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Corsicana NOW

M A G A Z I N E

April 2009

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Champions**

**Lift High
the Cross**

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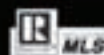
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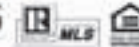
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600 Sandy Lane - 2 affordable off
water lots. Includes RV w/wooden
deck, metal cabin, dog kennel, stor-
age shed and easy access to ramp.
Pedro 903-388-7660.



142 Pearl Valley - 3/3 on 2 acres in
quiet cove on RC Lake. Cedar beams,
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much more! Julie 903-654-3970.



600 Scott Place - Perfect lot in
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407 Hidden Oaks Ln - Fabulous 4/3
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large deck. Julie 903-654-3970.



139 Christie Lane - AWESOME!
3/2 brick on 1 acre corner lot.
Tasteful colors, large bedrooms,
mature trees & move-in-ready!
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2113 Dartmouth - 4/3 brick
home with 2 living areas, formal
dining, fireplace, sprinklers and
on corner lot.
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528 Bay Hill Lane - Exquisite
5/5, 4/3 water front home!
Media room, wine vault, gym
room, enormous walkin closets,
fireplace, boardwalk and MORE!
Julie 903-654-3970.



1523 Columbia - Cute 2/1 that
is MOVE-IN-READY! See 8
approved & remodeled in 2006.
Devin 903-875-4878.



1411 Collins - Cute 4/3 in town.
Large kitchen, carpet, tile and
perfect front porch for lazy
afternoons!
Karen 903-641-9998.



921 Winged Foot - New Construction
in The Links! Pick your colors
in this 3/2/2 brick/stone home
w/wingery and green features. Fenced
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705 & 805 Spikes Rd - New
Construction! 3/2/2 with open
concepts, 9' ceiling throughout, large
front and back porchs.
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129 E College - Great invest-
ment property or starter home.
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home on 10 acres. Carpet in
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guest quarters, small pond &
more! Pedro 903-388-7660.



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421 Meandering Way - MOTI-
VATED SELLER! 3/2 waterfront
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ceilings, formal dining, tile, huge
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104 W 2nd Ave - Cute bungalow
in Blooming Grove! 3/2 on
.5 acre with recent roof, nice
decking and storage shed.
Julie 903-654-3970.



236 E Main - 2/1 in Midred ISD.
Corner lot, covered porch, storage
building and carport.
Great investment property!
Julie 903-654-3970.



3985 SE CR 0060 - 4/2 in Midred
ISD on corner lot. Home has many
updates, separate laundry, tile
throughout, split bdms, shade trees
and quiet location.
Carolyn 903-467-8145.



1264 E Main in Gun Bartel City.
1,900 sq ft building on 1.64 acres.
Parking in front w/2 drives. Large
metal 24x30 storage building.
Previously set up as vet clinic.
John 903-641-3359.

View all area listings at www.remax.com

Contents

April 2009, Volume 6, Issue 4

8



Lift High the Cross

16



Best of Both Worlds

At Home With Kevin and Kelly Neri

28

ArtsNOW Thirty Years in the Making

34

SportsNOW National Champions

40

BusinessNOW Money When You Need It

42

EducationNOW Order in the Court



On the Cover:
A plaque at the top of this oil
derrick reads: 1942, Stroube
Brothers. The Corsicana Preservation
Foundation is dismantling the derrick
and moving it to the corner of 5th
and 7th streets.

Photo by Samantha Daviss.

46 Around TownNOW

54 FinanceNOW

50 Who's CookingNOW

56 HealthNOW

52 Dining Guide

60 Community Calendar

Publisher, Connie Poirier
General Manager, Rick Hensley
Managing Editor, Becky Walker
Editorial Coordinator, Sandra McIntosh
Creative Director, Jami Navarro
Art Director, Chris McCalla
Office Manager, Lauren De Los Santos

Corsicana Editor, Samantha Daviss
Contributing Writers, Faith Browning
Nancy Fenton • Joan Kilbourne
Bruce Robinson • Ron Rodriguez
Photography, Terri Ozymy • Natalie Busch
Ivey Photography
Contributing Editors/Proofreaders, Pat Anthony
Jaime Ruark • Beverly Shay

Advertising Representatives, Linda Moffett (manager)
Rick Ausmus • Linda Dean • Will Epps • Steve
Hansen • Carolyn Mixon • Steve Randle • Linda
Roberson • Shane Smith • Eddie Yates • Terri Yates
Graphic Designers/Production, Julie Carpenter
Allee Brand • Cherie Chapman • April Gann
Marshall Hinsley • Arlene Honza • Jana Jennings
Brande Morgan • Pamela Parisi • Jennifer Wylie

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Corsicana NOW

Editor's Note

Hello Corsicana and Navarro County!

With spring break behind us, there are a lot of fun activities going on around town. This month, we have the Preservation Foundation's Annual Twilight Ball taking place on April 4. The theme this year is "April in Paris."

Do not forget that April is also the month of Derrick Days. It will be filled with a lot of fun events. The Hoop It Up Tournament is coming back this year, and the Oil City Mini-thon is returning after a long sabbatical. There will be a 5K run and a one-mile fun run for children, families and pets to enjoy. If you are king or queen of the grill, be sure to sign up for the chili cook-off and the brisket cooking competitions.

If you have a great idea for a story, please feel free to contact me. If you need assistance with advertising please call (903) 875-0187.

Samantha Daviss

CorsicanaNOW Editor

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Evonne Blackwell
Certified Public Accountant



Vicky Croom
Tax Manager



Ryan Douglas
Tax Preparer

Cut off date for tax filings:

Remember to avoid the RUSH at the last minute! This year we will not be taking appointments after April 1, but as long as your return information is in our office by April 1, we will try to get the return done without an extension. We will still accept return information up to April 1, but can't promise the returns will get done without an extension unless the information is in our office by April 15, 2009. Extensions can be done anytime before October 15, 2009.

New Tax Relief Law for Individuals and Families was signed February 12, 2009:

*** "Making Work Pay" tax credit — this will essentially provide a tax credit of up to \$400 for working individuals and \$800 for working families through a reduction in the amount of income tax that is withheld from paychecks or through claiming the credit on year end tax returns. Recipients of social security, SSI, Railroad Retirement and Veterans Disability Compensation Benefits and government retirees will receive a one-time payment of \$250 which is a reduction to any allowable making work pay credit.

*** Increased Earned Income Credits

*** The refundable child tax credit for dependents under the age of 17 is scheduled to increase to \$3,000 from \$1,000.

*** Refundable First Time Homebuyer Credit — For homes purchased (or built and moved in to) after January 1, 2009 and prior to December 1, 2009, a refundable credit of up to \$8,000 is available for certain first time homebuyer taxpayers and so long as the home is not sold within 36 months of the date of purchase.

*** Sales Tax Deductions for Vehicle purchases is extended through 2009.

*** Temporary suspension of taxation on federal unemployment benefits up to \$2,400.

*** For Businesses: Extension of bonus depreciation, election to accelerated recognition of Historic AMT/R&D credits, extension of enhanced small business expensing, 5-year carryback of net operating losses for small businesses, delayed recognition of certain cancellation of debt income, incentives to hire unemployed veterans and disconnected youth, new markets tax credits, recovery zone and tribal economic development bonds and many more.

*** Energy Credits: Many energy credit extensions, including tax credits for energy-efficient home improvements — 30% of amount paid up to \$1,500 credit available for installed qualified energy efficient improvements.

*** Health Insurance Assistance: The bill provides a 65% subsidy for COBRA insurance premiums under certain circumstances.



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100 S. 15th St., Corsicana • 903-874-1040

Office hours through April 15, 2009: Mon.-Fri. 8:30 - 5:30, Sat: 9:00 - 12:00 • Closed April 16 - April 26
After tax season office hours: Mon - Thurs. 8:30 - 5:00 and Fri by appointment only.



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Lift High the Cross

— By Joan Kilbourne

"The cross is intended to commemorate the people, who have served this church in the past and those who will serve in the future."

It can be seen from Highway 14: a simple white cross, the tallest cross in Navarro County. Behind it is the white clapboard church building, resembling a country farmhouse. Reverend J.E. Ferguson and Reverend J.G. Hardin founded this United Methodist Church in 1847, and it is the home of the oldest continuing Methodist congregation in Central Texas. First located at Pisgah Ridge, the building was moved to an area called Richland Crossing when a railroad line forced it to relocate. The current lay leader John Bruce Thomas, known as Bruce to his congregants and family, explained, "Later, the building was eventually moved across the road to its present location."

While Bruce was growing up in Dallas, he spent his summers in Richland with his grandparents. "I attended service every



Sunday, and I was baptized in this church. As an adult I lived in San Antonio, attending the second largest Methodist church in that city. Sunday services included four worship services, as well as several different choirs and an orchestra," he said. At the same time, Bruce's parents, who years earlier had relocated to Richland, were becoming elderly and needed


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help keeping the church alive. "Just imagine," Bruce said, "it's a church that has survived the early days of gunfighters, Indians and rustlers; the Civil War; World Wars I and II; the 1929 depression; Vietnam; and now, another recession. So much good was being done by the people here; it [the church] just had to keep going."

So, Bruce made a life-changing decision to move with his wife, Shirley, from San Antonio to Richland, to support his parents and the ongoing mission of the church started by his great-grandmother and founding member Amanda Swink. "It felt like it was a calling I couldn't ignore. I had to learn patience. I had to slow down to appreciate what's here," he shared.

The effort to revitalize the church began at the urging of Bruce's cousin, Dr. Reese Brown, and Arthur Patrick, a retired banker and cattleman. Bruce said, "It was Arthur Patrick, a 50-year member and supporter of the congregation, who persuaded me to serve as our church's lay leader and to volunteer as a financial officer for the city of Richland." The congregation rallied behind their efforts. "In the big church in San Antonio," Bruce said, "it was necessary to coax people to help out, but here everyone wants to be involved." He offered as an example church member Sybil Brister, who walked into the church, still recovering from double knee replacement surgery, and asked, "What can I do?" "Harriet




Albertson has been playing the piano for us, even though she is not in the best of health. Caren Smith is our youth leader and her high-school-age daughter, Bree, serves on the pastor's parish committee. Jean Tidwell sings and cooks for us, and Betty Jean Murray teaches the young children in Sunday School," Bruce added. "These women here have this 'can do' attitude and they really do everything — from canning food to branding cattle."

Some of the credit for the spiritual,

"It's a church that has survived the early days of gunfighters, Indians and rustlers; the Civil War; World Wars I and II; the 1929 depression; Vietnam; and now, another recession."


as well as the physical, turnaround must go to Dr. Janice Krietner-Cain, who kick-started the revitalization, and to Reverend Alison Humann, her family and the lay board, who have been working to ignite a passion to preserve the historic church and to encourage both its internal growth and its presence in the community. "Brother Tejas Baird, an ordained Baptist minister and old friend from Dallas, has joined the church. He teaches an adult Sunday school class. He and William Baldwin have organized a men's breakfast to



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
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help raise funds for a youth mission trip planned for this summer. Former church members from all over Texas come back and visit Richland UMC and want to help. They all want to see our church continue,” Bruce explained. “In addition, we have offered brick pavers for sale, which can be inscribed with the names of family members who have passed away, or in honor of someone. We will use the pavers around the base of the cross, along with a bench and some landscaping,



so people will have a place to come to reflect, relax, meditate and pray.”

The person in charge of managing the pavers is Sara Brown, who lives in Liberty, Texas. “We were in a meeting, thinking about a way to increase interest and awareness of the church,” Bruce remembered. “Arthur Patrick suggested a cross be placed at the back of the church. The idea grew quickly. Someone said, ‘Let’s put it in front, so it can be seen from the highway.’ Another said, ‘It should be lighted,’” Bruce recalled.

Donated H-beams determined the great 40-foot height of the cross. Clearly, the project was challenging. Nevertheless, with the volunteered advice of an architect and the generous assistance of local building professionals, the beams were welded, painted and



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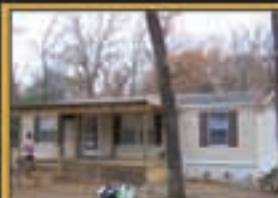
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Room for all in this 4/1 on corner
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planted by a crane in a 10-foot deep hole filled with six yards of concrete. The structure is built to withstand 90-100 mph winds. "Just in case," Bruce smiled, "we placed the cross 40-feet from the building, so it won't come down on the roof."

Bruce could not say enough about the generosity of the people who helped with the project. Haynie Drilling Company dug the hole, and then dug it again when rain collapsed it. Corsicana Sign and Crane lifted the iron cross into place. Sherwin Williams Paint and Transit Mix Concrete contributed, along with the other contractors. Darwin Myers, the manager of the Texas Department of Public Safety for



Navarro County, personally inspected and approved the cross's location near Highway 14. The advice and reduced prices made this large endeavor possible for a small church.

Bruce explained what the cross means to church members. "The cross is intended to commemorate the people, who have served this church in the past and those who will serve in the future. It also represents our outreach to the community. We want the cross area to be a peaceful place where everyone can come and feel welcome," he stated. Bruce looked pleased to tell a story about standing in front of the church one day when a car came up from the highway. A man got out to stand and look at the cross. He stood for a while and then he knelt to pray. Then he got back into his car and went on his way. "That's what we hoped for," he said, "a beacon that invites the community to come here. Just look for the cross." **NOW**

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Best of Both Worlds

— By Samantha Daviss

Moving from a big city like Austin, Texas, to the small town atmosphere of Corsicana is exactly what the Neris needed. Most people endure major culture shock when they move to a smaller community than the one they grew up in or moved from, but not Kevin and Kelly Neri. “We absolutely love it here, we have made so many great friends we know we will have for life,” Kevin admitted happily.

Growing up in two of the largest cities in Texas: Houston and San Antonio, Kelly and Kevin (respectively) knew they found home when they settled in to the slow easy-paced life of Corsicana. They felt blessed by God when the house of their dreams fell into their lap over dinner one night with friends.

These two were predestined to be together. Not many of us can say that we have known our spouse since kindergarten,

At Home With
**Kevin and
Kelly Neri**

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but these two certainly can. “We lived a couple of blocks away from each other, from kindergarten to the eighth grade,” Kelly recalled. “Then he moved away to San Antonio during



our high school years." After high school, unknown to the other, they each enrolled at Texas A&M University in the fall of 1993. They attended a Christian-based group that met once a week just across from campus called Breakaway.

"I remember I saw her in the parking lot one night after Breakaway," Kevin recalled. "I called out her name; after a



moment of surprise, she agreed to ride with me as I searched for a parking spot on campus." Like every good Aggie gentleman, Kevin walked Kelly back to her dorm, while they caught up on old times. Soon after, they "had one date to Bonfire [a long-standing A&M tradition until 1999], but there were really no romantic flames igniting that night. We ended up just being really good friends," Kelly recalled. After graduation in May 1997, they were reunited. This time, their feelings toward each other had a little bit more of a romantic twist to them. Needless to say, that Thanksgiving Kevin popped

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the big question and they were married in the summer of 1998.

While at A&M, Kevin had been a member of the renowned Corps of Cadets, in which he was commissioned to the military for four years after graduation. He decided his career with the military was complete after his four required years and the birth of their oldest child, Katie, in 2001. Kevin knew it was time to shine in his area of expertise — construction — in order to support his ever-growing brood.

Soon after starting their new life in

the construction industry in Lakeway, Texas, Kelly and Kevin received a transfer to Corsicana, a town they had heard of but never visited. Kelly was pregnant again by this time and they needed to quickly find a home. Luckily, they had made some good friends at the First Baptist Church of Corsicana, including Robert and Danielle Means. Robert was a longtime native of Corsicana, coming from a long line of Corsicana residents, so his family was well-established in Corsicana heritage. The Means welcomed Kelly and Kevin

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with open arms and even had them out to their home for dinner one evening. Robert and Danielle had spent the last few years renovating their house that had previously belonged to Robert's grandparents. After their evening out, Robert called Kevin and informed him that he and Danielle would be moving to Tyler,

Texas. A light bulb went off in Kevin's head and he and Robert made the deal for the Neris to purchase their home. "The house never even went on the market," Kevin said.

"I never really saw the inside of the house until we were unloading the moving van the day we moved here," Kelly recalled. "I remember quickly

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Dana Collins announces her candidacy for City Council Precinct 4

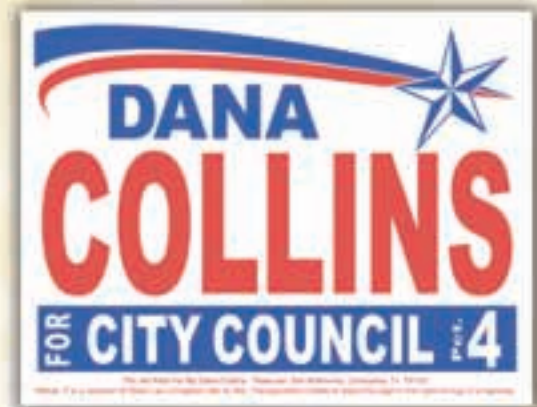
Dana Collins announces that she is running for City Council in Precinct 4. As a life-time resident of Corsicana and a resident of precinct 4 for 16 years, Dana wants to work with the city and the citizens to ensure we maintain our historic past as we achieve a progressive future.

"I was born in Corsicana and grew up here with my older brother, Glen. My father, Herbert Degner, was a Cabell's milkman and my mother, Shirley, worked at Woolworth. Early on, I developed a love of my city and an attachment to this community. Some of my most fond memories are riding with my dad on his milk route, attending church and helping my mom with whatever fun-filled project she was working on at Woolworth or in the community."

Dana continued, "I have a very strong work ethic. By the age of 10, I already had summer jobs and I began working alongside my mom at Woolworth at the age of 15. By Christmas of that first year, (I was 16 years old) I was moved to customer service." Some people might say Dana had a gift for speaking with people and resolving issues. "One thing for sure, my love of people and service were prevalent even then. In remembering one of my favorite teachers and friend, Jan Ivie, I can say that she was a strong influence on my community involvement and dedicated work ethic."

Dana married her high-school sweetheart, Randy Collins right after graduation and they have been married for 28 years. "We raised two beautiful daughters in this community (Alison, 23 and Whitney, 21) and we are now enjoying our first grandchild, (Gracie, 3). I want to be sure that when my grandchildren grow up in Corsicana, there will be ample jobs, a beautiful city, strong retail districts and flourishing tourism. I believe we can achieve that by planning for those things and working that plan. I don't believe it will happen overnight, but I am committed to these goals for our city."

Dana currently owns her own business, Sign Pro's on 7th Avenue and is intensely involved in the community. She takes an active role in the community as the president of the American Business Womens Association and the chairman for Creative Arts with the Navarro County Youth Exposition. She is also active in the Chamber of Commerce, participating in Leadership Corsicana. Dana is also a Red Cross volunteer, a Relay for Life helper and participates in various other community support efforts.



"I believe that only careful consideration and strategic planning will help Corsicana find her place as a gem in central Texas. We have a glorious past, a beautiful downtown, park system, college and some of the finest residents I have ever met. Yes, I believe that with a new perspective and varied representation, we will find our perfect fit and begin to shape this city for our heirs."

"The first thing I need is your support and to ask for your vote on May 9th for City Council Precinct 4. I am open to your suggestions and comments. You will find me at Sign Pro's every day and I will be anxious for your views and opinions. Call me at 903-874-7800."

I am asking for your vote on May 9th



walking through it during the dinner, but I wasn't looking at it from a buyer's perspective. We were just out here for a nice dinner with friends," she giggled.

"The house is fantastic. It is built like a tank," Kevin said, explaining it is made with shiplap walls, creating an immensely strong, reinforced and sound home. Kelly explained it takes an industrial-strength hammer to nail even the simplest of pictures on the wall.

"The house was built in 1953 by W.W. Harris (Robert's maternal grandfather) on about 500 acres," Kevin said. Kevin and Kelly bought 20 of those acres, and with all the land surrounding the house, it is like stepping into another world, outside of city lights, street noise and the hustle and bustle which sometimes presents itself during daily life.

Entering the drive parallel to the

side of the house, two dogs, Bandit and Lisha, serve as greeters. They definitely fit the old cliché "their bark is louder than their bite." Elijah, the Jack (donkey) is the latest addition to the Neri family. The house is a perfect fit for Kelly, Kevin and their three children, Katie, Ridge and Camille.

They have done very little to the home to make it fit their lifestyle. "The only things we did to the house were

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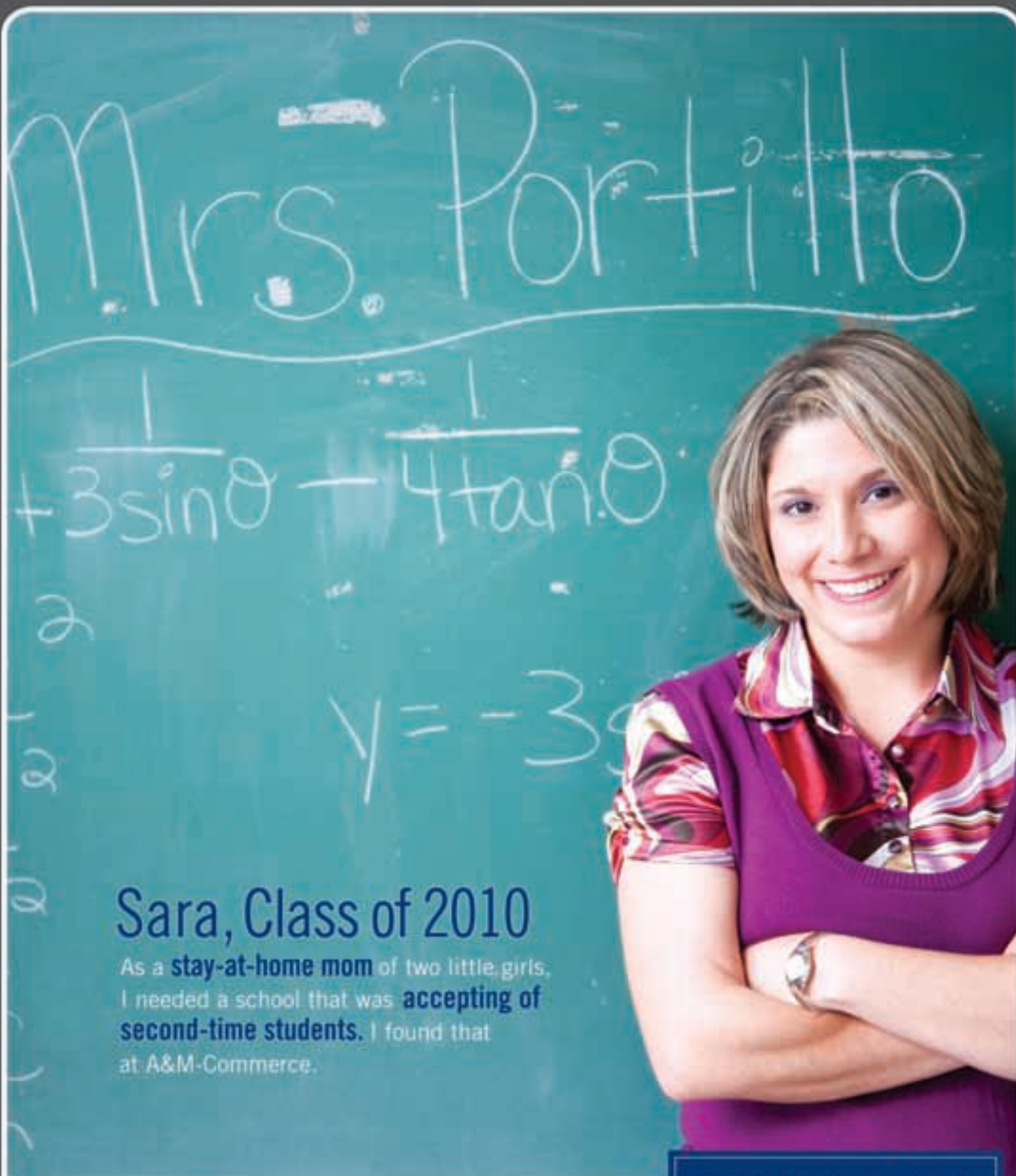
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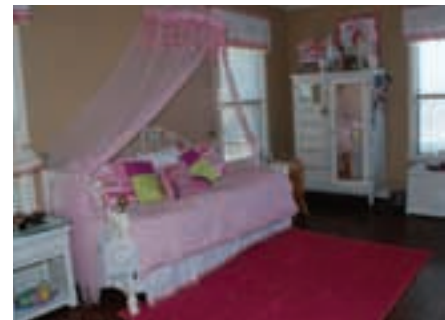
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repainting the outside, updating the septic system and adding the electric gate out front to keep the kids off the farm road," Kevin said. "But that was mainly because Robert and Danielle didn't have the opportunity to get all of that done," he added, complimentary of all the hard work Robert and Danielle had done to the house.

Amazingly enough, this 50-year-old home has withstood the test of time, with its amazing construction and a few additions to accommodate the growing and changing families who



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"The thing we love the most about this house is that we get to see the sunset directly out our front windows every single night."

have resided here. Fortunately enough, the Neris were able to move into their ideal living situation with very little effort. "The thing we love the most about this house is that we get to see the sunset directly out our front windows every single night," Kevin said. "And our kids get to grow up in a lifestyle unlike any other. We truly have the best of both worlds living where we live."

The Neris have done some work to customize the house that is their pride and joy. Katie and Camille's room is enough to make a princess envious, and Ridge's room looks as if has been lifted straight off a dude ranch in southern Colorado. Family heirlooms that have true meaning in their lives are displayed, such as one piece near the front entry from Kevin's paternal grandmother. "She was actually Katie's namesake," Kelly explained, pointing to the beautiful antique secretary. "Kevin's dad gave it to us right after we were married."

These previously big-city slickers have sunk their roots deep into the Corsicana community as a family, in their home and with their friends and job. Obviously, they are here to stay. **XXXX**

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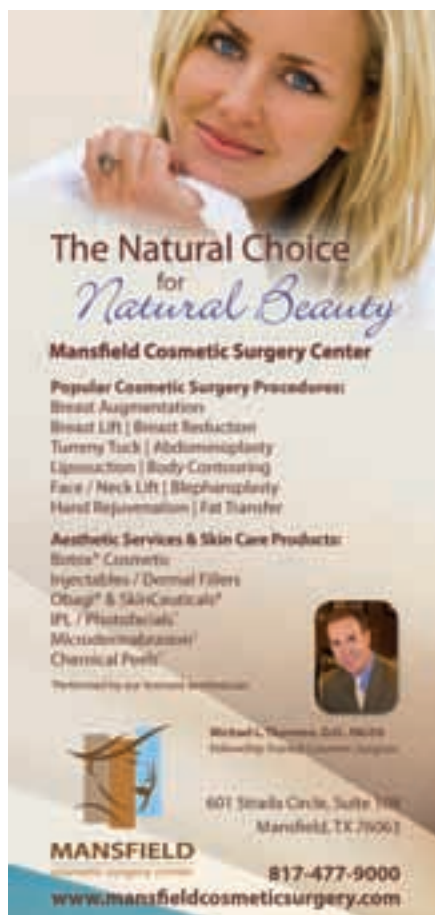
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Thirty Years in the Making

— By Samantha Daviss

Navarro Council of the Arts (NCA) has accomplished something that most nonprofit organizations strive for on a continual basis, and that is to hit the 30-year mark of success and existence. “The NCA started out as a Dallas Symphony League member, where they would present one concert per year for kids in Navarro County, and we would raise money through sponsorships and memberships,” Leah Blackard, executive director of NCA, explained.

Since its inception 30 years ago, the NCA has evolved into a showcase which offers over 10,000 students throughout Navarro County the opportunity to see and experience exhibit art, performance art and various cultural phenomena they would never get to experience otherwise. “We give the students the opportunity to see two professional touring performance companies per year,” Leah stated. “We work very hard trying not to repeat like performances or genres, such as vocal, dance, symphony or acrobatic shows.”

Even though the shows are offered to all the students within Navarro County, the NCA does not draw solely from Texas or the surrounding areas. “In fact, the majority of our performances come from out-of-state or international origins,” Leah said with pride. “We have seen the Chinese acrobats and so many other foreign performers,” Jane Biltz, current NCA board president, added. “We really try to take the performers or shows to the schools (for a more personal experience) around the county, but sometimes the shows, like last year’s *Barrage* and this year’s illusionist is too grand, so we bus the students to the Corsicana High School auditorium,”



Leah said, explaining the magnitude of some of the events and shows.

Even though the Palace Theatre and NCA are two completely separate entities, they combine forces once a year to assist with the cost of bringing in a performance for the students to see. If there is a musical or concert portion to the performance, then the Palace will typically pay for that, and the NCA will pay for the educational portion of the show. “The performances



“The mission of the NCA is to present quality arts to our students.”

ARTS NOW

that we bring to the children fulfill so many requirements," Leah said. "I typically try to do enough research on each performance that it in some way affects the preparation or studying for the TAKS test. I always try to prepare a packet for the teachers so they can see how the performance will enhance test scores on the TAKS exam. Each performance has the opportunity to really fulfill an educational component, if the teachers take full advantage of each opportunity and apply it within the classroom, not to mention that these



"I feel that art completes us and makes us better persons, offering better scores to our students and calming us all as individuals in these hectic times."

shows give students opportunities they wouldn't normally have in life.

"The mission of the NCA is to present quality arts to our students," Leah said. The NCA was formed by Navarro County residents to act as an umbrella agency to run and represent all the various organizations around the county. The NCA, the Palace Theatre and the Warehouse Living Arts Center remain their own entities but work closely with one another. The NCA also works with Corsicana Parks and Recreation during the summertime to get children



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involved in the arts through art camps, music in the park and various shows or productions at the Palace Theatre.

"When Leah came on board as our director in 2001, the image and reputation of the NCA continued to grow in a positive direction, without dismissing all of the hard work that Sylvia Bonin, the former director, had done in the past," Jane explained. "In fact, Leah is not so traditional; she manages to bring in groups that offer the traditional undertones or performances in a more contemporary manner, offering greater youth identification."

If nothing else, over the past 30 years the NCA has managed to make the arts a more recognizable industry in the Navarro County area. Navarro County has gained the reputation of having one of the better, more reputable arts districts in the state of Texas. Even

"Art is one of the staples of our lives."

though art is not one of the more recognizable industries, "It does employ more than 5.7 million people nationally and brings in \$1.6 billion to the annual economic activity," Leah stated.

Leah encourages everyone to allow art into their lives. "I feel that art completes us and makes us better persons, offering better scores to our students and calming us all as individuals in these hectic times," Leah said. "It will spark them [children] in so many different ways."

"Art is one of the staples of our lives," Jane added. "In history, cultures have come and gone, but the things we have and remember are the wars that have been fought and the art they [the cultures] have left behind. I personally want to be remembered as a society for our art." That is exactly what the Navarro Council of the Arts continues to strive for every day with the positive influence they exert in our children's lives. **ARTS NOW**



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Sports NOW



National Champions

— By Joan Kilbourne

It was a big day for the Tiger Baseball Team from Navarro County. They became the National Champions of the Central Division of Select Baseball Teams. Remarkably, the team had won eight consecutive games. Perhaps more remarkable is the fact that all players are 11 years old.

The Tiger Baseball Club began just five years ago when a group of dads, along with Coach Billy Harlan, who played ball at Texas A&M University, got together to organize a baseball team for their sons.

An Internet search identified an organization called Super Series Baseball. The dads located tournaments in the Central Division which would allow the team to play other teams in the area around Dallas, Fort Worth and Navarro County. The first team roster included 11 boys from Corsicana, Blooming Grove, Teague, Lyndale and Fairfield.

Five years later, these same 11 players are still together. This in itself is a sign of their loyalty and dedication to the game.

Danny Hayes, one of the coaches, said, "They play well together. They think like a team; not like individual players." His son, Hunter, added, "I play shortstop, but also second base, third base and catcher and I pitch, too." Danny explained that all the boys take turns pitching. "When you play a lot of games over three days at a tournament, you have to switch pitchers. As each pitcher steps into the game, the other boys move to cover his position, so they all play all of the positions. The way

they back each other up is great!"

Membership on the team is a family affair. Hunter's 8-year-old brother, Keller, is just starting to play on a team. Hunter's mom, Lisa, like all the other

moms, makes sure there are blankets, chairs, food and water for the games. All the necessary equipment tends to find a semi-permanent home in the family car during the season. Hunter said, "I play soccer at the YMCA," as Danny smiled and added, "He hunts and fishes with me, too." Hunter's goal, however, is to play baseball when he goes to Corsicana

**"They think like a team;
not like individual players."**

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High School. "After that, I want to play for the Texas Longhorns," he shared.

Family support is evident as the parents are always in attendance for every game. The membership fee covers tournament fees throughout the season. To cover the cost of an out-of-town national tournament week, however, the boys have to do some serious fundraising activities. They have held car washes, sold candles and Pampered Chef kitchenware. They sponsored a tee ball tournament for younger players, as well as a bake sale or two. Parents were active and willing participants in this effort as well. While the parents are enthusiastic about their sons' involvement with the team, "homework comes first," Danny stated. "All the kids are doing well in school."

The season began in mid-March. Coach Harlan, Corsicana High School varsity baseball coach, made the high school field and the batting cages available for team practice on Thursday evenings. Another practice takes place on Sunday. The schedule allows for some weekends without tournament games so that the players and their families can enjoy other summer activities.

In their first season of play, the team did so well that the dads signed up for another season of tournament play. "In 2007, they scored well enough to rank in the top four winning teams that went to the National Tournament in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma," Danny said. "They played well, placing fourth in their first national competition." The Tigers competed in 10 qualifying tournaments in 2008. The top four winners go to the state tournament. Top state winners are then eligible to play in the National Tournament, held last year near Little Rock, Arkansas.

At the National Tournament, the Tigers Team demonstrated its strength right away by winning three games, which put them in fifth place for the next level of play. Staying strong, the

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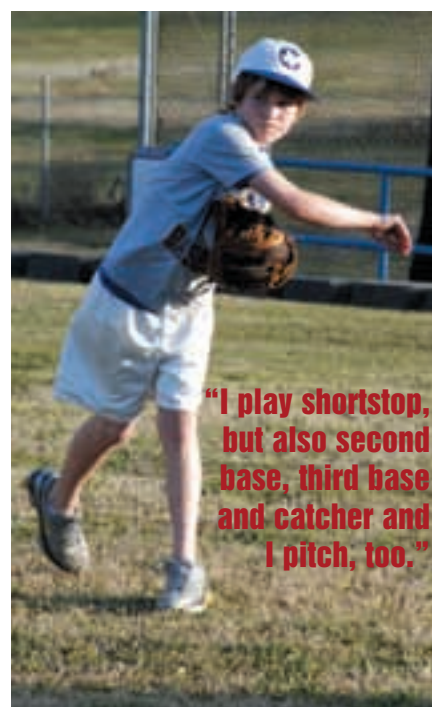
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Tigers played and won seven more games. The playoff game put them in competition against the winners of the Arkansas State Championship. They won this final game in overtime and became the Select Baseball National Champions. Every player's family attended the National Tournament and took hundreds of photographs of the winning players proudly wearing gold medals the size and weight of Olympic medals.



The win in the National Tournament helped raise the team to a more advanced level of competition so that, in this current season, they will compete in tournaments with the higher American level teams. Still ahead of them is the top national level. "Their accomplishment is remarkable when you recognize that the teams they competed against came from Dallas and Fort Worth where coaches can choose from many more possible players," Danny explained. "This small, yet mighty team has every reason to be smiling proudly in all their photographs." **NOW**



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Sun Loans originally started in San Antonio, Texas, in 1988, and now operates in seven states nationwide. The Corsicana branch office actually opened in 1992. They have been at their current location for the past five years. The office is located on West 3rd Avenue, complete with a whole new look, which includes the newly renovated brick streets and wider sidewalks.

The staff there greets you with a smile and a helping hand for all your financial needs. Customer service is the most important functional aspect for all of the office employees. In fact, that is precisely the motto the Corsicana Sun Loan office exists by: The customer comes first and customer service is the most important thing. "We service all of Navarro County from as far north as Rice, down to Richland, and east to west from Blooming Grove to Kerens," Jerrie explained. "The other



Money

When You Need It

— By Samantha Daviss

way we offer great service is to get involved with the community. We have participated in Derrick Days in the past and offered a sponsorship to the Calico drill team."

The rest of the staff is also extremely knowledgeable and helpful. Shea St. Clair is a home-town guy with deep roots, offering a friendly and recognizable face as you enter the office. As assistant manager, he will help you with your loan application or any service you may need.

"The staff there greets you with a smile and a helping hand for all your financial needs."

The Corsicana branch offers its customers unsecured loans up to \$1,100. Their loan application process is quick and easy in order to provide any emergency cash you may need. "Also, no explanation as to what the loan is for is required; and a checking or savings account is not a requirement

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either," Jerrie said. "Sun Loans looks at their applicants as a whole, as an actual person, not just a credit record. They take into consideration the person's stability, ability financially and their credit." However, one factor does not outweigh another, all applicants are considered equal. The payment plans are clean and simple. They offer six- to 12-month payment options, depending on the amount requested.

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"Sun Loans looks at their applicants as a whole, as an actual person, not just a credit record."

school, they come to realize just how difficult it is to establish credit, so this is a great graduation gift or suggestion."

Other services offered through Sun Loans are tax return preparation and filing. "We offer the same promise that other firms do," Jerrie said. "We try to get your money back to you as quickly as possible, from five minutes to seven to 14 days." They also offer a referral fee program — \$25 for every referral. "It is a great second job or source of income that is tax free and requires very little work," Jerrie informed.

Located at 111 West 3rd Avenue, Suite A, Sun Loans offers loan assistance, tax preparation, a full-time notary, as well as a full-service fax and copy center. So if you are in need of a loan, visit Jerrie and Shea at Sun Loans or call them at (903) 872-9110. **NOW**

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Order in the Court

— By Samantha Daviss

Some of us find our calling in life at a very young age, and then there are those of us who never really find the right fit, yet we have a vague idea of what we might be really good at doing. The paralegal program offered at Navarro College can fulfill both of those needs. It offers a chance at a great life and a great career, and the opportunity to know that you are really good at assisting others, organizing an office and aiding a busy lawyer with all their legal needs.

Damara Watkins, director of the paralegal program, knew she wanted to go into law from a very young age. “I always knew I wanted to be a lawyer — ever since the fourth grade,” Damara admitted. After graduating from Corsicana High School in 1986, she received her bachelor’s degree from Southern Methodist University (SMU) in 1989 in management information systems. “Once I started interviewing [post-college], I definitely knew designing computer systems wasn’t for me, and I headed to law school at the University of Texas,” Damara said.

Upon returning to Corsicana in 1993, aside from planning her wedding, which was to take place in January 1994, Damara was busy studying for the bar examination to further her lifelong dream of a career in law. “I went out and practiced for a year on my own,” she recalled. “But then an opening came up in January of 1995, in the district attorney’s office, which I knew was a perfect fit for me.” After seven years of trying everything from speeding tickets to capital murder cases and working her way up to first assistant district attorney, assisting with half of the felony case load, Damara knew it was time for her to stay home with her two babies, Grayson and Graham. “While I was at home, though, I still got to work part time out of my house, mainly criminal defense and termination of parental rights cases,” Damara stated, explaining one position she held as the second chair alongside Kerri Anderson Donica on a capital murder case and another appointment as appellate counsel on a capital murder case.

Damara was able to do it all: be at home with her kids, while still fulfilling her lifetime dream of being a lawyer. “Although it is a very difficult job on an emotional level, it is particularly satisfying to work on capital cases, because of being able to pull out all of the stops,” Damara said. “The



county (or state) pays for the accused’s experts, so really no expense is spared; therefore, you know you are getting and working with the best of the best. Also, I love doing research, which is required for these types of cases. You definitely have to be at the top of your game.”

In 2004, after working from her house and spending priceless time with her children, Damara felt it was time to start practicing outside of the house again. “But then, the opportunity to become the director of the paralegal program opened up at the college [Navarro College],” Damara said. “I knew it was going to be a great position for me as a mother, a wife and a legal professional. I had taught part time in the program previously and knew that teaching could be as rewarding as practicing.”

This is Damara’s sixth year as director of the program and she loves it. During this time, she has managed to get herself involved with the county on a legal basis again. “I just felt it was best for my program and my students if I could really stay connected with the goings-on and particular law issues throughout the county,” Damara explained. “Through my

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criminal cases, I am able to work with local attorneys and judges and be better informed about the issues facing the legal profession in our area."

With the paralegal program in its 20th year, Damara has managed to keep its reputation climbing. In addition to practicing within the county and directing the program, Damara is also a full-time professor. "The paralegal program is a great opportunity for anyone seeking an exciting career in the legal profession," she said. "We

"The paralegal program is a great opportunity for anyone seeking an exciting career in the legal profession."

actually offer two degree plans for people to choose from. There is a one-year certification program, and then we offer an Associate of Applied Science degree in paralegal studies that tends to take about two years."

The requirements and responsibilities will vary for each paralegal, depending on the law office they work within, but a few general responsibilities may include: conducting client interviews and maintaining general contact with clients; conducting legal investigations; calendaring and tracking important deadlines; organizing and maintaining client files; assisting attorneys with depositions, hearings and trials; and organizing information in preparation for trial.

Damara recognizes the differences in teaching and practicing, but appreciates both on different levels. "Teaching is so exciting to me because I get to see people embark on a new phase in their lives," Damara said. "We have graduates who work in law offices, corporate legal departments, government agencies and the courts. There are so many success stories, and it feels great to help people achieve their dreams!" **NOW**

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Around Town

NOW



Elonda Cassady and friends, top left, enjoyed an evening at Black Jacks Restaurant. Karlan Hightower and several of his friends, top right, celebrated his 10th birthday at CiCi's Pizza. The Ambassador of the Year Award was shared this year by Brenda Stubbs, second row left and Maxine Moore, second row right. The Image Maker Award went to Brad Haney, second row center, during the recent Chamber of Commerce Banquet and Awards Ceremony. The Authur J. Keeney Award was presented to Jimmy Hale, bottom left, by Executive Director Paul Hooper. A ribbon cutting, bottom right, was held at Bethany Home Health Services.

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Around Town **NOW**



Guests, top, eagerly looked on as door prizes were awarded during the Business After Hours event at RE/MAX. Roy's Café, second row right, hosted the Corsicana Education Foundation as they raised money for CISD students and teachers. John and Julie Teel and Paul Hooper, third row center, were in attendance at the recent Business After Hours hosted by RE/MAX at their new Richland Chambers location. V.O.I.C.E., third row right, hosted a 20-year anniversary celebration. Lynda Sloan, chief executive officer for V.O.I.C.E., bottom left, gave a demonstration of the treadmill desk designed for her by her father. Dutch and Loudine Marrs, bottom right, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

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IN THE KITCHEN WITH DEBORAH SCOTT

Deborah Scott's love for cooking started early. "I have always wanted to cook," she said. "When I was 6 years old, I totally confused Santa when I asked him for a can opener." Growing up in a home with her parents, grandparents and an aunt, meals were spent together talking and laughing. "That has been my adult life with my family," she said. "We eat and talk, laugh, cry and stay connected."

When Deborah is not teaching at Collins Middle School, she enjoys working in her yard and attending Bible study. "All in all, I really like my life. I'm married to the greatest man in the world, and our sons and their wives are just the best," she expressed. "Our grandchildren have added a dimension to our lives I didn't know existed. God is good!" **NOW**

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

BAKED POTATO SOUP

2 leeks, split, rinsed, chopped — no substitutions
1/4 cup butter — no substitutions
3 lbs. baking potatoes, peeled, cut into 2-inch chunks
2-3 cups chicken broth
1 qt. half-and-half — no substitutions
Sauté the leeks in melted butter over low heat until tender, about 10 minutes. Peel and cube the potatoes; add to butter and leeks. Pour enough chicken broth to just partially cover the potatoes. Cook for about 12 minutes or until fork tender. Make sure that the broth is reduced by about half. Pour half-and-half into potato and broth mixture. Heat through, but do not boil. Top with whatever you would put on a baked potato — chopped bacon, sour cream, grated cheese or chives. Serves 6-8.

COUSCOUS SALAD

2 cups chicken broth
2 cups couscous
1 small shallot
1/3 cup + 2 Tbsp. olive oil, separated
1 garlic clove, minced
juice of 1 large lemon plus zest
salt and pepper, to taste
grape tomatoes
Parmesan cheese, shredded
1/2 cup fresh basil, finely shredded
Bring chicken broth to a boil; remove from heat. Add

couscous, cover and let sit for 5 minutes. Stir couscous with a fork to fluff; transfer to a bowl. Cover and refrigerate for about 1 hour or until chilled. Mince shallot; sauté in 2 Tbsp. olive oil until tender. Add garlic; sauté until garlic is cooked but not brown. Remove from heat; add to a deep bowl. Add lemon juice and zest. Slowly stream about 1/3 cup olive oil into mixture, whisking quickly. Add salt and pepper to taste. Pour the dressing over the couscous; stir to coat the pasta. Cover and chill. Before serving, add grape tomatoes, Parmesan cheese and basil; toss gently.

HOT FUDGE CAKE

1 chocolate cake box mix (I use Duncan Hines devils food.)
vanilla ice cream (or flavor of your choice)

HOT FUDGE SAUCE:

1/2 cup butter
1 12-oz. can Hershey's chocolate syrup
1 10-oz. can sweetened milk
1/2 tsp. vanilla
Prepare cake mix according to directions. I use either a Bundt pan or an 8 1/2 x 11-inch pan. Prepare fudge sauce by melting butter in a saucepan. Add remaining ingredients; stir until combined. Do not boil. Sauce can be kept in the fridge for about one month. To assemble the cake, cut 2 1/2- to 1-inch slices of Bundt cake or one large square of oblong cake. If you are using oblong cake, cut cake horizontally into two slices. Place scoop or slice of vanilla ice cream, or whatever you prefer, on the bottom slice. Top with second slice of cake. Ladle hot fudge over the cake.

You can use anything extra you like, such as whipped cream, chopped nuts, cherry pie filling or coconut to garnish the dessert. This is my sons' favorite holiday dessert. We always had it on Thanksgiving and Christmas. As a special treat, it was also their breakfast on the day after the holiday.

MARSHMALLOW FROSTING

This is my great Aunt Christine's recipe. She cooked on a wood-burning stove and beat the eggs and frosting with a hand-held egg beater. I do not know how she made this taste so good working with those tools!

1 cup white sugar
1/2 cup white Karo syrup
4 Tbsp. water
4 egg whites
1 Tbsp. good vanilla

Combine sugar, syrup and water in a heavy saucepan. Do not stir more than a few times to incorporate ingredients. Cook over medium heat until syrup "spins a thread." (Dip spoon into syrup and hold above pan. When syrup is ready, a thin thread will drift from spoon down into pan.) This could take up to 10 minutes. Do not stir while syrup is cooking. While syrup is cooking, beat egg whites until stiff, but not dry. I keep the mixer going very slowly while the syrup comes up to temperature. When syrup is ready, pour very slowly into beating egg whites. Turn mixer up to medium high; continue beating for about 10 minutes. Add vanilla. This will frost a 3-layer cake. It was my mother's best frosting and she used it on all our birthday cakes. It is particularly good for coconut cake.

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Suffering From Investment Statement Shock?

— By Bruce Robinson, CFP®

Conventional wisdom tells you to be a patient “buy and hold” investor, but seeing half of your account wiped out in a year might make you feel like a “buy and fold” investor.

“Should I sell now before I lose even more money?” has certainly been one of the most frequently asked questions of 2009. We have to go all the way back to the 1930s to find stock market declines like the one that began in 2008. What we have seen is unprecedented. Using asset allocation models based on over 35 years of market history, portfolios have been constructed that had a “worst case” expected loss of 5 percent to 10 percent. The 2008/2009 bear market blew through this expectation like Hurricane Katrina hitting New Orleans. While looking back and considering lessons learned is helpful, the pressing question is what you should do now.

As an investor, the first thing you need to consider is selling down to your sleeping point. If your investments and their decline in value are keeping you up at night with worry and anxiety, it may be time to restructure your portfolio. Another sell signal would be if you and your spouse are having tense discussions about your portfolio. Do not let numbers on a statement wreck your health and your relationships.

The second point involves your investment time horizon. If the money you have invested in the stock market is going to be needed by you or your family within the next five

years, you should consider the ramifications of losing another 20 percent or more. While finance professionals are confident in our country’s future, it could take several years for the economy to recover from the severe shocks of 2008.

Lastly, remember the old expression, “It is what it is.” You must deal with the present reality and you still need a plan.

Boone Pickens, talking about our lack of a national energy policy, said, “A fool with a plan beats a genius with no plan.” As painful as it may be, you need to make a realistic reassessment of your investment plan. For example, you may have to scale back your expectations for lifestyle income in retirement, postpone retirement, or increase your savings rate. Computer technology has made financial planning widely available. Financial planners can test various assumptions and do “what-if” analyses. However, there is a big picture question that the

computer cannot answer. Do you believe this bear market will end without breaking the back of our economy? Will the stock market recover in a few years? If you see our economic future as an optimist, you can retool or modify your investment



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plan with this positive and realistic point of view. On the other hand, if you believe our system has been fundamentally broken and we are heading toward a bleak economic future, it may be time to sell and avoid further losses.

It can be argued that history is on the side of the optimist. All previous bear markets have eventually run out of gas. Our stock market has always recovered and gone on to make new highs. Despite our current challenges, our best days are ahead of us. Sell down to your sleeping point. Consider your time horizon. Refresh your plan. **AYDY**

The comments expressed are solely those of Bruce Robinson, CFP®, a principal with Maplewood Investment Advisors, Inc. His office is in Corsicana. Readers should consult their investment and tax advisers.



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Gary Hayden

Health NOW

Lead Poison: Prevention

— By Dr. Ron Rodriguez

Unlike the urban legend, you can't get lead poisoning from a pencil, but lead is a hazard that can cause serious health complications.

Lead, which is toxic to many of the body's tissues and enzymes, can be found in the soil, in some household paints and even in children's toys. The number of cases of lead poisoning has decreased since a federal regulation required fuel and paint to be lead-free. However, there is still a high level of lead concentrated in the soil around major highways and in some urban settings.

High levels of lead can also be found in older houses with lead pipes and lead-based paint, on old ceramics, china, porcelain and even in household dust. When the body is exposed to high levels of lead in the environment, the result can be lead poisoning.

While it is children who are generally more susceptible to lead poisoning, adults can be affected, too. Children are more vulnerable because lead can begin to accumulate in their undeveloped tissue and nervous system. This may result in serious health problems including: kidney damage, learning disabilities, speech and language behavior issues, poor muscle coordination and hearing loss. In some cases, children can be at risk of irreversible brain

damage due to high levels of lead poisoning.

Adults who have high levels of lead poisoning may also experience some health issues including: high blood pressure, digestive problems, cataracts, memory loss, muscle and joint pain reproductive issues or pregnancy complications. For both children and adults, high levels of lead poisoning may cause seizures, unconsciousness and possibly even death.

To avoid serious health problems there are symptoms that serve as a warning to seek early treatment. Children may show signs of irritability, weight loss, decreased appetite, sluggishness, abdominal pain, vomiting, unusual paleness and difficulty learning. Similarly, adults may show signs of pain, numbness or tingling in the arms and legs, muscular weakness, headaches, abdominal pain or changes in mood.

There are a few simple measures that can be taken to prevent lead poisoning:

- Have a home lead inspection and risk assessment by a professional;
- Wash children's hands after playing outside, before eating or before going to bed;
- Clean floors, windowsills and other dusty surfaces with a damp cloth;
- Restrict children's play around roadways or bridges;
- Provide meals that are high in iron and calcium; and
- Run cold water in old lead pipes for at least a minute before using.

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Health NOW

It is important to have children tested at 6 months old for lead poisoning and to have a yearly exam if they live in an older house with lead-based paint. It is also important to have an annual lead check if exposed to high levels at work or in daily activities. If diagnosed, a physician may provide different treatment options, depending on the severity of the diagnosis. Visit your physician if you think you need to be tested for lead poisoning and find out what treatment options are available. **571111**

*Dr. Ron Rodriguez,
Navarro Regional Hospital
Sources: Mayo Clinic (mayoclinic.com)*

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Weep, Creep

and Leap!

— By Nancy Fenton

Are you planting yet? Flowers, shrubs and trees are only going to be as beautiful as the care given to them merits. This includes planting! The old wives' tale about perennials, shrubs and trees "weeping, creeping and leaping" makes sense if you watch your plants and think about it.

All plants need to be planted in our clay at ground level or a bit higher, so they do not start out with soggy feet. The roots need to be loosened from that tight ball they get in while in those little pots. I have even taken a knife or spading fork to them if they are in a giant ball! You can see why they might "weep." Just the shock of planting can set some back for quite a while. New plants need a good cover of mulch (three-four inches) to protect them from heat and drought. If your plant is very small, just take the mulch up to within two inches of the plant until it grows a bit, then move it on in closer. Trees need to have the mulch pulled back from the trunk at least two-three inches to lessen the possibility of fungus or disease.

I am watching a certain tree right now. It did not do much last year or the year before, but I hope it will have established itself and be ready to "leap" up and grow like mad this year. If it does not, I may have to do some digging and check out roots. If they did not get unwound, they will still be growing round and round. That tree will not be very stable (watch out for high winds) plus it will exhaust all the food and water in that confined area. Not a good situation for the tree!

If you are planting annuals, be sure and loosen up the roots as you put them in the ground. Those tight little squares do not do much for water and food acquisition. Our plants really are pretty resistant and can take a bit of handling if given a good soaking.

Farmers' Market begins in May, so I may see you there! **XXXXX**

Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener.





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April 2009

Community Calendar

Third Thursday

Corsicana Education Foundation Board Meeting for board of directors at the CISD Administration Building: 4:00 p.m. executive; 4:30 p.m. general board.

ABWA Empowering Women Express Network meeting: 5:45 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center, 1 Community Circle. www.abwa-empoweringwomen.org.

Fourth Thursday

Corsicana Education Foundation Campus Celebration. This month is Collins Middle School.

April 4

Corsicana Preservation Foundation annual Twilight Ball: Halbert House, 3rd Ave. For ticket prices and purchases, please contact Mary at (903) 875-0354.

April 9

HOP Downtown Easter Celebration: 3:30-5:00 p.m.

Spencers Theatre of Illusion tickets on sale for May 7 show at the Palace.

April 11

Marriage Management Courses: 8:45 a.m.-5:00 p.m., YMCA, 400 W. Oaklawn Ave.

April 14

"Those Who Host, Lose the Most" press conference and art exhibit: 10:00 a.m. at the Warehouse Living Arts Center.

April 15-20

"Cost of Freedom" American Veterans Traveling Tribute at Grimes Park, 500 E. Centre Park Blvd., DeSoto. (972) 224-3565. info@desotochamber.org.

April 17-19

Bluebonnet Trails Festival in Downtown Ennis. Friday: 11:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday: 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

April 18

Mosaic Spring Sports Spectacular at Fullerton-Garrity Park: 3:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m.

Annual "Corsicana Start! Heart Walk" at I.O.O.F. Park.

Registration: 8:00 a.m. 5K walk begins at 9:00 a.m. Free event.

April 20

7 Bridges Eagles Tribute Band tickets on sale for May 22 show at the Palace.

April 21

Navarro County A&M Club presents their annual Muster Dinner: 7:00 p.m. at the Corsicana Country Club. Call (903) 654-2838. "Softly Call the Muster" Ags.

April 22-24

Derrick Days. Visit www.derrickdays.com for entry forms for any event.

April 22

Hot dog luncheon at Pocket Park: 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

April 23

VOICE 5th Annual Spring Luncheon: noon at the Cook Center at Navarro College, 3100 W. Collin St. Guest Speaker: Former Dallas Mayor Laura Miller.

April 23-May 1

A Bad Year for Tomatoes will be performed at the Warehouse Living Arts Center. Contact the Warehouse box office for ticket prices and performance times: (903) 872-5421.

April 24

Street dance and fireworks display: 8:00 p.m.-midnight at Beaton and 5th Ave.

April 25

Oil City Minithon 5K run: 7:30 a.m. at the YMCA, 400 W. Oaklawn. Contact (903) 654-2838.

Oil City Minithon One-mile Fun Run: 8:00 a.m. at the YMCA, 400 W. Oaklawn. Contact (903) 654-2838.

Derrick Days Parade: 9:00 a.m., downtown.

Chili Cook-off and Barbecue: 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. at Beaton and 2nd Ave.

Derrick Days 3rd Annual 3-on-3 Basketball Street Jam: 10:00 a.m. on Beaton St, between 6th Ave. and Collin Street.

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

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**Matthew 6:33 But seek you first the Kingdon of God, and his
righteousness, and all these things shall be given you.**

**Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which
strengthens me.**



**Removes more than
99% of:**



Dust



Pollen



Bacteria



Flu Virus

Wait, what?

It started as a simple goal: build the best whole home air filtration system in the world. Now that the tests are over, the results are astonishing. An independent study from the Harvard School of Public Health determined AccuClean Whole Home Air Filtration System from American Standard Heating & Air Conditioning removes more than 99% of harmful particulates from the filtered air, including the common flu virus. Give your family healthier, cleaner air. Visit the website or contact your local independent American Standard dealer to learn more.

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