoyed dinner with Norma Epstein. John and Laurie Mah, middle row, celebrated Chinese New Years. Steve Huff invited Mike Harrison, second row right, to sing cowboy ballads at the Ennis Rotary Club. Rev. and Mrs. Goodwin and their children, Adrian and Kim, bottom right, pose for a pretty picture.



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Around Town NOW



Joleigh Mitchell, top left, welcomed her parents, Gary and Renee Mitchell and grandmother Francis Shrader to *Hear Tha' Sound, Feel Tha' Beat*. More oratorical winners, top middle and second row right, beam with pride during the MLK Oratorical competition. F.W. and Marilyn Lynch, top right, spent an evening out with friends. Robert Brazier, along with tech crew Jessica and Amanda Bohanon, second row middle, were on hand at the San Jacinto Auditorium for a recent event, *The Orchestra for Nonsense*, bottom left, was led by Aaron Schumacher. Emily Pool and Heidi Haley, bottom right, ham it up for the camera.





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Look Who's Cooking

— By Stephanie Brewer

IN THE KITCHEN WITH PAT CLEMENTS

Pat's love of cooking comes from watching and learning from her mom, Agnes Whitfill. "She was a great cook and liked trying new things," Pat said. "She was a home economics major and taught home economics for many years at St. John Catholic School." Pat was hooked on baking in high school and won the Betty Crocker Award from a test she took. "Baking is therapy for me, and cooking is part of entertaining and pleasing others," she added.

The lighter side of Pat's cooking memories include the time her Christmas breads and snacks for her new neighbors were permeated with fumes from freshly varnished floors. "Luckily, an old friend was brave enough to tell me," Pat laughed. "Imagine! My neighbors took another chance on their crazy new neighbor." **NOW**

To view more of your neighbors' recipes, visit our archives at www.nowmagazines.com.

COCONUT LEMON CAKE (OR COCONUT PINEAPPLE CAKE)

CAKE

1 Duncan Hines white cake mix
1 3-oz. pkg. instant vanilla pudding mix
1 cup water
1/2 cup Crisco oil
4 eggs
1 tsp. vanilla
1/2 tsp. almond extract
LEMONADE FILLING (your choice)
4 Tbsp. butter
1/2 cup sugar
4 Tbsp. cornstarch
1/4 tsp. salt
1 1/2 cups water
4 egg yolks
3/4 cup lemonade concentrate
PINEAPPLE FILLING (your choice)
3 Tbsp. flour
1/2 cup sugar
1 20-oz. can crushed pineapple (undrained)

2 Tbsp. butter
FROSTING
1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese
1 cup sugar
1 12-oz. container Cool Whip
Angel Flake Coconut (for final topping of cake)

CAKE: Preheat oven to 350 F. Mix all ingredients for cake. Pour into 3 greased and floured round pans. Bake 18 - 23 minutes. Do not overcook. Turn onto wax paper, cover with cloth and gently press down on each layer to make them level. Leave covered with cloth and let cool completely before icing. Can double recipe for taller cake and make cupcakes with any leftover filling. **LEMONADE FILLING:** Melt butter. Blend in sugar, cornstarch and salt. Gradually stir in water. Cook, stirring constantly until thickened. Mix egg yolks with lemonade. Stir small amount of hot mixture into egg mixture to temper. Stir lemonade mixture into hot mixture. Bring to a boil stirring constantly. Cool. **PINEAPPLE FILLING:** Combine flour and sugar in small saucepan. Add pineapple and butter. Cook over medium heat, stirring

constantly until thickened. Cool. **FROSTING:** Mix cream cheese and sugar with mixer until fluffy. Fold in cool whip. Put layers together with either pineapple or lemonade filling. Frost top and sides with frosting. Press angel flake coconut on sides and top of cake.

FORGOTTEN COOKIES

Preheat oven to 350 F.
4 egg whites, beaten stiff
1 1/3 cups sugar
1 tsp. vanilla
dash of salt
1 12-oz. pkg. chocolate chips
1/2 cup pecan pieces (if desired)

Add sugar to stiff egg whites. Add vanilla and salt. Beat 5 minutes. Add chocolate chips and pecans. Drop teaspoons of mix onto greased or foil-covered cookie sheets (I cover an oven rack with foil before heating the oven and use it as a cookie sheet.) Put cookies in oven and turn off the heat! Leave in oven at least 1 1/2 hours. Makes about 5 dozen cookies.



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Who's Cooking NOW

LASAGNA

MEAT MIXTURE

- 1 lb. hamburger
- 1 clove of garlic, minced
- 1 Tbsp. basil
- 1 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 1-lb. can tomatoes
- 2 6-oz. cans tomato paste

FILLING

- 3 cups cottage cheese
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 Tbsp. parsley flakes
- 2 beaten eggs
- 2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. pepper

FOR LAYERING

- 10 oz. lasagna noodles (cooked)
- 1 lb. sliced mozzarella cheese

MEAT MIXTURE: Brown hamburger, drain grease. Add remaining ingredients and simmer 30 minutes.

FILLING: Mix together all ingredients, set aside. In a 9 x 13-inch pan, layer half of the noodles, half of the meat mixture, half of the cottage cheese and half of the sliced mozzarella cheese. Repeat layers. Bake at 350 F for 30 minutes.

QUICHE

- 9 eggs beaten
- 1 5-oz. can evaporated milk
- 6 slices of crisp bacon (turkey bacon works, too)
- 1 box frozen broccoli florets, cooked and drained
- 1 6.5-oz. can sliced mushrooms
- 1 Tbsp. minced onion or 1/4 cup chopped onion
- salt and pepper to taste (garlic salt is good, too)
- 6 - 8 slices of Velveeta or American cheese

Pour all ingredients into a 9-inch unbaked pie crust in a quiche dish or pie plate. Top with 6 - 8 slices of Velveeta or American cheese, or enough to cover the whole mixture. Bake at 450 F for 10 minutes then reduce heat to 325 F and bake for an additional 20 minutes until firm and knife inserted in the middle comes out clean. I vary vegetables, meats and cheese.

WINTER SALAD

- 1 large head of romaine lettuce
 - 4 oz. shredded Swiss cheese
 - 1 cup cashews
 - 1/4 cup dried cranberries
 - 1 apple, cubed
 - 1 pear, cubed
- DRESSING**
- 1/2 cup sugar
 - 1/3 cup lemon juice
 - 2 tsp. finely chopped onion
 - 1 tsp. mustard
 - 2/3 cup oil, added very slowly
 - 1 Tbsp. poppy seed

Combine all salad ingredients listed. Blend dressing ingredients in blender. Add dressing sparingly to salad or serve on the side.



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Finance **NOW**

Put Your Tax Refund to Work

— By Angie Wingo-Juenemann

Sometime in the next few months, you will be filing your taxes. And when that happens, you will run into one of life's great questions: Will I have to pay, or will I get a refund? If you owe more taxes, you do not have much choice about what to do, but if you receive a refund, you will have some saving and investment opportunities that are worth considering.

Of course, what you do with your refund will depend, to a great extent, on how big it is. In 2007, the average refund was about \$2,260, according to the Internal Revenue Service. While there is obviously no guarantee that your refund would be this size, let us see what you could do with this money:

- **Contribute to a retirement account.**

If you invested your \$2,260 in a tax-deferred vehicle, such as a traditional IRA, and you earned a hypothetical seven percent average annual return over 30 years, your money would grow to more than \$17,000. (This does not include commissions, fee expenses or charges which would negatively impact the overall performance.) And that figure assumes you never put another penny into the IRA; if you invested in it regularly, you could potentially earn much more by the end of the 30-year period. You would still have to pay taxes on the earnings, but by the time you retire, you could be in a lower tax bracket, and even if you were not, you may be able to take withdrawals in a way that would allow you to spread out the tax burden over many years.

- **Pay off some debts.**

If you could use the \$2,260 to pay off some credit card debt, or possibly pay off a car loan, you would free up some cash to invest. Look at it this way: Every dollar you spend on debt helps pay for your past, but every dollar you invest goes toward your future — and that is the time of your life you should focus on.

- **Save for college.**

College costs continue to rise every year. To help pay for your children's college education, you will need to start saving early. Fortunately, you have some attractive college-savings vehicles, such as a Section 529 savings plan and a Coverdell Education Savings Account, both of which allow money to grow tax deferred and proceeds to be withdrawn tax free for qualified higher education expenses. Your \$2,260 would be more than enough to fund a Coverdell account for one year — the annual limit is \$2,000 — or give you a good start on a Section 529 plan, which offers much higher contribution ceilings. (Keep in mind, though, that a Section 529 plan's proceeds might count as income to your child, thus affecting his or her ability to receive financial aid.)

- **Create a cash cushion.**

It is a very good idea to maintain an emergency fund containing six to 12 months' worth of living expenses. Once you have established this fund, you can avoid dipping into your investments to pay for the unexpected, such as a costly car repair, a doctor's bill or a new appliance. Make sure to keep your fund separate from your everyday savings or checking accounts.

As you can see, your tax refund can help you make progress toward a number of financial goals. So, when the check arrives from Uncle Sam, put it to work. You may be pleased by the results. **NOW**

Angie Wingo-Juenemann is an Edward Jones representative based in Ennis.

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Health NOW

The Benefits of a Healthy Breakfast

— By Dr. Fatiregun

Your mother always told you that a healthy breakfast was the best way to start your day. Based on Harvard Medical School research, she was right. It has been confirmed that regular breakfast eaters tend to weigh less, consume more vitamins, have lower cholesterol and have better morning-time concentration than those who skip breakfast on a regular basis. The key to breakfast is choosing healthy options, just like your other meals. Even if you do not like traditional breakfast foods, there are other options that provide the needed nutrients without a lot of calories.

There are two theories as to why breakfast eaters are usually healthier than breakfast skippers. One theory is that eating breakfast helps control hunger, which leads to lower caloric intake throughout the day. Those who eat breakfast are not as hungry at lunch and can make smarter eating choices for the remainder of the day. However, if you are hungry, a growling stomach may have more influence over meal decisions than personal willpower. Also, those who eat breakfast maintain a more steady level of blood sugar throughout the day. Without breakfast, blood sugar levels may drop, which can lead to a loss of concentration or poor memory. That lack of concentration could also sabotage personal goals of choosing healthy food options.

The second theory as to why breakfast eaters are healthier is that people who plan what they will eat for breakfast are also more likely to plan other meals. Planning meals ahead of time makes choosing healthy food easier. Without meal

plans, a hunger attack could derail even the best of intentions. Cravings for unhealthy foods will not have as much control over someone who has planned ahead to eat healthy foods.

To make breakfast a beneficial meal, it must provide energy, a feeling of fullness and essential vitamins and nutrients. Otherwise, you will experience the same problems as the breakfast skippers. Healthy breakfast options should contain fiber and protein to achieve a sensation of fullness, without containing too many calories. Breakfast does not have to be a bowl of cereal with cold milk. For the breakfast lover, foods such as eggs, fruit, dairy and oatmeal are good options. Other options are an English muffin egg sandwich, a veggie omelet, salmon on a whole-grain bagel, a fruit smoothie or a hard-boiled egg. Trying different menu items will keep breakfast interesting and, hopefully, make it a habit.

For those people who dislike breakfast foods, there are options beyond the traditional eggs and bacon combination. Try leftover, low-fat veggie pizza, fresh fruit, yogurt, a breakfast taco with beans and salsa or cheese and whole-wheat crackers. Disliking breakfast foods does not have to derail your plans to make healthy food choices.

Breakfast not only helps get your day started, but it provides an opportunity to introduce needed vitamins and minerals into your diet. By taking the time to plan your breakfast, you can set yourself up for success and lay the foundation for a healthier lifestyle. **NOW**

Dr. Fatiregun, Pediatrics, Navarro Regional Hospital



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April 2008

Community Calendar

Weekdays

Golden Circle Senior Citizen Center. Tuesday: singing and devotionals. Wednesday: Bible study. Thursday: exercise and pot luck lunch. (972) 875-6101.

Every Thursday

Chess for Kids, Ennis Public Library. (972) 875-5360.

Every Friday and Saturday

Live Bands at Red Moon Café. For upcoming events visit www.theredmooncafe.com.

Tuesday - Saturdays

Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, 8:00 p.m., 1301 S. Kaufman.

Daily

Grace Recovery Group, 8:00 p.m., 107 S.W. Main Street. This is a support group for recovery from drug and alcohol addiction. (972) 921-3275.

April 2

Red Moon Café Karaoke Night with Doc. 8:30 p.m. - 12:00 a.m.

April 3

Circle of Friends monthly meeting, 7:00 p.m. New members enthusiastically welcomed. Call (972) 878-0740 to confirm date and for location.

April 9

Curbside Recycling. Obtain free yellow recycling bags at City Hall. (972) 875-1234.

April 12

United Brotherhood Breakfast, 7:30 a.m., Baylor Baptist Church. For information, contact Jeff

Trojacek (972) 935-6787.

April 15

ABWA (American Business Women's Association) Express Network at Waxahachie Civic Center. For more information, contact Stephanie Kinnison at (972) 938-0703 or stephanie@customcaredgivers.com.

April 16

Ellis County Christian Women's Connection monthly luncheon. 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Waxahachie Country Club, 1920 W. Hwy. 287 at I-35 South. Cost is \$13.00. Vouchers for nursery child care available. For reservations, call Kay at (972) 937-2807 or Mary at (972) 937-9984 or e-mail windchime@charter.net, by April 13.

April 18 - 20

The 57th Annual Bluebonnet Trails Festival, sponsored by the Ennis Garden Club. Live music, artists and a children's area. The Bluebonnet Trails will be active all month. Visit the Ennis Convention and Visitors Center for updated trail maps and event information or call (972) 878-4748.

April 18 - May 11

I Ought to be in Pictures by Neil Simon, Ennis Public Theatre. Call (972) 878-PLAY for reservations and times.

April 19 - 21

Ennis Sokol 100th Anniversary Celebration. Friday night: free reunion of past and present members. Saturday: by invitation, semi-formal banquet, \$40 per person. Czech Dancing: The Little Czechadees, under the direction of Marita Barak, Twirling Number by Kendall Morris, Hand Balancing Act by Joe Vrzalik (Sokol Baltimore), Wade Garrett and Melissa

Dunlap (Sokol Fort Worth). Music by Czech & Then Some. Sunday: free annual exhibition of local gymnastics. Barbecue provided and members are encouraged to bring side dishes.

April 25

The 4th Annual Ennis Relay for Life. Celebrate, Remember, Fight Back is an overnight event celebrating cancer survivors and raising funds for the American Cancer Society. Fun activities, entertainment and inspirational moments all night. Contact event chairman Amy Martinez at (972) 875-8710 for information about forming a team or participating.

June 7

Annual Pancake Fly-In at Mid-Way Regional Airport, Waxahachie, 8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Classic airplanes and fighters, plane rides/Discovery Flights, remote control model flyers, flight demo (T-28s), The Classic Swing Band, Midlothian Classic Wheels and other attractions. Breakfast tickets \$6.00, one child under 8 eats free with a paid adult ticket. Event and parking are free. For more information call Tammy at (972) 923-0080.

To have your events posted on the community calendar, e-mail us at: kkovar@nowmagazines.com.

For more community events, visit our online calendar at www.nowmagazines.com.



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