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APRIL 2011

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Also Inside

Pets' Best Friend

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In the Kitchen With
Ollie Nichols

New Country,
New Home

Restoration
and Preservation
At Home With Gerald
& Bobby Cutler Hill



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Superintendent Search and Board Elections

DeSoto ISD Superintendent Lloyd Treadwell will be retiring in June 2011, thus the search for a new superintendent began in January of this year. Search firm BWP and Associates is working with the DeSoto ISD Board to find the best person to lead our district through the current funding crisis, upcoming STAAR testing and other challenges for many years to come. They received excellent input from district staff and community surveys to develop the top qualifications sought.

TIMELINE:

1st Round Interviews	April 1-2
2nd Round Interviews	April 9-10
Site Visits	April 12-13
Lone Finalist Named	April 14

In addition to a new leader, three board positions are up for election May 14. Place 4 is vacant following the death of Board President Sharon Sternes in January; incumbent Kenzie Moore has filed for Place 3 and current President Dee Trimble has elected not to run for his position, Place 5, having served since 2002.

Making Up Instruction

After the five missed days in February due to bad weather, DeSoto ISD decided to recapture missed instruction time by adding 15 minutes to the school day from March 7 through June 3. Students will also report for regular school days on April 22 and June 3, as make-up snow days, and May 11 which is being changed from an early release day to a full day.

Make-Up Instruction (5 days):

- 2 days - April 22 and June 3
- .5 day - May 11 - no longer early release
- 2.5 days - 15 minutes March 7-June 3

Staff are also working to make up missed contract time. Campus staff will use June 6-7 as snow days and document extra duty or use personal days for the remaining three. Other staff will be working to make up all five days or use personal days if they wish to be paid.



DHS Academies operating, growing

Starting this past fall, the DeSoto High School College and Career Academies (CCA) began several programs of study including the Audio/Video Technology and Communications program for students to pursue career goals along with high school credit. Broadcast students have spent hours filming, editing and finalizing videos of various lengths for promotional and informational purposes. Instructor Kyna Grisby brings a wealth of professional knowledge and skills to the classroom as a previous TV broadcaster. The studio is state of the art with a news desk, multi-cameras, quality lighting and microphones plus an editing bay. Students have filmed campus events, made promotional videos for the school and created fun school-spirit videos for their peers and the community. They plan to start radio broadcast in the fall.

The program is just one example of the five academies offering career programs of study similar to college along with required high school courses. The district recently broke ground on the 160,000 sq. ft. expansion to house all five academies within an expanded DeSoto High School. The \$25M construction project is funded by the 2005 community-approved bond program and is not part of the statewide funding crisis that affects district operations. Bond money can only be used as approved by the voters and not for daily operations.

DHS students will still be required to graduate under the Recommended or Distinguished state plans with 26 credits but their electives will be in their program of study. The DHS CCA allow ALL students to explore personal interests, thrive in their academics and earn college credit all within the framework of a public high school with 5A athletics, clubs, organizations, music, school pride and tradition!

calendar of events

- April 11, 25, May 9, 23 - Board Meetings, DeSoto ISD Board Room
- May 2-13 - District Transfer Request Period (intra-district requests for 2011-12)
- May 6 - DHS Alumni Football Game at Eagle Stadium
- May 20 - Best Southwest Relay for Life Event at West Middle School
- May 30 - Memorial Day Holiday
- June 3 - NEW Last Day of School (June 2 will be a full day, June 3 early release)
- June 3 - DHS Graduation at Dallas Convention Center

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Camellia Varnado and daughter, Charity Ann.

Photo by Opaque Visuals.

Contents

April 2011 • Volume 5, Issue 4



16

- 8 A Very Small Start**
Their tiny baby opened the Varnados' eyes to a whole new world of opportunity through March of Dimes.

- 16 Pets' Best Friend**
Volunteers with the Friends of the Tri-City Animal Shelter help care for critters in need.

- 22 New Country, New Home**
A modern-day immigrant finds the good life through hard work.

- 28 Restoration and Preservation**
At Home With Gerald and Bobby Cutler Hill



22

- 36 BusinessNOW**
38 Around TownNOW
41 HealthNOW
42 FinanceNOW
44 CookingNOW

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Editor's Note

Hello, my Southwest Friends,

Spring awakens fond childhood memories of visiting my father's great-aunts' farm near Hallettsville, Texas: a pig's wet snout nuzzling my bare belly; watching black-faced wooly sheep amble in from the pasture; waking up to find a cow's entire head inserted through my open window, eating wild flowers from the water pitcher on my night stand. Perhaps the most fun was milking the cows, who only came when called by name. My aunts, thinking we wouldn't like the rich taste of raw milk, mixed in Nestlé's strawberry flavor. For more years than I will admit, I was convinced the frothy, white milk I had harvested was actually pink, and pasteurization turned the milk white again, a fact I proudly shared with my schoolmates.

May this month afford you opportunities for recalling or providing childhood memories with those you love.



Beverly

Beverly Shay
SouthwestNOW Editor
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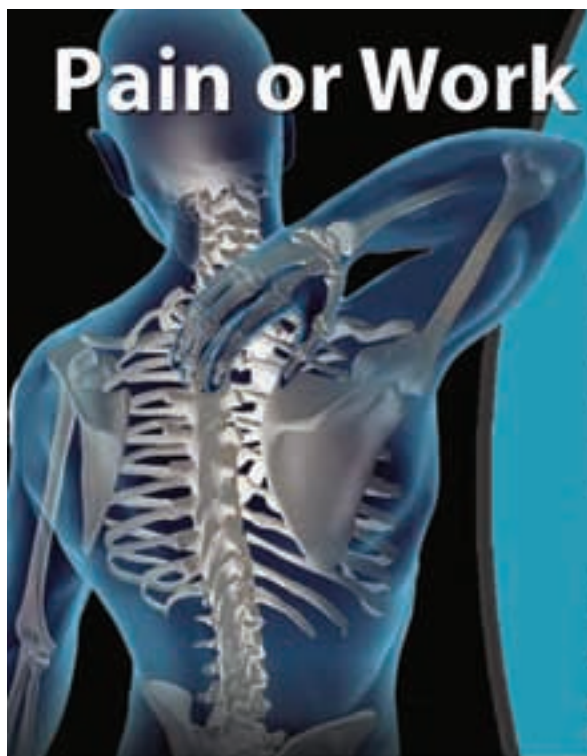


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A Very Small Start

— By Beverly Shay



Babies seldom come exactly when we want them to. Of course, once the flutter of life is felt, we eagerly begin to plan and await the arrival. While it takes nine months for a baby to fully develop and, incidentally, nine months for parents and siblings to adjust themselves to the coming life-style change that a little one brings, thanks to medical advances, even babies arriving early are more likely to live with less complications. Still, no one plans on giving birth prematurely, especially if there has been no indication of imminent birth.

Savern and Camellia Varnado certainly never planned on the premature birth of their very little Charity Ann, when they first met in February 2007. For some odd reason, Camellia decided to go into the Chase bank lobby, instead of her usual use of the drive-through. Savern saw her from his desk across the lobby. A few weeks later, realizing her funds had not been handled in as timely a manner as she had hoped, Camellia called the bank. "Savern took the call and told me he had been trying to reach me for the past two weeks. For some reason, I gave him my personal number, and that night we talked."

What happened next stunned them both. A few years earlier, Camellia had lost her first husband to stomach cancer, but with the passage of time, she knew she wanted to marry again. "I had been reading the Book of Ruth (in the Bible). I knew I wanted a godly man. And I had been praying and asking for one. As we spoke that first night, mostly about money, Savern mentioned that he was looking for his Ruth, referring to the same Bible story I had been reading," Camellia shared. "I knew right then he was my man."

"Our first date was on February 23," Camellia related. Right after meeting, Savern ruptured his Achilles tendon and needed surgery. Camellia came to see him at the hospital every day. By April, Savern had put money down on the house they now own. They continued seeing each other daily through September. Actually, it's been daily ever since, because they were married on September 8.

Camellia has a daughter, Ashley, now 20, from her first marriage, and Savern's daughter, Sydney, now 11, is from his first marriage. But Camellia wanted another baby. "I kept asking Savern if he was listening to God about having another child. He'd say, 'No.' But he came around, and she was definitely planned and wanted," Camellia stated. "I remember 'feeling' pregnant right from the start."

Their baby was due on June 17, 2009. On March 8, Camellia was at Ashley's track meet, when she experienced the first signs that the baby might come early. Once home, Sydney was waiting to go collect Girl Scout cookie money, but

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"Brian West, formerly of the Bell County Baptist Association, will be coming to Colonial Hills Baptist Church on April 3, 2011 as the new pastor. Brother West comes to Colonial Hills Baptist Church from First Baptist Church, Little River, Texas where he served for the past 8 years. He was also a member of the Executive Board of the Bell Baptist Association Evangelism Team. Brian was the Mission Project Coordinator for 2008 Hispanic Congress. He launched his church's first Children's Team, Music Minister Search Team and Vision Team, working with a church strategist to develop a plan for the church's future. As coordinator for the good Samaritan Scholarship at Temple College, Brian planned and led weekly prayer and devotion time for students. Brian is married to Lora and has two daughters, Breanna, 7 yrs. old and Lauren, 5 yrs. old. He claims Isaiah 61:1-3 as his life verse. It has taught him to be an "oak of righteousness". He feels his roots must run deep and his branches must reach high to the sky so that others may discover the Lord's splendor."



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Camellia was beginning to cramp up. "I thought a shower might relax me, but the contractions kept on coming. It was just weeks too early to have a baby!" she recalled.

They went to the hospital hoping the doctors could stop the contractions. The doctors agreed it was too early for the baby to come and gave all sorts of dire predictions about her condition if she came at that time. "I was only 25 1/2 weeks into my pregnancy, but when she began to show signs of stress an hour later, they took me in for an emergency C-section," Camellia remembered. Little Charity Ann arrived on March 8,



weighing only 1 pound 11 ounces. "We couldn't even hold her until the 22nd because her skin was so thin. Even then, at two weeks, she fit in the palm of my hand.

Charity was on a respirator until May. Camellia went to see her every day, bringing in breast milk. On May 5, Charity was able to drink her first bottle, and on May 10, Camellia nursed her for the first time. "Each day brought a breakthrough. I developed such a close relationship with the passionate NICU (neonatal intensive care unit) nurses at Arlington Memorial. They told me about the March of Dimes organization and how all the nurses marched, walked or ran to raise money for them," Camellia explained. "We probably would never have thought to participate in the March for Babies if we hadn't had this experience, but we walked in the march in April while Charity was still in the hospital."

The employees at the Chase bank where Savern worked were always supporting nonprofit groups. One of his co-workers in charge of events, Fa'shay Halley, designed the Varnados purple March of Dimes walking shirts with Charity Ann on them. Several of



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the bank employees joined them in the march, with Charity specifically in mind.

The March for Babies raises funds to help understand premature births and provide hope for the more than half million babies born prematurely each year, as well as supporting local programs to help moms have healthy, full-term pregnancies. Funds also go to researching answers to problems that threaten babies. The marches, beginning in 1970, have raised \$2 billion. More than seven million people in 900 communities across the nation will march this year on April 16. Camellia and Savern plan to run this year, instead of just walking. "We are so grateful that Charity, even with her small beginning in life, is healthy and at full development for her age. That is why we walk. No one has been able to determine what triggered my labor so early. We are very fortunate, but I want to be able to help the researchers find answers, as well as encourage other parents with preemies," Camellia remarked.

Little Charity is quite the celebrity in her home, adored by both her sisters. "At first, Ashley was shocked that I was pregnant, since she was already in high school, but she really loves her little sister. Ashley is now attending TCC (Tarrant Community College) and is currently thinking about going into nursing. Sydney, who lives with her mom in Plano, loves spending time with Charity and wants to be a vet. Of course, that could change," Camellia laughed, "she's only 11!

"You know," Camellia continued, "I really do have the greatest husband. God has been so good to me. Savern really likes to surprise me with spontaneous dinners out at fine restaurants and movies or jazz concerts. He has bought me outfits complete with new shoes. He believes that love is shown with action and makes sure we have regular date nights."

To see little Charity Ann now, you would never know she was born so tiny. She is a bundle of energy and the apple of her parents' eyes. As most parents know, Savern and Camellia certainly cannot imagine life without her. "Her name means Love Grace, and that is what she has been for us," Camellia admitted. **NOW**

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Pets' BEST Friend

— By Angel Morris

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Awareness is the top goal for Friends of Tri-City Animal Shelter. The group, founded in June 2007, takes caring for local pets to a new level and now hopes to put the shelter at the top

doing at the shelter. Now we just need more people to think of us when they decide to adopt a pet," Barbara Detmore, president of the Friends group said.



Potential rescuers Debra & Peyton Cruce.

of animal lovers' minds. "I'm pretty proud of this group and the impressive things in line with the incredible work staffers are

The organization, Friends of Tri-City Animal Shelter, was charged with assisting the local pet facility owned jointly by the cities of Cedar Hill, DeSoto and Duncanville. The board of eight to 10 volunteers started with no money and no real direction. "I was already a shelter volunteer and became president of the board when the Friends officially incorporated as a nonprofit. We started with no money and decided to put out donation jars around communities the shelter served," Barbara explained.

While that brought in some money, the Friends' first gala event garnered big bucks in September 2009. "We expected to maybe bring in about \$5,000. I could have cried when I read the total was \$15,000," Dr. Donna Fuller, Friends' board member and local veterinarian, said. "It's just a casual gathering geared toward pet lovers — where you eat, socialize and spend some money on good



From left to right: Amy Stirman,
Barbara Detmore & Dr. Donna Fuller.

things to help animals. I think that is what made it wildly successful.”

Dollars raised by Friends go toward animal care beyond what is funded by the sponsor cities each year, and the group managed to raise another \$14,000 through its laid-back gala in the fall of 2010. This year's event is set for September 11. “It is always fun to work with the dedicated people in Friends to prepare the gala, and to see it all come together for the best interest of the shelter and its animals is just incredible,” said Amy Stirman, director of fundraising for Friends. The group also hosts Smooches for Pooches wine and beer tasting and an annual garage sale benefiting the shelter.

The shelter opened in 1996 as a joint effort of its three host cities, which had meager animal facilities of their own. By joining forces, a larger, more modern shelter was born. In 2009, Tri-City was completely renovated and, today, houses an average of 160 dogs, cats and other animals at any given time. “When I first came to Duncanville, the shelter was a sad little trailer, as were the other cities’ shelters. Now we’ve got this beautiful building — because the cities came together. I was amazed things could go

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DeSoto **NOW**

so smoothly between the three entities, but they really made it happen,” Donna said.

Amy's job with the city of Duncanville inspired her to be part of the Friends' board. “I grew up in Duncanville, so I was familiar with the shelter, but when I started working for the city, I really realized what the shelter was all about,” she said. “As a kid, when I saw an injured animal I would cry knowing it was hurt.



I've always loved animals, so helping the shelter has been a natural fit.”

Being owner of Pet Medical Center, Donna, too, was a logical choice for the Friends' board. “I've practiced in Duncanville for 30 years and was always looking for a way to give back. Nothing I have been involved in is as close to my heart as this. I really enjoy stopping by the shelter and giving advice on animals whenever I can,” Donna said.

As a retired executive secretary, Barbara is described as the glue holding the Friends' board together. “Animals can't do a thing for themselves, and moving them through the shelter requires our help,” Barbara said. “I have the time to sit down and make calls, handle paperwork, send e-mails. Each board member brings different strengths, and I'm just really honored to bring them all together.”

To raise awareness, the Friends organization hosts Second Saturday adoptions each month. They also subsidize food and veterinary care for animals fostered at local vet clinics and Camp Bow Wow, a dog day/night camp, where they are available for adoption. “It's another way to show more people pets available through the shelter and,



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most importantly, to get more animals in front of the public to help find them a home," Barbara said, noting that animals housed at Pet Medical Center and Camp Bow Wow have, thus far, always been adopted. "The program has been very successful — these animals never come back to the shelter."

Amy encouraged anyone considering pet adoption to think of the shelter first. "I was amazed at the number of dogs and cats that come through the shelter — some never get a chance to go to a good home. Many animals spend a much longer time at the shelter than you might expect, when staffers think there is still a good chance of adopting them out," she said. "I'm glad to see the rescue groups come in to save some of these animals and give them a second chance at finding a home. I encourage everyone looking for a pet to do the same through our incredible shelter."

People can adopt pets for a nominal fee, after visiting all the animals at the site to ensure a good personality fit. Those not needing a pet, but still interested in helping, can become a member of Friends for \$25 per year. "Along with our continued assistance toward animal care, awareness is our primary goal. We are raising lots of money and doing many good things, but people still don't know about us or the shelter," Barbara said. "I am available to visit clubs or organizations to let more people know about us."

One such visit resulted in a \$500 grant from Cedar Hill Rotary Club, a pleasant surprise for Barbara. "And this year, they decided to give us another grant!" she said.

Enthusiastic about every penny, the Friends of Tri-City Animal Shelter ultimately just want what is best for the animals. "Eventually, an on-site shelter veterinarian would be a dream come true," Donna said.

Until then, they will do whatever else possible to help the shelter. "If you've never been there, go to the shelter and see what it's all about. You will fall in love with the animals and the kindhearted staff," Barbara said. "Remember the shelter when you want a pet. And tell your friends to remember it, too!" **NOW**

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New Country, *New Home*

— By Beverly Shay

A lot of people dream of finding a new home someday — an ideal place to live. They dream of comfort, a good life, plenty of work, food and happiness. They dream of a good future for their children. But few, if any, at least in America, dream of having to send their children away from home to another country so they can have that kind of life, or even, just to keep them safe. But when Vicente Fuente was 15, his father did just that — sent him away to keep him safe.

Vicente grew up in Santa Rosa, El Salvador, in the middle of a large family. His father owned land and raised cattle. His parents had to make one gut-wrenching decision after another to send away their sons, lest they be conscripted as guerilla soldiers or killed. In 1980, Vicente's three older brothers were sent away to Panama. Vicente well remembers his mother's tears. At least, she thought, Vicente could remain at home and would

—Duncanville **NOW**

be safe. “Not long after, a matter of only days,” recalled Vicente, “my father came home saying I would have to go, also. So many young men were leaving the country that the guerillas were now taking even 15-year-old boys. My father got me papers stating I was already 18, and I left our village with four other boys my age. My father told me to go to America.”

He knew nothing about America, nor did he know any English.

Just as Vicente’s brothers had people to go to when they left for Panama, the four boys travelling with Vicente had someone in America to whom they could go. Vicente had no one. He knew nothing about America, nor did he know any English. But he did know fear, and he was determined not to bring danger to his family. For 10 days, the boys traveled through Guatemala and Mexico, crossing the Rio Grande into Brownsville, heading for Houston.

“We had no money and did not know where Houston was. In my mind, Houston and America were one and the same place. We went into a church, and the people there said they would help us. I told them I needed to get to America. They looked puzzled and said we were in America,” Vicente recalled with a grin. The boys’ uncle sent a man to pick them up, but he did not want Vicente. The man had only been paid to pick up four boys. “Finally, he decided to bring me as well, telling me someone would have to pay the cost of my travel when we got to Houston. I did not know who would do that, but I was glad he decided to take me, too. I hoped maybe their uncle would want me.”

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he had no more room. The man asked several friends if they wanted the boy, but no one did. "Even though my papers said I was 18, most people thought I was 10 because I was so small and skinny. No one believed I could work hard," Vicente shook his head at the memory. "I knew I could because I had been working for my dad. My dad thought work was more important than education, and I had worked more than I had been in school my whole life."

Finally, the driver took Vicente to his house, as though he were a piece of furniture. "He said I could stay until I found a job and my own place to live. Every day, Vicente would go out looking



for work. He asked everyone he found to hire him, but everyone thought he was too young and too little. Vicente would do yard work and help anyone he saw working, hoping they would pay him something, and sometimes they did. "I saw that a man in a truck came each day, honked his horn and filled his truck with workers, so I began to watch for him and ask him to take me, too. He hated seeing me and would yell at me telling me to go away, that he only had work for men, not children. For two weeks I came to him, and finally, he let me go with him to work," Vicente said.

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he threw bricks at me, but I just watched the others and did what they did. My hands were bloodied that night, but I kept working so hard every day that after two years he made me a supervisor. I worked for him for five years," Vicente recalled.

Vicente's hard work was noticed by the boss of the business. Soon Vicente was sent to work on jobs in other cities throughout Texas, which was how he found his way to Mesquite, where he met a beautiful young woman named Angelica. When it was time to move on to another city, Vicente told the boss he wanted to settle in Dallas. He had been laying brick on Perry Homes, so he asked that supervisor if he could work for him. "He told me he needed a painter and asked if I could paint. I told him I could. I had been watching the painters and thought their work looked easier than mine, so I was sure I could do that. The supervisor watched me and saw I was a good painter and good with the customers. He said if I bought my own van and equipment, he would hire me as a subcontractor."

Vicente had been sending most of his money back to his family, keeping only what he needed to get by and saving a modest amount. At 22 years of age, Vicente set up his own business as a painter and married the beautiful Angelica, whose family had moved to Dallas from Mexico. They soon began a family and bought their first home. That same year, 1989, Vicente became a resident and, five years later, a citizen of the United States. He has continued to work his business, VF Painting and Complete Home Repair, for 22 years.

"I was able to visit my mom one time before she passed away. I so wanted to bring her here to meet my family," Vicente remarked. Vicente and Angelica are the proud parents of four children and grandparents to one grandson. "Two years ago, we all went to El Salvador. It was like being in a foreign country. I realized all I had ever known there was our land."

The Fuente family feels so blessed of God to be in a land where they do not fear for their children's futures, where they can work hard and earn a living and care for those whom they love, as they age. They are living the good life of their parents' dreams. **NOW**



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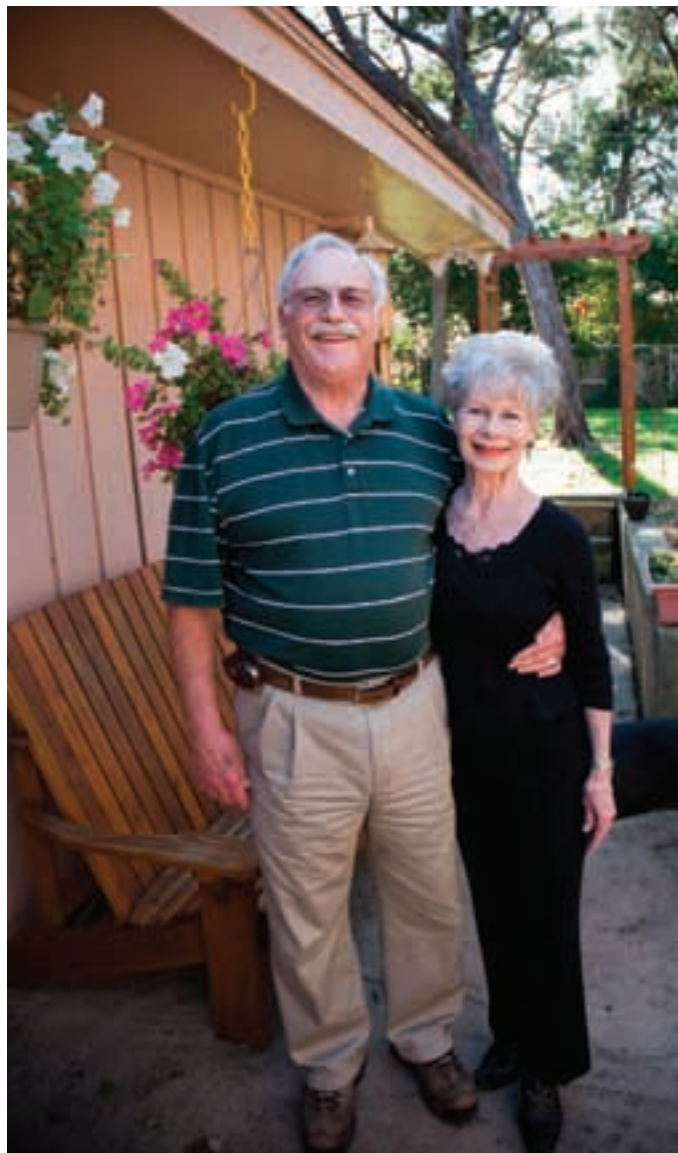
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Restoration and Preservation

— By Adam Walker

Gerald and Bobby Cutler Hill were wed in their living room seven years ago. “Our pastor, Dr. Eldon Irving, married us right there in front of the fireplace,” Bobby remembered. She had been widowed in 1998, while Gerald had been single for 13 years. “We knew each other vaguely for a long time at church. I knew her husband was a homebuilder,” Gerald revealed. “Then we found each other, and it’s been a wonderful seven years.”

The Hills call a quiet corner of Duncanville home. “This area is really quiet,” Gerald explained. “The only problem is the roads in here are impassible when we have ice like we did in February or heavy snow like a few years ago.”



At Home With Gerald and Bobby Cutler Hill

Bobby agreed saying, "It's really private up here because of the varied elevations of all the lots." Bobby's first husband built the house. "We built this house when the kids were in elementary school," Bobby said. "Most of the houses hadn't been built yet. My son would go out the door and just vanish into the woods. When we first moved in, I thought it was so big, with so many cabinets I thought I would never fill them up. Well, I have filled and emptied them



several times." Since all their children and all but one of Gerald's five and Bobby's three grandchildren are grown, they share their house with Kaylee, a vivacious black Labrador who sports a blue collar and

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welcomes anyone who will play fetch with her.

The fireplace where Bobby and Gerald were married dominates the living room. "There is over two tons of rock in that fireplace," Bobby said. "It was built by a stone mason from DeSoto. The foundation is massive just to support it." Fireplace screens are commonplace, but Bobby's is one of a kind. Her mother and father made it to look like a dollhouse village complete with a church and some of Bobby's favorite stores.

The living room ceiling sports a ceiling fan, with woven rattan blades, hanging from the polished wooden beams placed by finish carpenter, Walter Anderson. The rattan theme is echoed in the seating



group and coffee table situated with a view of the patio. "We recently replaced the old sliding glass door with French doors," Bobby said showing the exit to the backyard.

Gerald enjoys showing off some of the memorabilia and collected items in the room. He is especially happy to share about a framed picture and plaque, which hang on the small wall between the living room and breakfast nook. "We were visiting my alma mater, [Texas] A&M and decided to visit the George Bush Presidential Library there," Gerald explained. "We had been before, but this time when we walked in we saw Barbara Bush standing off to one side and there were all these people milling around.

When we walked through the doors balloons started falling. They told us we were the 2,000,000th visitor. We got to meet Barbara who gave us a behind-the-scenes tour! Then we got to take this picture with her," he said pointing to the frame.

On the built-in bookcase across the living room, next to the fireplace, you will find Bobby's collection of Texas Centennial memorabilia, as well as a pair of cased flags. One of the flags draped the casket of Bobby's first husband, while the other once flew atop the George Bush Library.

Both Bobby and Gerald are committed to their community and deeply involved



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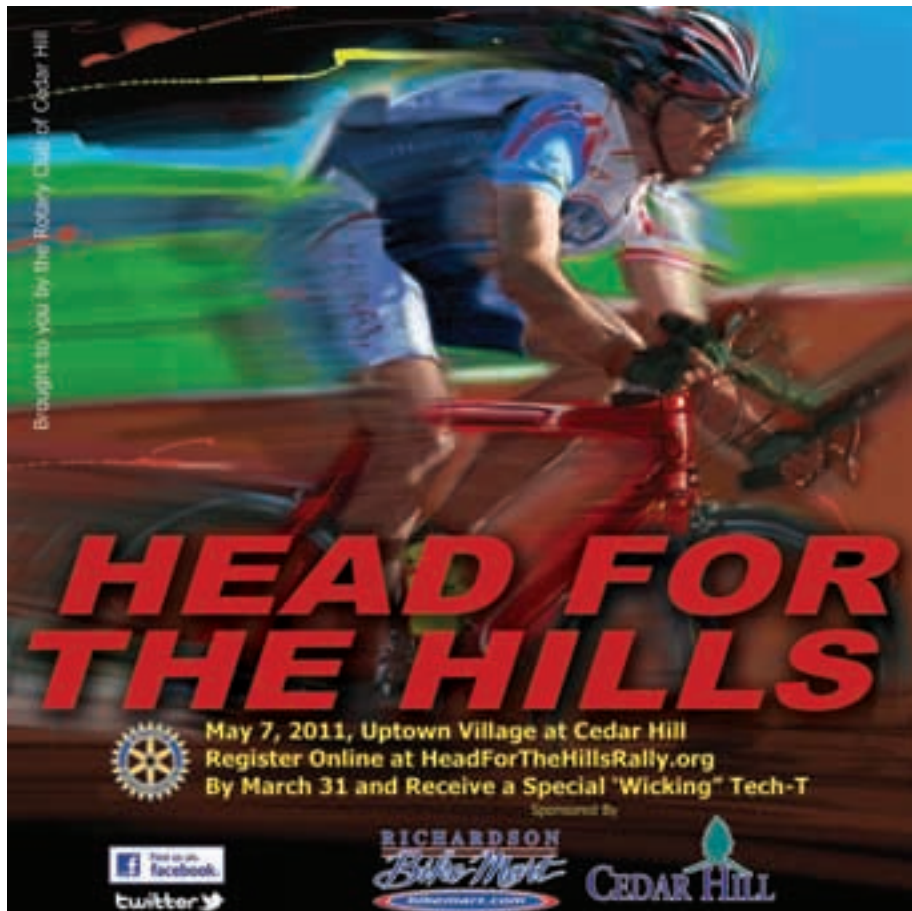
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in serving it. Gerald owned a fire and water restoration business in Duncanville for 28 years. Bobby helped run the home building business for 25 years before going to work for and retiring from UT Southwestern. Together they serve as elders at First Christian Church of Duncanville, where Bobby also serves as president of the Disciples Women, a service group that benefits the community. She is also involved with the Old Chisholm Trail chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR).

"When we married seven years ago, I knew nothing about the DAR," Gerald explained, "but the people who really appreciate the DAR are the GPs."

Gerald serves on the Duncanville Signs Board. "We deal with ordinance compliance and try to keep the signage in Duncanville tasteful," he explained. Bobby



has similar concerns about Duncanville as chair of Keep Duncanville Beautiful focusing on litter control, anti-graffiti measures and collection drives for proper disposal of hazardous materials.

What they preach to the community, they practice at home, filling their home with beautiful and interesting antiques and artwork. The dining room hosts Bobby's collections of Waterford crystal, Sabino gold-infused glass and Depression glass. In the same case with much of the glass sits a Lladro porcelain figurine of Bach and the organ, which Bobby won in a contest about why the arts are important to Dallas sponsored by the local classical music station, WRR.

Many of the antiques, like the Thomasville dining table, were once ruined by floods or fires, but rescued

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by Gerald and restored to beauty and function. The curio cabinet, which houses Bobby's Sabino, was once written off by an insurance adjustor, who totaled it as irreparable. Gerald bought it for \$10, but you would never know to look at it now. Of course, this is a man who built his own grandfather clock, turning all the wood himself. The grandfather clock

now stands in the hallway, where it holds pride of place in Gerald's clock collection. "What else can you build that will talk to you four times an hour?" he exclaimed.

Bobby's collection of crosses adorns the breakfast nook wall. "I collect them when I'm out on the road," she explained. But one of them, the one in the lower right corner of the collection, has a bit more meaning than some of the others. A thin, wooden cross with a brass cross and rings

appliquéd in the center — this cross was a wedding gift from the minister who married Bobby and Gerald.

In the master bedroom, above the marble and wood fireplace, another of Gerald's restorations, hangs a painting with a story. One of Gerald's friends is quite a traveler and art collector. On one trip shortly after the fall of communism, he visited Russia and bought a painting signed Poryadochnov in Cyrillic letters and dated 1984. The customs agents tried to claim it was a "national treasure" which couldn't be taken out of the country until Gerald's friend pointed out the TV antenna in the midst of the Siberian landscape. It just goes to show, you never know where in Duncanville you might find one of the treasures of Mother Russia! **NOW**



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Bill and Viki Watkins, owners of Paradise Cowboy, pose with their daughter, Alyssa, who is holding Tex, the store's mascot.



Outfitting for Paradise

Shop Paradise Cowboy, where the islands meet the Southwest in a unique gift shop for men and women.

— By Beverly Shay

Bill Watkins opened Paradise Cowboy six-and-a-half years ago to provide a casual shopping experience on the southwest side of town. “I like bucking the whole working-image trend,” Bill remarked. Paradise cowboy offers one of the most exclusive selections of Tommy Bahama menswear outside of North Dallas. “Their whole line of casual-Friday, wild-Hawaiian shirts represents a sort of rebel image — bringing to mind the capacity to enjoy time off or early retirement while still working.”

To accentuate the relaxed image, Bill and his wife, Vicki, designed the shop decor to move from the island look: paradise blues and palm trees to a cowboy/southwest motif. “We love islands, and we love the southwest, so we wanted to convey our idea of paradise,” Bill stated. And it works. From their seasonally dressed porcelain gecko, named Howdy, to their jewelry, leather

goods, wood carvings, Texas products and souvenirs and air fragrance lamps, they sell the whole Tommy Bahama image of relaxation and weekends, creating a completely enjoyable shopping venue.

“Lots of people have their photos taken with Howdy or just stop in to see our dog, Tex, who will sometimes ‘sing’ along with the music,” Vicki smiled. “And they stop to chat and find themselves a gift. We get a lot of feedback on how nice it is to find items not carried in department stores without having to drive to North Dallas.”

One of their best-selling items is Lovelinks story bracelets from Denmark, which appeal to a broad age range. “What’s fun about this line of jewelry is the pieces are interchangeable and totally unique to each person. You pick a simple sterling

silver bracelet and build it with beads and charms to commemorate a special occasion,” Bill explained. “Or you can make it fashion-oriented by choosing a color scheme or theme. We have bling crystals and Murano glass from Italy and sterling silver charms of animals, trip mementos, hearts ... just all sorts of things. We can keep a wish list, which makes it very easy for men to purchase a gift they know their wife or daughter will absolutely love!” Earrings and rings can be designed to match and are also interchangeable.

Vicki’s uniquely designed jewelry is also a favorite. She uses fine chains, glass beads, gem stones and turquoise, and can custom design a piece for you. “We both grew up in Cedar Hill, and we wanted to bring all the things we love for the people of our community. We think our customers will agree there’s nothing like it anywhere else,” Vicki shared.

Another unique and popular item is the Lampe Berger from France. “The company is over 100 years old,” said Bill. “In 1898, Maurice Berger invented the



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Duncanville ISD's Bilbartz Elementary celebrated Dr. Seuss' birthday (March 2) with special guest storytellers like Superintendent Dr. Alfred Ray.



Eva McAdams is honored as the 2010/2011 Sweetheart for Xi Rho Beta Chapter of Beta Sigma Phi at a luncheon held at the Dallas Museum of Art.



Menna Cerrone, Shannon and Madison Samples and Catherine Bartosh placed second in the Girls 400 Yard Freestyle Relay at the district meet.



Six Duncanville High School Panthers signed letters of intent to play football in college on National Signing Day.



Methodist Charlton Chef Stewie Hutchins, Kyllan Cody and Lynda Greene greet former Dallas Cowboys great Everson Walls.



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Why Weight Matters

— By Dr. Lesa G. Ansell, D.C., R.N.

In this culture where attractiveness is equated to being overly thin, the psychological effects of being overweight or obese can be overwhelming. These individuals frequently suffer from shame, guilt and depression. The fact that it is cheaper to buy processed foods than fresh fruits, vegetables and lean meats contributes to this vicious cycle. This cycle of eating badly leads to other health problems and is not isolated to low-income families. Our poor nutrition habits are promoted by our fast-food culture. These fast or processed foods are much higher in fat, sugar, calories and sodium than the foods we cook fresh at home. When a person consistently eats this way, they lose vital nutrients necessary for normal functioning of the body, which leads to other health problems, such as: high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, metabolic syndrome, joint problems, respiratory problems and a higher risk for cancer.

Increased sodium causes an increase in blood volume within the vessels, which leads to increased blood pressure. Add to that extra tissue (fat) on the body, which requires additional blood supply, and it causes additional increased workload on the heart. This can lead to an enlarged heart in addition to high blood pressure and other heart conditions. Atherosclerosis is seen 10 times more in obese people (BMI 30 percent or higher) compared to people who are in

the healthy BMI range (18.5-25 percent.) This is also related to diet because increased fat in the diet is deposited in the blood vessels, which narrows them and contributes to a higher risk of stroke.

Obesity is the major cause of type 2 diabetes, which used to be seen only in adults. Now it is being seen in children due to childhood obesity and an increased resistance to insulin, which is highly related to metabolic syndrome. Metabolic syndrome is comprised of several components, such as: abdominal fat (obesity), insulin resistance, elevated blood pressure, elevated cholesterol and others.

Obesity also affects osteoarthritis. This is due to increased weight putting pressure on the joints of the spine, hips, ankles and knees. The added weight also causes increased pressure on the chest wall, which can contribute to respiratory issues, such as sleep apnea and restricted breathing. Finally, the last condition that obesity contributes to is cancer. These include cancer of the breast, gallbladder and uterus in women, prostate cancer in men, and colon cancer in both sexes. Although the emotional effects of obesity can be harmful, the physical effects can be deadly, so try to reduce your risks as early as you can. **NOW**

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experience heavy rains, hailstorms, high winds and other types of inclement weather. That's why we keep our roofs in good shape, keep branches away from our homes and take other steps to protect our houses and property from the ravages of Mother Nature. You and your family could go through some rough "weather" too, during the course of your lives, so you'll want to make sure you have sufficient protection in the form of adequate life and disability insurance. Review your coverage to make sure it's still adequate for your needs.

• **Open up the windows of opportunity.** After a long winter, you'll find it pleasant to open the windows of your home and let in the sun and the air. And as an investor, you'll find "windows of opportunity" through which you can open yourself up to good investment possibilities. For example, even though we've clearly been in a challenging economy the past couple of years, a number of factors — such as low interest rates, improved corporate earnings and favorable stock valuations (the price you pay for a stock, relative to its earnings) — have actually meant that it's been a pretty good environment for investors looking for quality stocks.

By doing some financial spring cleaning, you may find that you've swept away some of the obstacles to helping achieve your goals. **NOW**

Contributed by the Edward Jones representatives in Cedar Hill.

It's spring — time to clean out the gutters, tune up the lawnmower and wash down the windows. But as you attend to these types of tasks around your home, why not take the time to do some financial "spring cleaning" as well?

Specifically, consider these moves:

• **"Dust off" your investment strategy.** If there's an area in your home that you haven't looked at for a while, you may need to dust it off in preparation for the new season. And the same principle may apply to your investment strategy — if you haven't examined it for a while, it may be time to clean it up to prepare for a new season in your life. After all, since you initially designed your investment strategy — that is, the total amount you invest, the percentages going into "growth" and "income" vehicles, the dollars going into taxable versus tax-deferred accounts and so on — many things may have changed for you, such as your employment situation, the number of children in your household and even your long-term goals. Consequently, you may need to revise your investment strategy in consultation with your financial advisor.

• **"Declutter" your portfolio.** The chances are pretty good that if you look around your house, you'll find many things that are actually duplicates, such as those five coffeemakers you've accumulated over the years — so you decide to "purge" a few. And when you take a close look at your portfolio, you might find several investments that you've added over time and that are similar to each other. If that's the case, you might help yourself by selling the "redundant" investments and using the proceeds to buy different ones that can help you diversify your portfolio. (Keep in mind that while diversification can help reduce the effects of volatility on your portfolio, it can't guarantee gains or prevent losses.)

• **Prepare yourself for stormy weather.** During springtime, we often

If you live or work in Dallas County, you can join. What's more, if you bring in this magazine to our Cedar Hill branch and join today, get a **\$50 Visa Gift Card** when you open a savings and checking account with Resource One! Visit us for more details.

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Calendar

APRIL 2011

April 4, 11, 18

Cedar Hill library is offering various free computer classes: 2:30 p.m. Call (972) 291-7323.

April 6

Duncanville Women's Club Luncheon: 11:00 a.m., Golf Club of Dallas. Soup and salad buffet: \$14/person. Speaker: Kay Seamayer, "Get UP...Get OUT...and Get your MOVE ON," living life with passion, purpose and courage. Call for reservations: Barbara McComb, (972) 296-4601 or Joan Bryan, (972) 296-8986 by April 3.

April 7-9, 14-16

Duncanville Community Theater presents *Doubt, a Parable*. (972) 780-5707.

April 9

KCHB Spring Clean Up and Arbor Day Tribute, 9:00-11:30 a.m., Virginia Weaver Park, 631 Somerset, Cedar Hill. Cleanup: 9:00 a.m., Arbor Day Tribute featuring tree education: 11:00 a.m. No cost. cedarhilltx.com.

April 10

Family Kite Fly, 1:00-4:00 p.m., Valley Ridge Park, 2850 Park Ridge Drive, Cedar Hill. Fly kites and maybe win a designer kite. No cost. cedarhilltx.com.

April 11

Audubon for Kids: 6:00 p.m. "Exploring Nature" program presented by the Dogwood Canyon

Audubon Center.

April 16

Passion's Fruit Events presents Passion Rocks! 2011 Fashion Show & Music Event benefiting Monument of Faith Ministries: 7:00 p.m., Monument of Faith, 335 E. Wintergreen Rd., DeSoto. Event features seven fashion collections, live music: R & B, soul singer, Alicia Thomas, VIP after-reception. Cost: \$15/general admission; \$35/VIP; tickets available: www.passionsfruitevents.com or call Tiffany at (281) 804-4076.

April 21

Celebrate Earth Day! 5:00 p.m., Cedar Hill library.

April 23

The Real Women of Cedar Hill Workshop "Change is Good": 9:30-11:30 a.m., Cedar Hill Recreation Center, 310 E. Parkerville Rd. Cost: \$15. Call (972) 293-5288 or visit cedarhilltx.com.

Duncanville's Easter egg hunt: 10:00 a.m., Lakeside Park. Over 12,000 eggs. Bring your own camera for photos with the Easter bunny.

April 26

Cedar Hill library's computer class on tracing your family history on the Web: 7:00 p.m. Learn to use online genealogy databases at no cost through the library.

April 30

Cedar Hill Park Master Plan Public Input Meeting: 10:00 a.m.-noon at Government Center Court Chamber, 285 Uptown Blvd., Cedar Hill. Public invited.

Red Oak Creek Trail Public Input Meeting: 1:00-3:00 p.m. at Government Center Court Chamber, 285 Uptown Blvd., Cedar Hill. Public invited.

Thursdays and Saturdays

DeSoto library is offering free computer classes: Thursdays: 6:00-7:30 p.m. Saturdays: 9:30-11:00 a.m. Valid DeSoto library card and flash drive required. Call for specifics and to register one week prior to each class: (972) 230-9661.

May 1

Mother/Son Dance: 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Cedar Hill Recreation Center, 310 E. Parkerville Rd. Cost: \$15/person. Visit cedarhilltx.com to register online. (972) 293-5288.

May 7

5th Annual Mother & Son Dance: 7:00 p.m., DeSoto Civic Center. Call Carolyn: (972) 230-9651.

Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your event details to bshay.nowmag@sbglobal.net.



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In The Kitchen With Ollie Nichols

— *By Beverly Shay*

Ollie Nichols' passion is cooking. He learned to cook as a young boy watching his mother. "She was a homemaker, maintaining a house for her husband and 12 children. You can imagine that I saw a lot of cooking," Ollie, also known as Nick, remarked. "I refined my culinary skills as an administrative dietary technician at Presbyterian Hospital of Dallas, where I worked for 25 years.

"My favorite spices are rosemary and garlic. I enjoy cooking a large variety of foods, including Mexican, Southern and Cajun. I cook mostly for my family. However, sometimes I cook for special events," Ollie stated. "My best success story was when my cooks did not report for work, and I had to prepare breakfast for 450 patients." **NOW**

Oven BBQ Baby Back Ribs

1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. black pepper
1 tsp. garlic powder
1 Tbsp. Lawry's Seasoned Salt
1 Tbsp. rosemary
4 racks pork baby back ribs
Barbecue sauce of your choice

1. Mix first five ingredients to make a rub. Rub both sides of the ribs, and wrap them with foil.
2. Place ribs on a cookie sheet and bake at 300-325 F for 3 1/2 hours. Drain excess grease during cooking time.
3. When ribs are done (completely tender), generously spread your favorite barbecue sauce over ribs. (I prefer KC Masterpiece original.)
4. Cover ribs and continue baking for 30 minutes or until sauce is absorbed.

Enchiladas, Nick's Way

1 lb. ground turkey (may substitute beef or chicken)
2 cans Old El Paso Enchilada Sauce
1 onion, diced
2 cups Sargento 4-cheese Mexican Cheese
1 packet flour tortillas
1 can Ro*Tel tomatoes, drained
Pico de gallo (see recipe below) or picante sauce for garnish

1. Heat oven to 350 F
2. Cook ground turkey in a skillet over medium heat, until well done. Drain excess fat.
3. Pour in 1/2 cup enchilada sauce. Mix in 1/2 diced onion and 1 cup cheese.
4. Spray tortillas on both sides with a non-stick cooking spray. Place 3 teaspoonfuls of meat mixture on down the center of each

tortilla. Roll tortilla around filling and place seam-side down in a baking dish.

5. Pour remaining enchilada sauce and Ro*Tel tomatoes evenly over enchiladas. Sprinkle remaining onions and cheese over enchiladas.

6. Cook for 20 minutes at 350 F. Garnish with pico de gallo or picante sauce when served.

Pico de Gallo

3/4 cup white onion, minced
1 1/2 cups tomatoes, chopped
1 jalapeño, seeded and minced
1/4 cup fresh cilantro, minced
2 Tbsp. freshly squeezed lime juice

1. Combine all ingredients.

Nick's Fish and Shrimp Soup

1 Tbsp. olive oil
1 medium onion, diced
1/2 large green bell pepper, diced
2 celery stalks, diced
4 1/4 cups chicken stock (may use fish stock)
1/2 cup dry white wine
1 tsp. ground cumin
1 bay leaf
1 sprig each of thyme, rosemary and oregano
1 14-oz. can diced tomatoes
1 lb. firm white fish, cut into 1-inch cubes (I use basa.)
8 oz. medium, peeled and deveined shrimp
Salt and pepper, to taste
Lime wedges
Green onions, sliced

1. Heat olive oil in a large saucepan. Gently fry onion, bell pepper and celery for 3 minutes.
2. Add stock and wine to the saucepan; bring to a boil. Stir in cumin. Tie together the bay leaf and herbs; add to saucepan. Cover and cook for 5 minutes.
3. Add tomatoes; continue cooking for 5 minutes.
4. Add fish and shrimp. Cook until fish is thoroughly done.
5. Add salt and pepper to taste. Garnish with lime wedge and sliced green onions. Serve with garlic toast.

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

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