

The Community Magazine Serving Midlothian and the Surrounding Area

Midlothian NOW

M A G A Z I N E

April 2009

Soul
Painting

Challenges in
Living a Dream

Always
Learning

Spring Into
Summer Football

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Gilbert and
Deloros McKay

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MISD Kindergarten Roundup



When: April 20-24 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Where: All Elementary Campuses

Any child who is 5 years old on or before September 1, 2009 is eligible to attend the district's full-day kindergarten. Students must attend school within the attendance zone assigned by MISD. Parents/guardians are encouraged to register their child at their attendance zone campus during the week of April 20-24, 2009 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Registration for the 2009-10 school year will end June 4 at 12:00 p.m.
Registration will be open again August 12-14 from 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 a.m. and
August 17-20 from 8:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. only.

Required Documents to Enroll

Parents or guardians should bring the following: child's Social Security card, child's official birth certificate, child's complete immunization record, guardian's driver's license, two proofs of residency: mortgage statement, lease agreement or closing document and either a current electric, gas or water bill showing the physical address.

Kindercamp

Parents and students are invited to visit their home campus for an informational meeting about MISD's Kindergarten program. Enrollment packets will be available.

Tuesday, April 21 6:30 p.m. at Irvin Elementary
6:45 p.m. at Vitovsky Elementary
Thursday, April 23 6:30 p.m. at Baxter Elementary, Miller Elementary and Mt. Peak Elementary
Thursday, April 30 6:30 p.m. at Longbranch Elementary

Pre-Kindergarten Roundup

Pre-Kindergarten is also available for children who will be 4 years old on or before September 1, 2009 and have limited ability to speak and/or comprehend English, are homeless or whose family income allows the child to qualify for free or reduced lunch. Registration is also scheduled for April 20-24 at all MISD elementary schools.

Head Start Roundup

MISD also offers the Head Start program as an option to Pre-K if the child qualifies. Head Start registration is April 20-24 only at the LaRue Miller campus. Contact Michelle Lewis at 972-775-4361 for additional information.

Contact your campus for more information about the Bilingual Pre-K and Bilingual Kindergarten program.

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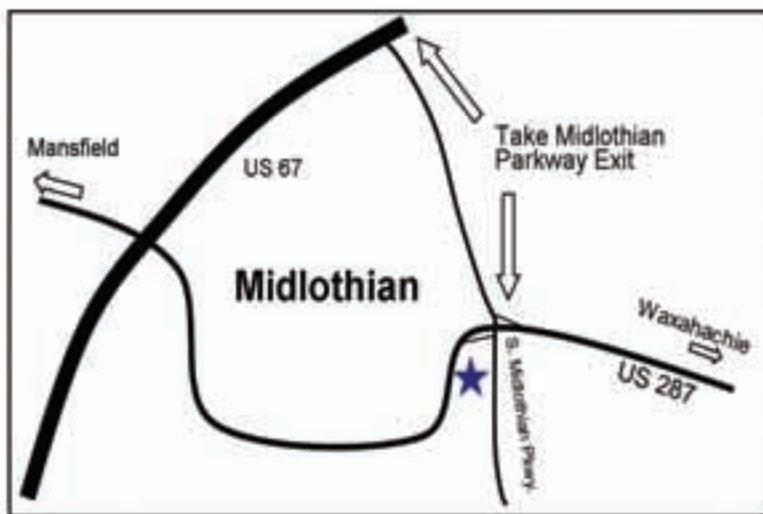
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A gnome gets his wish at the home
of Gilbert and Deloros McKay.*

Photo by Ivey Photography.

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Midlothian NOW

Editor's Note

Hello, Midlothian!

When one of my sons was younger, I took before-and-after pictures on Easter morning. The before photo shows him clean and meticulously dressed. The after photo with his suspenders hanging on the ground, shirt tail out on one side, bow tie askew, a mysterious stain on his shorts, muddy knees and a big grin on his face, is one of my favorite pictures. Can we ever get enough of the beautiful dresses and new outfits worn to celebrate this day? A new outfit for a new beginning sounds right to me! I hope you enjoy celebrating a new beginning in the Resurrection of Christ at your place of worship this Easter, April 12, with your family and friends.

Get your little bunnies hopping to Midlothian's annual Easter egg hunt sponsored this year by the Midlothian Downtown Business Association in Kimmel Park. For more information, contact Jason Kyle at jason@kyle-law.com.

Betty Tryon
MidlothianNOW Editor



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Challenges Living a Dream

— By Betty Tryon

On a beautiful, hot and sunny day in July 2005, tragedy was the last thing anyone in the group of teenagers considered. Eric Wickliffe, a recent graduate from Midlothian High School, went to the lake with his friends for a relaxing time of fun in the sun. In the blink of an eye, his life changed forever. He recalled his story: "Some friends and I went to the lake to swim. We had been diving off the back of the boat. I dove under and hit my forehead on a tree stump. It was scary when I first hit my head. You know when you hit your thumb with a hammer and it kind of tingles? That was how it felt. I thought, *Man, I just hit something.* When I tried to swim, instead of my arm going all the way up, it was hitting me in the face. I am a certified scuba diver, and I knew if I held my breath, I could float to the top. One of my buddies saw me, and he also saw the blood in the water from where I had hit my head. He grabbed me, loaded me in the boat and took me to the hospital where I was care-flighted to Baylor in Dallas."

Each detail of that day is clearly etched into Eric's mind forever. "Most people don't remember getting injured, but I remembered everything," he said. He knew something was terribly wrong, while trying to swim. His friends tried to provide further assistance after he was pulled into the boat. He said, "One of the girls was taking nursing classes and was



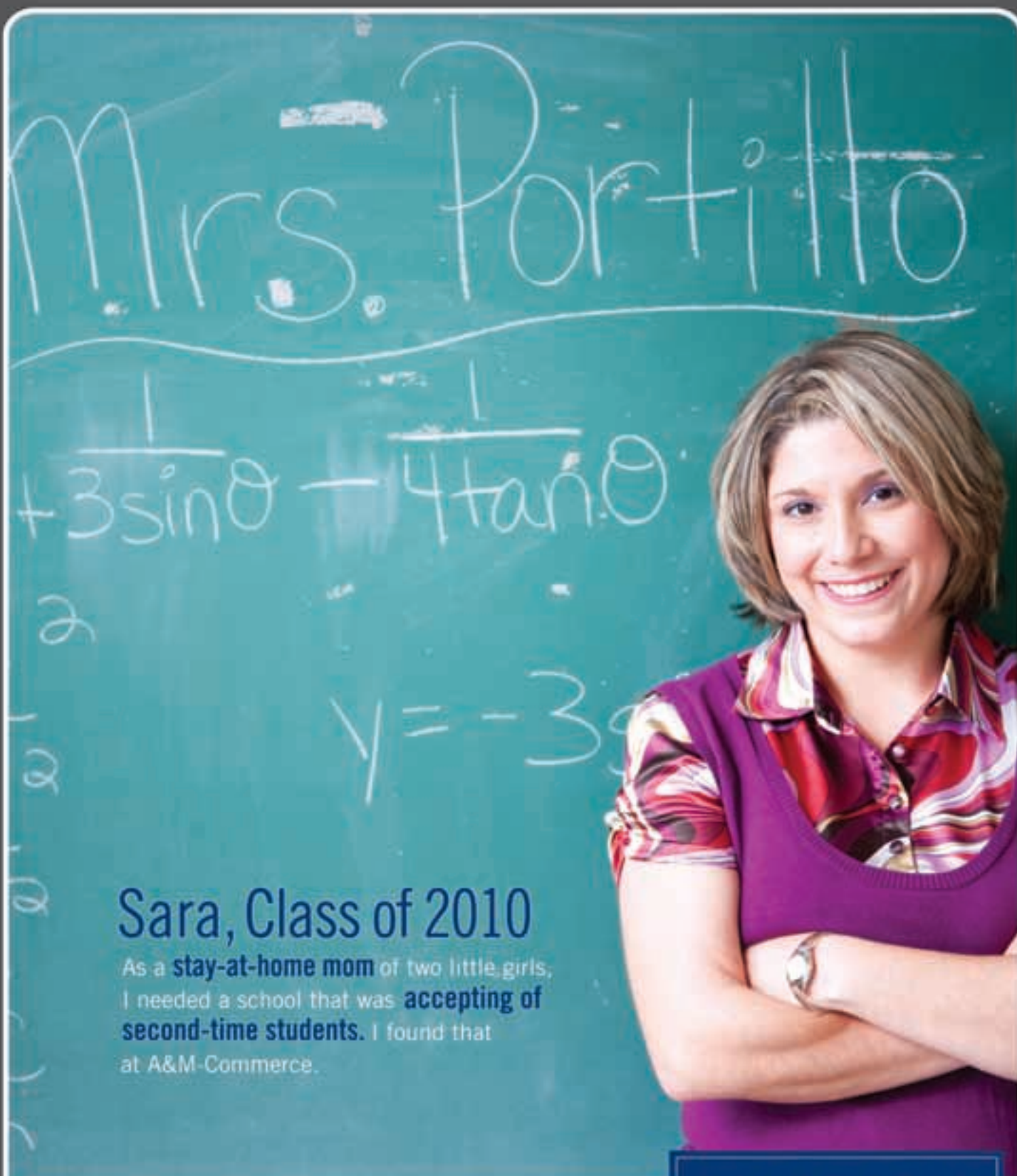
Eric posed with his wife, Kristina, and son, Ethan.



touching my feet and asking if I could feel this or that. I knew I had messed up my back or my neck, but didn't think too much about being paralyzed. My aunt and my grandpa both broke their necks, and neither one became paralyzed. After being in the hospital for a while, it started to sink in, but I was still thinking that after the swelling went down, I would be OK."

Eric would not be OK for a long time. He became a quadriplegic, paralyzed from

the neck down, although he does have function in his arms and wrists. Quite understandably, after the accident he felt dispirited and depressed. Eric smiles now, thinking back at the reaction of some of the visitors to the hospital immediately following his accident. "The hospital had to stop letting people come see me, because they started crying, and it made me even more depressed," he shared. Not everyone was turned away. "My buddy who pulled me out of the lake would work all day and come and stay all evening. My mom would stay all day until my dad came, and he would stay until 2:00 or



Sara, Class of 2010

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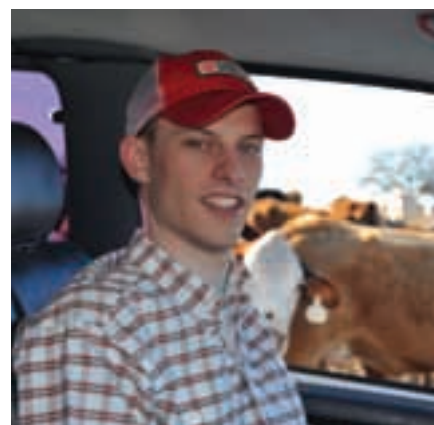
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3:00 in the morning and go to work the next day. I always had someone with me. I made a lot of friends with the nurses at Baylor who still call me and keep in touch."

Regaining control of his life was difficult, but with the support of his parents and wife, Kristina, Eric, in a sense, started his life over. Thinking about his son, Ethan, now 4 years old, also inspired him. However, what really got him moving was his truck. "Before the accident, I had just gotten my truck and had it all fixed up. My big thing was being able to drive again," he said. That took awhile because now his truck had to be custom-fitted to accommodate Eric as a quadriplegic. He recounted the



**"Most people don't
remember getting
injured, but
I remembered
everything."**

work that was done: "The seat now comes all the way down so I can slide in. I have hand controls for the brakes and gas. The day it was fixed up, I was off!"

Another huge part of his mental recovery was returning to work full time at the family business, Lincoln Press, located in Dallas. He said, "I started going back to work at the print shop in January 2006 as an estimator. We do everything from postcards to books to posters. When projects come in, I take the size, figure out the best kind

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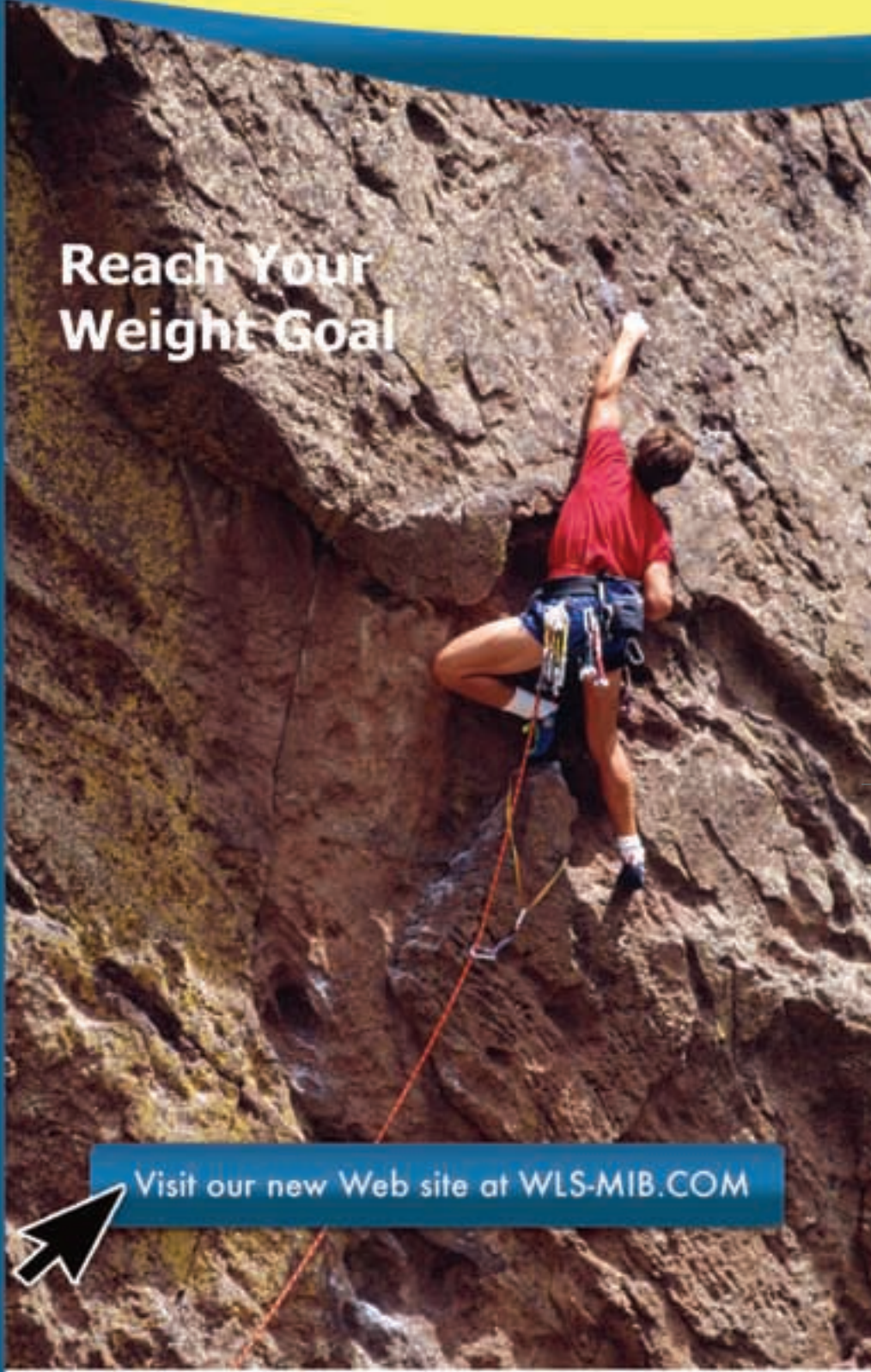
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of sheet to run it on, how many colors it is and figure how much time it is going to take to run through the press. I also decide how much to charge for the press, how much the paper is going to cost and if we have to trim it or fold it. After I estimate a job, everybody pretty much follows what I set up."

As much as Eric enjoys working in Dallas with his family, he works his dream job every weekend by taking care of his cattle on the ranch. "I could stay out on the ranch all day," he said. "I have been around it all my life. I showed steers beginning in the fifth grade all the way through school. I took



"On weekends, I go to the ranch to take care of the cows, feed them and doctor them if they need it."

a lot of Ag [agriculture] classes when I was in high school. One of the classes was livestock judging, which helps now when I buy cattle at auction. The government was giving beginning farmers loans with low interest rates to try and get younger farmers in the business. The U. S. Department of Education told me to get a plan together to show them what I could do. Now I have 130 head of cattle. On weekends, I go to the ranch to take care of the cows, feed them and doctor them if they need it. My grandparents usually assist when I am out there. My dad, brother and son come out there also."

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his accident, he continues to maintain a cheerful and upbeat attitude about life. He is very clear about his goals and plans for his family. "My game plan after graduation from high school was to try and make a living by running cows. Not many people can make a good living doing that. Someday, I want to run 500 cows. In my future goals with the printing press, I want to be the production manager someday."

Because of his indomitable spirit,



Because of his indomitable spirit, Eric's dream before his accident remains his dream afterward.

Eric's dream before his accident remains his dream afterward. With a lot of support from family and friends, he is still pursuing it. Eric remarked, "It might not be the same way you thought it would be. You might not be doing the same things you thought you would do, but you can still follow your dreams and make things happen. I miss riding the tractor, but I'm still out there and still doing it." **NOW**

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**At Home With
Gilbert and Deloros McKay**

A Matching Set of Bookends

— By Sandra McIntosh

Gilbert and Deloros McKay moved to Midlothian from DeSoto in May 2003. “We’d been in DeSoto since 1971,” Deloros said. “DeSoto had grown so much that we were ready for a change.” The change happened unexpectedly one day while they were visiting friends in Ovilla. “We decided to hop in the car,” Deloros explained. “While riding around, we came upon these garden homes.”

After making the decision to relocate, they decided the homes designed and built by Bert Calvert, a well-known builder in Midlothian, were the ones for them. “We picked from several plans he had available,” she said, adding they had to stay true to the plans, once the building process got underway. “When moving, we downsized the yard, but went up in square footage on the inside.”



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MidlothianNOW April 2009



She and Gilbert both agree the move was somewhat of an adjustment, but within two short years, they grew to love their new three-bedroom, two-bath home.

The home is located on a pie-shaped lot. The zero-lot line allows for a maintenance-free home. Going from a yard with 6,000-square-feet of workable soil to one with 2,800 square feet has made a lot of difference to the McKays. "There are no big trees to worry about," she noted, "so the leaves are not much of a problem." As self-proclaimed outdoor lovers, Gilbert and Deloros spend many hours in the yard. In fact, they take great pride in doing their own yard work and keeping the landscaping pristine and perfect all year long. "The landscaping



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in the front was done by the builder before the home was complete," Deloros explained. "Gilbert added the circular garden area around the plum tree, and we did the backyard together."

On July 2, Gilbert and Deloros will celebrate 43 years of marriage. "We're soul mates," Gilbert said, as Deloros grinned, gave him a quick hug and nodded her head in agreement. "We love doing things together." What they have been able to create is a testament to how well the two of them actually do get along. Gilbert loves to care for

the many small gardens, which make up the entire backyard area from the flowers that encircle the miniature wishing well to the birdbath, archway and jasmine in another corner, which would grace any outdoor wedding ceremony. "Gilbert has a green thumb," Deloros said with pride in her voice. "He can plant something dead in the ground, and it starts to grow almost immediately." Butterflies in a palette of many colors and low-flying birds only add to the peaceful, serene feeling the couple have created with garden

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Gilbert is very happy when he is in the yard watering and pruning, but Deloros is just as happy in the home doing what she enjoys most — interior design. She is one who likes change, and it is apparent in the decorations found from season to season within her home. “I love daisies,” she beamed. “I love the fall and winter months, but when it comes time for spring and summer, I look forward to displaying my daisies.” In doing so, she will change out the



curtains in her breakfast area, while also allowing the flower arrangements she creates herself to reflect the change of seasons, too.

The home's open floor plan and angled walls give Deloros a unique canvas on which to work her magic. “The angles make for a nice change from the straight walls found in most homes,” she explained. The layout is also something the couple has come to appreciate as well. The entry hall is a space within itself. The study, which is actually one of the three bedrooms, may be smaller



than Deloros would like, but she has been able to transform it into a warm, cozy, relaxing space, where one can retreat to read or just spend some quality “quiet time.”

“I wanted it to look masculine, so I used a trinket table to display Gilbert's nautical memorabilia and also added a set of antique Early American footstools in the corner,” she shared. Deloros' knack for decorating allows her to successfully take old and new, marrying them together, to make a style all her own.

The entire house is utilized. In fact,

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Center School of Medicine in Lubbock. She completed her residency at John Peter Smith Hospital's family medicine residency program in Fort Worth. Dr. Fisher is interested in the management of acute and chronic diseases, women's health, dermatology procedures, adult and pediatric medicine. Dr. Fisher enjoys reading, watching movies, and traveling internationally.


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PFC Thomas J. Williams is stationed at Ft. Hood and deployed for his first term in Iraq in July 2008, where he is serving as a Scout for Apache Troop 1-9 CAV. Thomas (a.k.a. TJ) moved to Midlothian from Waxahachie when he was 6 years old and attended MISD until 2007, when he enlisted in the U.S. Army. When TJ returns home from Iraq, he hopes to get back to the things he enjoys most, which are riding his motorcycle, hunting, fishing and just hanging out! TJ is missed and loved by his entire family, who all say he is "full of life!"

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the morning routine always includes opening the wooden blinds, giving Gilbert and Deloros the chance to enjoy the outdoor wonderland they have created, while allowing natural sunlight to filter throughout the home. The double-door from the master bedroom opens to the back patio, as does the door in the living/den/kitchen area. The big window in the master bath, which was incorporated into the floor plan, is private, while at the same time open to the rock garden Gilbert

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created on the side area of the backyard. "It's a nice view looking out to what we've created," Gilbert said.

In the old house, Deloros decorated her kitchen with a massive collection of ducks and cows. Her taste changed once she got to Midlothian. "I started collecting roosters and chickens when we moved here," she said, as she pointed to her kitchen. "I just felt like it was time for something different." Deloros also pointed to a pair of framed prints hanging over the back door. "I hung

them crooked because I wanted something abstract and different," she laughed. The antique radio, which looks like an old phone from days gone by, and the little tea set, which belonged to Deloros' mom, displayed in the china cabinet add to the overall character of the room.

Changes have been few over the years. They tiled the front and back patios and also added tile to the bar area and the back splash, as well as accent lighting in the kitchen. Both bathrooms were fully carpeted when the couple moved in, but they have since been reworked with tile inlays. "Portions of the carpet were cut out and tile was added,"



Gilbert explained. "The tile man cut the sections out in angles, which gave Deloros the movement she wanted." In the future, they hope to remove all the carpet and replace it with distressed wood flooring, thus adding even more character and charm.

It would definitely be fair to say Gilbert and Deloros are made from the same mold. Looking at their traditional home with its accent flair, it is easy to see they visualize things alike. Theirs is a partnership, which allows everything they touch to come together in harmonious balance. What he creates outdoors blends perfectly with what she envisions indoors. Gilbert explained it best when he said, "We're a matching set of bookends," to which Deloros just smiled. **★NOW**

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Soul Painting

— By Betty Tryon



Alone in her cramped closet, little Patti Malone found what she was seeking: a world of make-believe where everything was beautiful. She did her part to add reality to the fantasy. Patti recalled, “As a little girl, I would sit in my closet and color and paint in my color book. We didn’t have markers and fancy pens. My mind was kind of like in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. My mind just went into a different world. I guess I knew at a very young age that it was a blessing the Lord had given me a place to go. I could go to any beautiful place I wanted.”

Growing up with no playmates and very few distractions, Patti had to make her own tools to do what she loved more than anything, which was to paint. She stated, “When I was about 5 years old, I didn’t have paint, so I made paint out of berries.” Laughing, she recalled, “I would come in and my hands would be all purple. My mom would get all upset with me because it would take days for that stuff to wear off. I would paint on rocks with my fingers and chew wood to make a brush. To me, that was fun! I mixed the berry juice

My heart and soul go into any item I make.

with sand to give it some consistency. When the berries changed colors, then the colors of my paint would be different. It was how I kept myself occupied. There were no relatives close by, and my brothers were off doing their thing.”

Despite her many years of creating, Patti has in her possession very few pieces of her art. She gave most of her artwork away, preferring to share her creativity with others. Others were hung in her home to enjoy. She elaborated, “My husband said our house started to look like an art gallery. He encouraged me to do an art show. I was very shy about it.” Patti stayed in the background at first, but after the first one

ARTS NOW

sold, she became enthusiastic. "My paintings are not expensive. It means more than the money to me for someone to have the painting who appreciates it.



My heart and soul go into any item I make. I told my husband that I didn't think I have ever sold or given away a painting to somebody who didn't appreciate the fact that it was made by an individual rather than a manufacturer."

Patti's painting of the *Rock Canyon* is an example of how she paints using all of her senses. *Rock Canyon* is a visual presentation of a section of a canyon with very high, sheer rock walls. A river flows in the canyon. She said, "When I was painting this, I heard the water flowing through the canyon. I heard the echoes of the wind as it blew around the rocks. I heard this even though I have never been there." Patti's instincts regarding the setting proved to be correct. "I was doing a show and had a large picture of a wooded area up into the rock canyon. There was this archway that you could see at the end of it. A lady came over and said, 'Oh, you took a picture of that.' I said, 'No, I painted it,' and she looked surprised. She said, 'You've never been there? There is a place in Utah that looks exactly like that. I've got to have that painting.' She bought it and said she was taking it up there."

Patti has on display in her home a few of the paintings she still owns. One particularly beautiful one is a somewhat



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abstract painting of an Indian. His Indian cape flows in colorful layers that spread out like wings. Multitudes of tiny "beads," each one meticulously placed, decorate the cape. The "beads" are in fact tiny drops of paint, each one raised and touchable. Hanging in her kitchen is *The Cook*, a western gentleman in cowboy clothes with a large apron covering his ample girth. He poses over an iron pot while holding a long, iron pot handle.

With Patti's obvious talent and pleasure in painting, it is surprising it has not been her life's career choice. When living in Lewisville, Texas, she owned three beauty shops and a tanning salon. Leaving those businesses, she



enrolled in nursing school and became a pediatric nurse but did not stay in the nursing field for very long. She explained, "I became so involved with the babies that I couldn't do it anymore." Following her grandmother's footsteps, Patti then became a seamstress and made wedding dresses, did alterations for Ellis County EMS and made school uniforms. She shared, "My grandmother came to Dallas in a covered wagon; she was a very good seamstress. During the Depression, she made silk pantaloons for rich people. I got my talent for sewing from her.

"Artwork has always been a hobby with me, a place to go when I am stressed out." With her rich imagination and creative talent, Patti can always leave stress far behind. **ARTS NOW**

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Spring Into

Summer
Football

— By Betty Tryon

For the last two summers, Dylan Hackmann, back-up quarterback for the 2008 football season and senior at Midlothian High School, got the chance to do what few quarterbacks get to do — perfect the art of passing under the tutelage of the famous Manning brothers of the National Football League (NFL). Dylan said, “The Manning brothers, Peyton, quarterback for the Indianapolis Colts, Eli, quarterback for the New York Giants, and Cooper, hold a football camp during the summer called the Manning Passing Academy. It is three-and-a-half days. We practiced three-hour sessions three-times-a-day.”

Attending the camp sponsored by the Manning brothers, which is open to quarterbacks around the country, would be a thrill for any football fan. Dylan stated, “I liked it a lot. You learn that they are just like regular everyday persons. The camp focused on throwing motion, footwork, the basic mechanics and the fundamentals of football. Any receiver or quarterback can apply and go. There wasn’t so much learning as improving. I improved.”

In his years of playing football, Dylan has come to respect the responsibility of being a team member and as a quarterback — a leader. He valued the life lessons presented during the camp. “They said on and off the field you need to conduct yourself with high character, because you are supposed to be the leader of the team,” Dylan explained. “The quarterback needs to set a good example during football season for the team to follow, because most people on the team look up to you. If the quarterback works out really hard, others on the



team will say, ‘If the quarterback can bust his butt, then we can too.’” Dylan thinks if time and finances permit, camp is great for some football players. “I would encourage someone to go to camp because you gain so much. Quarterbacks and receivers learn different routes. The receivers learn how to run the ball and improve on their catching ability. The benefit of camp is exposure to different ways of doing things. Camp is a great experience, if you are motivated enough; it takes a lot of time and effort,” he said.

Dylan attended other camps last summer in addition to the Manning camp. One of the other camps was Metro Passing Academy Camp. He said, “I learned a lot from coaches at

Sports NOW

Keller and Corsicana High Schools. It was a different perspective or different style of coaching that helped me a lot this year."

Football, a contact sport, lends itself many times to intense interactions and, occasionally, dangerous situations. Dylan accepts it all as being a part of the game. "I like the intensity, the forceful nature of it," he explained. "I grew up around it and started playing Pop Warner football when I was 5. I have always played football." Playing the position of quarterback can open the player to

**"It's football.
If you play,
you know you
are going to
get hit."**

even more physical contact, if the defensive line of the other team can get to him. However, Dylan is philosophical in his approach. "I'm not worried about it," he said. "It's football. If you play, you know you are going to get hit."

One might think that a player would welcome the end of the football season to take a break from the strenuous nature of the game, but not Dylan. His mom, Debbie, recounted an incident in which Dylan was sent home from school. She stated, "Dylan came home one day and said, 'Mom, I got in trouble today and got kicked out of the weight room.' The trainer had told him to get out of there. You have to have a little time for everything to build up." Dylan's dedication to the game was being felt in the weight room, where he had been spending a majority of his free time every day. It was a way for him to stay



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in shape, and he just enjoyed doing it. He shared, "I work out so much because it is better than going out partying all the time. It makes you push through adversity to achieve your goals, pushing through adversity builds character."

This will be the first spring Dylan will not participate in spring ball for the high school, because he is graduating in May. He remembers looking forward



"It makes you push through adversity to achieve your goals, pushing through adversity builds character."

to it as it was a precursor to football summer camps and then the regular season. As Dylan leaves the school this year, he carries an entire team of great friends with him. He said, "I think this year our team has been the closest I have ever seen. We all joke with each other. You can pick out anyone on the team to go do something together. We all wanted to be better and go to the playoffs, and that bonded us. It was a goal we set a long time ago and it was hard when we didn't get to go, especially for the seniors."

Dylan has his sights on Howard Payne University, but stated he will go anywhere he can play football. **NOW**

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Business
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— By Betty Tryon

U.S. Drug Mart takes convenience for the customer to a higher level. They can bring your medications to your door. Imagine you are ill and feel so weak you just cannot summon the energy to get dressed and drive to the pharmacy to pick up that prescription called in by your doctor. One phone call to the U.S. Drug Mart will solve your problem. Dave Gambel, pharmacist for U.S. Drug Mart states, “We do two deliveries a day. We start at 1:00 p.m. and another at 6:30 p.m. We don’t mind doing it at all. It helps mothers with children who are ill. They can go to the doctor, have him call in a prescription and go home. We can deliver it to them. It is our answer to the inconvenience of not having a drive-through.” The pharmacy delivers for a nominal fee of \$3.00 and will travel within an eight-mile radius. They will make exceptions for the eight-mile radius if needed.

In an age of large pharmacy chains that offer the lure of \$4.00 prescriptions, U.S. Drug Mart can hold its own as an independent operator. They do this with customer service. Dave stated, “We have patients who have taken their prescriptions to big chains and came back to us because of service. We take care of our customers. We try to go the extra mile as far as giving them the service they deserve. We look at it as a privilege to help customers with their health care needs. We also bill their diabetic supplies and inhalation solutions to Medicare for those who are eligible.”

One of the services the pharmacy offers is compounding prescriptions. These prescriptions require the pharmacist to mix two or more drugs’ ingredients together to customize a medication to meet a patient’s particular needs. U.S. Drug Mart is the only compounding pharmacy in town. Dave

said, “Most of the pharmacies in town know this and will send patients with compounds to us. We can put those together here in the pharmacy — creams, gels, ointments and capsules.”

The pharmacy was started in 1991 by owner Thomas Jefferson, who formerly owned a pharmacy in Dallas, then came to Midlothian to start one from scratch. Dave also has a background in owning a pharmacy. He graduated from University of Texas College of Pharmacy in 1971. He wanted to go into hospital pharmaceuticals and enrolled in a hospital pharmacy residency program in Houston. After completion of his program, he moved to Ft. Worth to work in John Peter Smith Hospital. In 1979 he operated his pharmacy in Mansfield, sold it, worked a couple of years at independent pharmacies and came to Midlothian in 2002. Dave enjoys his job as a pharmacist. He said, “The



The staff at U.S. Drug Mart consider it a privilege to help their customers with their healthcare needs.

Business **NOW**

best thing about this job is the patient contact; it's knowing you are providing a service that is going to help someone feel better. Somebody is going to live a more healthy life because of a service you provide. That is the reason why I chose this profession and why I am still

“We have patients who have taken their prescriptions to big chains and came back to us because of service.”



in it. There are a lot of pharmacists that will stand back behind a glass wall or whatever and not really interact; and you have the mail order pharmacist that is in some facility that is miles from here and they never get any patient contact. I just think people like the personal contact.”

For that personalized touch at the pharmacy, U.S. Drug Mart is located at 310 W. Ave. F. For home delivery, call (972) 775-1180. Hours of operation are 8:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Saturday and closed on Sunday. **NOW**

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Always Learning

— By Alex Allred

One would not think animals and computers typically work well together, but for the fifth-graders at Mt. Peak Elementary, the two complement each other perfectly thanks to the efforts of Tracy Xavier and Wendy Reese. Both Wendy, the school librarian, and Tracy, a fifth grade teacher of math, social studies and the campus tech leader, are avid animal lovers, yet they could not be more different.

While Tracy is more reserved and quiet, Wendy is very animated. “She’s so bubbly and energetic,” Tracy said. While Wendy has been an educator for over 16 years, Tracy, a transplant from California, only discovered her passion for teaching three years ago. “I was a finance manager,” Tracy said. “It wasn’t very fulfilling,” she added.

“I just wish she had gotten into teaching earlier,” Wendy smiled. “The world needs more teachers like her. She has a passion for teaching that shines through for the kids.” Just as there is a bumper sticker that reads, “I wasn’t born here [Texas], but I got here as fast as I could,” there needs to be a bumper sticker designed for Tracy that reads, “I wasn’t always a teacher, but I should have been.”

“She has the best ideas!” Wendy said.

When Tracy approached her with the idea to develop the only after-school iTech program for fifth-graders in Midlothian, it came as no surprise to Wendy. “Plus,” Wendy added with a smile, “we’re the only school with three computer labs.” With the support of their principal, Karen Childress, they went from meeting every other week to once-a-week meetings



with enrollment nearly tripling in the second session.

With innovative ideas, such as adopting dogs and cats from a no-kill, nonprofit animal shelter in Iowa, using the Internet or creating a whodunit mystery for the students to solve, Wendy and Tracy are doing the near-impossible. They are making learning exciting and interesting, teaching teamwork and how to share ideas. “They help each other out — not just their own friends, but other kids,” Tracy said of the students. They see someone who needs help and they are so eager to show what they know; they all help each other.”

The idea was simple. Tracy and Wendy wanted to expand their students’ technology knowledge beyond computer games and cell phones. By the end of their first session, students were able to create their own iMovie as a Christmas present for their parents, do a pod cast and “do so much more than we were even ready for!” Wendy laughed.

During the summer, Tracy and Wendy conducted a teacher-training retreat, showing the staff of Mt. Peak how to be more computer savvy and earn required computer credits. “But what we really learned is how intimidating the computer can be,” Tracy said.

“You know how it goes,” Wendy joked. “If you have a problem with an iPod, go ask a fifth-grader.” Armed with renewed confidence and computer skills, their fifth-graders will be taking their first field trip to Frank Seale Middle School to learn even more advanced technology, including media broadcasting and production. “It really was just an idea,”

Education **NOW**

Tracy said humbly, "to get the kids excited about technology." Neither one of them ever imagined how successful the program could become.

The students became so creative with computers; they actually designed their own cards for each animal they adopted from the Iowa animal shelter, even raising almost \$400 dollars worth of collars, leashes, treats, cash and dog clothing. The load was so large, Tracy and her husband wound up driving to Iowa to drop off the care packages. "There was no way I could send all that," Tracy said.

As for the mystery, the students at Mt. Peak were asked to determine who dog-napped Tracy's pug, Otis. Using clues given through the computer and a CSI simulated crime scene, who would have ever suspected Coach Probst? When Principal Childress declared, "Coach Probst, I am placing you under arrest for the kidnapping of Otis the Pug," a great technology victory was scored and Otis was, at last, returned to Tracy.

"It's been so much fun," Tracy admitted. What had begun as an innovative learning tool turned into so much more. As the students learned something as cold as technology could save the lives of puppies across the country, both Tracy and Wendy learned how iPods, iMovies and iTunes could transcend learning and develop a relationship. "She's not just my co-worker," Wendy said of Tracy. "She is my friend. She is probably the most genuine and generous person I've ever worked with."

"I can't wait to share ideas with her," Tracy said. Once Wendy grabs hold of an idea, it is almost a guaranteed success. "She has so much energy. You know, she has that kind of personality that the kids love. They adore her!" Together, they have both a great future and the potential to give an even brighter future to their students. "We're always learning, always," Tracy smiled. **NOW**



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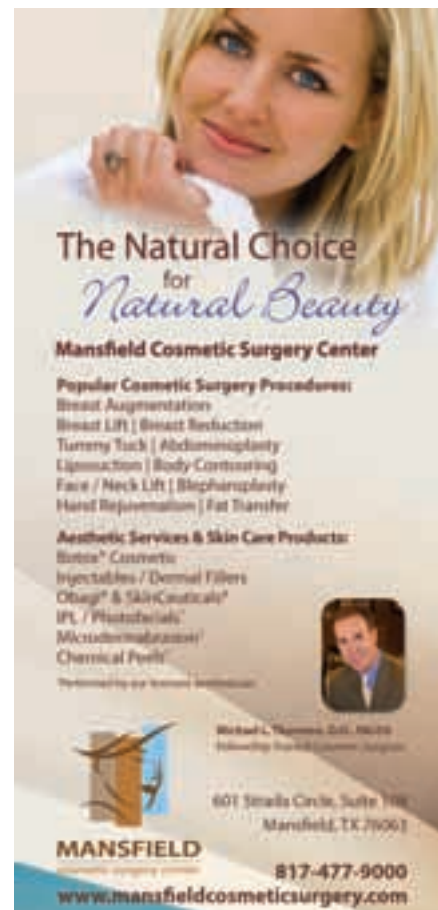
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Around Town **NOW**



Jebrelan E., top left, gave expert testimony on government issues during J.A. Vitovsky's Fifth Grade Congressional Hearings. Family Eye Clinic, top right, recently held a groundbreaking ceremony. Local community member Jim Morris, second row left, recently donated \$1,200 to the Walnut Grove Middle School CBI class. Kindergarten students at Longbranch, bottom left, learned to tie their shoes. The winning classes received a silly string party. Longbranch students "Teamed Up for TAKS," bottom center, with former New York Giant Keith Davis. A ribbon cutting, bottom right, was held for Tony Turner with Stubbefield Insurance & Financial Services.

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2 cans cream of chicken soup
8-oz. container sour cream
3/4 cup water
1 large can green chilies, undrained
3 cups chicken breasts, cooked and cubed
2 cups cheddar cheese, grated
10 flour tortillas

Cooking Day: Mix soup, sour cream, water and chilies until well blended. Mix in chicken. Place mixture in freezer bag and freeze for later. **Serving Day:** Spray 9 x13-inch baking dish with cooking spray. Thaw soup mixture and spread a small amount on bottom of pan to prevent sticking. Layer tortillas, half of soup mixture and one cup cheese; repeat. Bake at 350 F for 30 minutes.

CHICKEN POT PIE

10-oz. pkg. frozen mixed vegetables
1/4 cup butter or margarine (Can be reduced for less fat and calories.)
1/3 cup flour
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. sage
1/8 tsp. pepper
2 cups water

3/4 cup milk
1 Tbsp. chicken bouillon
3 cups cooked chicken, cubed
*For serving day – double pie crust

Cooking Day: Cook mixed vegetables according to package directions; drain and set aside. In separate pan, melt butter, then stir in flour, salt, sage and pepper. Add water, milk and bouillon all at once. Cook and stir until thickened and bubbly; cook and stir 1-2 minutes more. Stir in drained vegetables and chicken. Heat until bubbly. Allow to cool, then place mixture in freezer bag and freeze until ready to serve.

Serving Day: Thaw frozen pie mixture completely. Place bottom piecrust in pie plate; fill with chicken mixture. Top with upper crust, making a few slits in top of crust to release steam. Bake in 400 F oven for 25-30 minutes, until golden brown. (I bake it on the oven rack that is second from the bottom to ensure that the bottom crust gets completely done.) Serve with a vegetable or fruit salad.

ITALIAN MEATBALL SOUP

2 medium carrots, thinly sliced
1 small onion, chopped (Can use frozen chopped onion. It tends to be stronger, so use half the amount compared to fresh.)

1 Tbsp. olive oil
1 medium zucchini squash, cut in half lengthwise, then thinly slice
2 15-oz. cans cannellini or white beans, undrained
14.5-oz. can Italian-style stewed tomatoes
14.5-oz. can beef broth
16-oz. bag frozen fully cooked Italian meatballs (H.E.B. brand is delicious.)
1/2 cup chopped fresh basil leaves
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. pepper
*For serving day – grated Parmesan cheese (optional)

Cooking Day: Sauté carrots and onion in olive oil for 5 minutes. Add zucchini, beans, tomatoes, beef broth and frozen meatballs. Stir and bring to boil; reduce heat. Simmer 8 minutes, stirring occasionally. (If you will be freezing the soup, take it off the stove at this point. You do not want to completely cook the vegetables if you will be freezing them. This prevents them from becoming mushy. If you plan to eat the soup right away, cook for 7 more minutes.) Stir basil, salt and pepper into soup. If freezing, allow soup to cool, then pour into 1 quart mason jars, leaving at least 2 inches of air space at the top of the jar to allow for expansion during freezing. **Serving Day:** Thaw soup and heat through. Top with grated Parmesan cheese and serve.



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When Bumpers Meet Antlers

— By Clay Money, CLU, LUTCF

When people get ready to walk across a public road, they usually look both ways first to see if any motor vehicles are coming. Unfortunately, this isn't the case with animals, including certain large ones.

Too often, the result is a motorist's nightmare: a collision with a deer, moose or elk. The animal usually comes out second-best in this type of close encounter, but the toll on vehicles and their occupants can also be substantial.

According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, more than 150 people die in animal-vehicle collisions each year. The Insurance Information Institute estimates some 1.5 million such collisions cause over \$1 billion in damage annually.

While animal-vehicle collisions can happen any time of year, fall is the peak season for deer-car crashes. That's mainly because autumn is both mating season and hunting season, so deer are more active and more likely to roam beyond their normal territory.

No foolproof way has been found to keep deer, moose and elk off highways and away from vehicles. Deer whistles have

their advocates, but the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety says there's no scientific evidence to support claims they work as intended. Some studies suggest roadside reflectors — designed to reflect light from vehicle headlamps and cause deer to "freeze" rather than cross the road — reducing crash frequency to some extent.

There are ways you can lessen an unplanned meeting with a deer, moose or elk. Here's how:

- Be aware of your surroundings. Pay attention to "deer crossing" signs.

Look well down the road and far off to each side. At night, use your high beams if possible to illuminate the road's edges. Be especially watchful in areas near woods and water. If you see one deer, there may be several others nearby.

- Be particularly alert at dusk and dawn, when these animals venture out to feed.

- If you see a deer, moose or elk on or near the roadway and think you have time to avoid hitting it, reduce your speed, tap your brakes to warn other drivers and sound your horn. Deer tend to fixate on headlights, so flashing them may cause the animal to move. If there's no vehicle close behind you, brake hard.

- If a collision seems inevitable, don't swerve to avoid the animal; your risk of injury may be greater if you do. Hit it, but control the vehicle. Report the crash to the police.

- Always obey the speed limit and wear safety belts.

Being alert at all times while driving is your best defense against any type of accident. **STAY**

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Health NOW

Our Cells Respond to Human Touch

—By Brad W. Collins, D.C.

A two-year research study headed by Gloria A. Gronowicz of the Department of Surgery at the University of Connecticut Health Center in Farmington, New Jersey, credits certain forms of alternative energy medicine with the successful stimulation and growth of normal human cell cultures. Energy medicine includes such biofield therapies as Reiki, quikong and Therapeutic Touch (TT). The study focused on TT, which was credited with directly impacting how human cells respond to external stimulation. According to the case report published this year in the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, the findings suggest that external stimulation with TT may also be effective in decreasing abnormal cell growth in cancer patients.

In this particular study, three different cell cultures fibroblasts (derived from neonatal foreskin obtained during circumcision), tendon cells (derived from human hamstring discarded during orthopedic procedures) and bone cells (obtained from healthy bone chips) were

grown and isolated. All cultures were obtained from different patients. In addition, each of the three cell types that were simultaneously subjected to the various tests all came from different patients.

The cultures were subjected twice a week, over a period of two weeks, to the healing hands of three experienced TT practitioners. During that time, the cultures also underwent sham treatments, or they received no stimulation at all. Each experiment was repeated three times at a minimum.

TT was performed by sweeping hand motions at least 4-10 inches above the plate without ever touching the specimen itself, for a period of 10 minutes, twice a week. These hand motions direct positive intentions through the hands. Control groups of the cultures underwent sham treatments random hand motions without any thoughts or intentions or they received no treatment at all.

All cultures were assessed at the same time. The results were obtained by statistical analysis and were rather surprising: TT resulted in a measurable change in all three cell cultures. Osteoblasts (bone cells) showed a significant increase in cell growth, compared to the untreated cells; a slightly smaller increase was seen in fibroblasts (cultures from neonatal foreskin). However, the largest increase in growth compared to the control group occurred in tenocytes (cells derived from hamstring tendon).

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potential. More studies are needed, but the findings also give hope to many patients who suffer from abnormal cell growth in particular cancer patients. By and large, energy medicine treatments, in particular TT, promise significant benefits for our bodies. **STILL**

Brad W. Collins, D.C.

Midlothian Chiropractic Clinic

Source:

"Therapeutic Touch Stimulates the Proliferation of Human Cells in Culture" by Gloria A. Gronowicz, Ankur Jhaveri, Libbe W. Clarke, Michael S. Aronow, Theresa H. Smith, *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, Volume 14, Number 3, 2008.

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April 2009

Community Calendar

First and Fourth Monday

School Board meeting: 6:30 p.m.

Every Tuesday

Midlothian Rotary Club meeting: noon, Midlothian Civic Center, 224 South 11th St. (972) 775-7118.

GED Class: 6:00 p.m., Midlothian High School Meadows Library.

Second and Fourth Tuesdays

Midlothian City Council meeting: 6:00 p.m., City Hall, 104 W. Ave. E.

First Thursday

Midlothian Area Historical Society: 7:00 p.m., Midlothian High School Meadows Library. For more information, contact Kathy Robinson at (972) 723-2755.

ABWA – Empowering Women Express Network monthly meeting: 6:00 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center, 1 Community Circle. www.abwa-empoweringwomen.org.

Midlothian Area Historical Society: 7:00 p.m., Midlothian High School Meadows Library. (972) 723-2755.

First and Third Thursday

Midlothian Lions Club meeting: 7:00 p.m., Midlothian Civic Center, 224 S. 11th St. (972) 775-7118.

Every Friday

Story Time: 11:00 a.m., Midlothian High School Meadows Library.

April 4

Easter Egg Hunt, hosted by Midlothian Downtown Business Association. For more information, contact Jason Kyle at jason@kyle-law.com.

April 7

Navarro College SBDC “How to Start a Small Business” free workshop: 10:00 a.m.-noon, Citizen's National Bank Community Room, 310 N. 9th St. Pre-registration required, as seating is limited. To register, call the Navarro College SBDC at (972) 937-2174 or e-mail sbdc@navarrocollege.edu.

April 12

Happy Easter!

April 15

Ellis County Christian Women's Connection monthly luncheon at Waxahachie Country Club, 1920 W. Hwy. 287 at I-35 East, Exit 401B. \$13.00. Nursery vouchers available. Reservations preferred. Contact either Kay at (972) 937-2807 or Mary at (972) 937-9984 or e-mail Kay at windchime423@yahoo.com before April 12.

Ellis County Job Fair, hosted by Workforce Solutions for

North Central Texas: 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., First Baptist Church, 1651 Midlothian Parkway. Free lunch provided to employers for up to 2 persons. For reservations, call (972) 937-8114, ext. 3307.

April 21

Navarro College SBDC “Writing a Winning Business Plan” workshop: 10:00 a.m.-noon, Citizen's National Bank Community Room, 310 N. 9th St. \$20.00. Pre-registration required, as seating is limited. To register, call the Navarro College SBDC at (972) 937-2174 or e-mail sbdc@navarrocollege.edu.

April 24

Early deadline to reserve booth space at Chamber's Spring Fling. Registration forms for vendors can be obtained at the Chamber's Web site at www.midlothianchamber.org or by calling (972) 723-8600. Chamber members also receive a special discount on vendor space.

May 2

Downtown Waxahachie Cinco de Mayo Fiesta: 11:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m. at Singleton Plaza. Food, vendors and music featuring Baraja De Oro, The Tequila Boyz and more. Kids' corner with bounce houses, face painting and fun. Free admission. For vendor information, contact Andrew Sanchez at (214) 336-5314 or visit www.waxahachie5de5.com.

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

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