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APRIL 2012

## a father's lessons

Michael Aguilar Sr. learns a new game so he can spend more time with his son.

## A Royal Welcome

At Home With Sandra Wakefield.

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History Lives On  
Representing the  
Smaller Guy  
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## On The Cover



The Aguilar family readies themselves for another baseball season.

*Photo by Amy Ramirez.*

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# Editor's Note

*Dear Family and Friends,*

Spring is definitely in the air. I'm ready for the milder temperatures that April promises to bring. Once again it's time for what we all refer to as spring cleaning. What's first on your list of things to do? While others will be cleaning closets and getting ready for their annual garage sales, I'll be taking my yard back. That means adding richer soil to the flower beds, planting a new tree and pulling all the "winter weeds" that found what they thought was a "forever home" in my yard.

I've also made a promise to myself and my family. I'm going to take some time every day for me. I may work on a Bible study, or I may just spend a few precious moments in the rocking chair thanking God for all He's provided. Every season is a season to count your blessings!

*Sandra*

Sandra Strong  
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Donna Vrzalik Dodson was born and raised here in Ennis, graduating from St. John's High School. Donna, her husband Gene, and son Cole built their home on the family farm that has been in Donna's family since 1900.

Donna began her career in the title industry in 1985 with Lawyers Title and in May 2011, she was chosen to transfer to the Ennis location as the Ellis County manager. Donna remains excited about working in her hometown where she grew up with so many people. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, deep-sea and fresh water fishing with her husband and Texas Hold 'Em poker.

Donna wants to put her 27 years of industry experience to work for each of you, to ensure that you have a very smooth real estate transaction, and help the residents of Ennis and Ellis County realize their dreams of home ownership.

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# a Father's Lessons

— By Sydni Thomas

*Growing up, Michael Aguilar Sr. did not have the opportunity to play sports. Determined not to let his children experience a similar situation, Michael Sr. did everything he could, from learning a game he knew nothing about to coaching every sport his son wanted to play.*

At 2 years old, Michael Jr. was throwing balls and swinging bats. Michael Sr. and his wife, Lori, signed their son up for T-ball once he turned 4. They wanted him to have more opportunities than just football in the fall. Michael Jr. has been coached by his father since his very first T-ball team. "My dad is a great coach," Michael Jr. said. "He is the one that taught me how to play baseball. One day, I want to be able to play college baseball."

Michael Sr. turned to books and DVDs to learn the game. When Michael

Jr. began batting and pitching lessons, Michael Sr. went along to learn as well. Anytime he came across a baseball coach he would pick their brain for ideas. "I decided to coach so that I could be more involved in Michael's life," Michael Sr. admitted. "I want to show him that I will always want to be a part of his life. It's my goal to give him the opportunities I didn't have growing up."

Two years ago when the couple realized how much their son liked the game, they gave him the opportunity to sign up for a select team as well. Michael Sr. formed a select baseball team for Ennis boys who were Michael Jr.'s age. The Ennis Eliminators was a young team with no tournament experience. They scheduled a tournament the second weekend after they began playing together as a team.

Neither the coaches nor the players knew what to expect during their tournament debut. A pleasant surprise to all, the team walked away champions that weekend. "In a small town like Ennis, there isn't always an opportunity to play



**“I decided to coach so that I  
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in Michael’s life.”**



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at the next level," Michael Sr. said. "When the opportunity to start a team presented itself, I wanted to give other boys the chance to play at a greater level and learn more about the game."

"I play both recreational and select baseball during the year," Michael Jr. stated. "I really like playing select because my teammates are great, and I like going to tournaments."

Things snowballed for the team after that first tournament, and they eventually went on to become runners-up in the USSA (United States Specialty Sports Association) Little League World Series. As the team continued to win, they began to show up on other people's radars. After their first year, the Eliminators were approached by the Dallas Stars, a select baseball organization, about a possible merger. With the support of the other parents and the promise from the Dallas Stars organization of keeping the team together, Michael Sr. merged the team.

Since the formation of the first select team, four players have stuck together: Charles Mathes, Ryan Casas, Gordon Gilmore and Michael Jr. "It was a no brainer to merge the teams together," Michael Sr. said. "When we were part of the Dallas Stars organization, the players attended more instructional sessions by great coaches and players from colleges."

Whether they win or lose, Michael Sr. uses each game as a character-learning tool for his players. There were times, after a win, when other teams refused to shake the Dallas Stars' hands. These times, although few and far between,

became lessons in sportsmanship. After a loss, when feelings of disappointment wash over the team, Michael Sr. is quick to step in and remind the boys that it isn't over. "I tell them there's always the next game," Michael Sr. explained. "No matter the outcome, we must support each other as a team. We are good sports, and we don't trash talk other teams."

"Our jerseys may have said Dallas Stars, but we still represented Ennis," Lori said. "We remind the boys of that each game. Everything they do and say is a reflection of their home town." Just this



past year, coaches, parents and players made the decision to come back home and be the Eliminators once again. "We wanted to come back home and represent our community," Michael Sr. stated.

Games and tournaments are still family events. The team plays nearly 15 tournaments a season, and their support system travels with them. They arrive at each game as a caravan, set up their canopies before the game and sit together to support their boys. Between each game they all picnic together and rest up for the next game. "Other teams see us all together at every game," Michael Sr. said. "We try to represent ourselves as a team on and off the field and as a family when we're at a ballpark."

Lori is at every game and has become the team's official scorekeeper. Having once been a softball player herself, Lori

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knew about the game, but learned there were major differences in the two games once she began keeping score. "As the scorekeeper, I have to stay focused on the game," Lori said. "I can't stop and yell at the coach. Since my scorebooks are the official record of our home games, other teams will ask to look at them. I have to be as accurate as possible, but sometimes I still make up my own signs."

Michael Jr.'s little brother, Aiden, has become the team's mascot. Having just turned 2 in December, Aiden is quickly following in his big brother's footsteps, running around the house in a Texas Rangers' helmet with a bat and a ball. In a little less than a year he will be ready to join his first T-ball team. "Aiden is already swinging the bat really well," Michael Sr. said. "We learned that Waxahachie will let 3-year-olds sign up for T-ball. I can't wait for him to join the game."

During the busiest season of baseball, the two Michaels spend nearly 15 hours a week practicing and playing the game. It isn't work for them, but a special time they spend together throwing the ball, riding in the car and creating memories as a father and son. "Michael has improved a lot since the beginning, and we see it each year," Lori said. "I think that is a reflection of his coaches. Having his dad learn the game to be able to spend more time with him makes this game a lot more meaningful to Michael."

"I want Michael to enjoy the game and have all of these opportunities," Michael Sr. said. "The most important thing in all of this is for Michael to be able to reflect back on these moments one day and recall good memories." **NOW**

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*Dr. Silverman graduated from the Medical College of Virginia and completed his internship and residency at Wilford Hall U.S.A.F. Medical Center at Lackland A.F.B. in San Antonio. He has practiced in Ennis, Texas for the last 20 years*



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# A Royal Welcome

— By Randy Bigham



*One of Ennis' most beloved and revered citizens, North Carolina-born Sandra Wakefield, came to the Bluebonnet City by chance, but stayed by choice. The talented actress and lecturer has enjoyed a stellar career, receiving national recognition for her theater work, and has lived abroad where she rubbed aristocratic shoulders with the British elite. But she's never been more fulfilled than she is today in the Lone Star State*



## At Home With Sandra Wakefield

*where she continues to perform, educate and enjoy life. "Ennis is my new hometown," she said. "I really feel that way about it. It's as though I've always lived here."*

Some might say a small town is an odd fit for one who has led such an eventful life. A producer of the Miss Arizona Pageant, Sandra was nominated for the Kennedy Center's Irene Ryan Award. After moving with her husband and children to England in the late 1970s she joined the famous London Bach Choir. One of only two Americans honored with membership, she added




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to her laurels in 1981 when she was selected to sing at the royal wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer. Returning stateside, Sandra became a platform and speaking coach for the Miss Tucson Pageant, appeared in TV and radio commercials, and launched an acting career that won her a state meritorious achievement award.

For all her material success, Sandra is quick to point out that glamour and prestige aren't as important as peace of mind. "When I first came to Ennis, my

marriage was ending, and I needed to regroup," she admitted. "I paid a visit to some dear friends who live here, and I was so charmed by this place and all the wonderful people I met. It was like a healing was taking place, so I knew it was where God wanted me to be."

Repeating her success in Arizona, Sandra has since made a versatile mark in the civic and cultural life of Ennis and North Texas, presenting book reviews and motivational speaking courses in the city and in Dallas. Sought after for her



Women of the Bible monologue series, which she presents at local churches and service clubs, she is past president of the Ennis Arts Commission and co-founder of the Ennis Literary Guild. Active in such diverse local organizations as the Twentieth Century Club and Inspiration, Inc., Sandra recently added ordained minister to her many hats, and currently serves as chaplain at Ennis Regional Medical Center.

A member of Tabernacle Baptist Church, where she leads a Bible study class, faith is integral to her life. So is helping others, which she accomplishes as a volunteer teacher for the Ellis County Christian Women's Job Corps. Instilling confidence in the women

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enrolled in her 16-week class is the calling Sandra finds more rewarding than any career feat of her own. "It's miraculous what happens as these women learn tools for gaining self-respect," she said. "It's so satisfying to watch them find their worth and then use their skills to help their family and community."

Becoming more assimilated herself in the community she's come to love is also gratifying for Sandra. "Everyone is so warm and friendly," she said. "It's a privilege to call Ennis home." That's some statement for the actress who once lived in a 16-room, 15th century mansion in England. But she insists nothing tops Ennis, and she has enjoyed settling into her new house in the city's Lake Clark area.

Sandra's three-bedroom brick abode is a reflection of her Christian faith, genteel Southern heritage, European travels and her love of theater. "Style-wise, I don't know what you'd call it," she laughed. "I guess it's just eclectic." In the formal living room, which opens onto a patio and garden, are assembled clues to the evolution of her exciting life. The sofa and love seat are modern, indicators of the value of comfort, as well as elegance to this busy homeowner. The profusion of antique decorative accessories and art are clear gauges of personal taste, cultivated through years of collecting both sophisticated and whimsical pieces. Along with crosses that echo her devotion to God, are a framed Pears soap poster from the Victorian era, a full-length gilt mirror and console from the Louis Seize revival-style of the early 20th century, a pocket watch that belonged to her father and an astounding piece of mounted sheet music dating to the 1300s.

The informal sitting area that connects to the dining room, with its long mahogany table and leather-backed chairs, is no less remarkable for the antique treasures on view. Over the fireplace hangs a pair of late 18th century portraits, still in their original frames, that Sandra's brother, David Gregory, a well-known antiques appraiser, purchased from a Colonial estate in Baltimore. On the mantel sits an alms box from about 1650, and from an adjoining wall an 1880s pastel of an Italian beauty smiles down, as if to signal her approval of these period gems.

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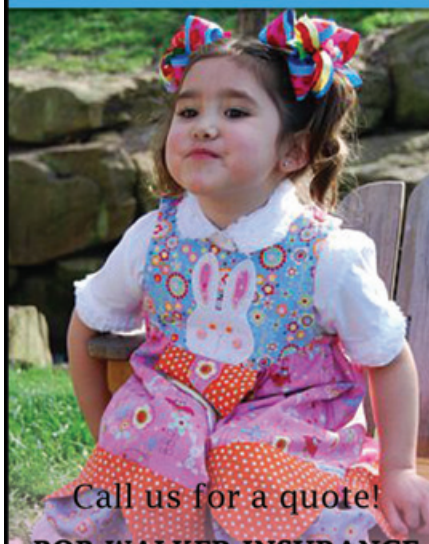
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The mistress of the house reserves her bedroom for a unique insight into her eternally feminine mind and heart. A favorite piece of furniture is her French, Deco-era dressing table with its Queen Anne stool and assortment of vanity items that range from a silver-handled hairbrush to her great-grandmother's darning ball. "I love the dressing table because it's so dainty," Sandra said. "And it's from the 'flapper' days, such a colorful time in history."

In addition to three large costume dolls and a vintage dress form (attired in her own prom dress), Sandra displays with pride many of her childhood dolls in an ornate cabinet facing her four-poster bed. The combined master bath and dressing room are exceptionally large and luxurious. Its focal point is a small, glass-top display case wherein resides her prize collection of 1920s costume jewelry, a beaded handbag of the same era and a long, ebony cigarette holder.

With its combination of traditional and idiosyncratic elements, the house is a superb expression of the public and private woman who makes it her home. "I've tried to let it say something about me," Sandra said. "I think your house should be an extension of your personality, not just fashionable. It has to be a happy medium." Sandra has struck the perfect chord with the interiors of her Ennis home, and while it may be a far cry from the English manor she once lived in, that's all right with her. "I'm very happy where I am, and wouldn't want to be anywhere else," she said. "Ennis is my home now, and I've made so many wonderful new friends. Coming here has changed my life. It's been such a blessing."

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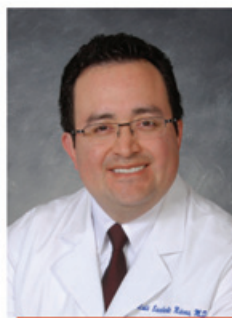
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# History Lives On

— By Sandra Strong

*Holsey Chapel C.M.E. Church celebrated 100 years of rich history last month. It was much more than a birthday party for longtime member Lula Washington. She has played an active role and been a vital member of the church since the tender age of 12. “I was 12 when I started going to church here,” Lula shared. “I was saved at 12, and I became the Sunday school secretary at 12.”*

Joining a church and getting saved is not out of the ordinary when you're in the sixth grade, but acting as the Sunday school secretary at that age came with a great deal of responsibility for the young Lula. “It all began with Abbie Jones,” Lula said, as she

began to share the story in its entirety. "I wasn't going to church at the time. My grandpa had passed, and no one knew how to drive a car. If I did go to church, I had to catch a ride because I wasn't allowed to walk all the way across town. Abbie asked my grandma if my late sister, Saphronia Moore, and I could walk with her to church."

Holsey Chapel was much closer to Lula's family home. "I had been to other churches on this side of town," Lula stated, "but I felt at home at Holsey Chapel."

For Lula, now a spry 82, the memories of a lifetime at the church she loves come flooding back to her mind faster than she can express them in words. She remembers catching a bus to Dallas with Abbie on Saturdays. "We went to Sunday school training," Lula said. "We'd catch the bus and walk four blocks down to Porter Temple. Then we'd walk four blocks back to catch the bus for home."

As children, they weren't allowed to walk to the bus stop alone, but Abbie, also lovingly known as Big Mamma, always escorted them home in the evening upon their return. "No one walked the streets at night, especially children," Lula confessed.

**"Abbie told me I could do anything, and I believed her. She pushed all the children to be their best."**

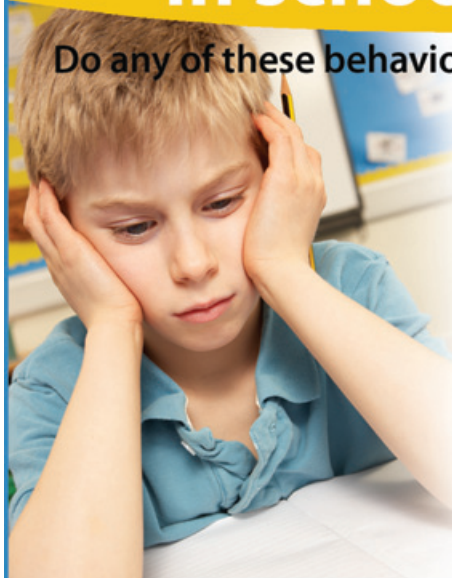
As Sunday school secretary, Lula was responsible for keeping records of attendance and finance, while also keeping a detailed record of lessons and Scriptures taught each Sunday. The book remained at the church until the annual Sunday school convention. "I turned it in during the convention," Lula explained. "The higher-ups would grade the books."

Lula was responsible, detailed and dedicated to her church home and to the duties she was entrusted with as secretary. She only missed on rare occasions. "We didn't have church when there was real bad weather," she recalled.

Holsey Chapel is a close-knit family church that is six generations strong. Looking back, Lula and her friend and fellow church member, Cora Whitlock, consider Abbie to be one of the last pioneers of the church. "Abbie was my

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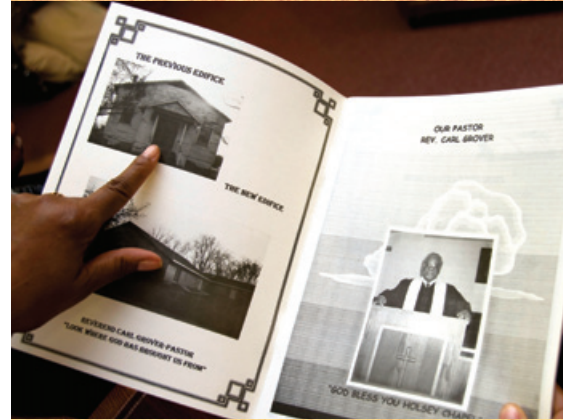
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grandmother,” Cora said. “Abbie was passionate about her church, her faith and her God. Abbie was God’s recruiter.”

Over the years, Lula sang in the youth choir. She organized the usher board, and still to this day serves as an usher. Lula is also the church clerk. “That means I keep the financial records,” Lula added with a smile.

History is an account of things that happened in the past. Some are written down, while so many others are kept within the heart. Everyone on the original organizational committee has passed on, so it takes Lula and others like her to keep the memories of the past 100 years alive. But, Lula had the chance to meet with one of the founders, Sister Molly Battles, before her death. “I attended mission in her home with Abbie,” Lula shared. “They made and donated quilts to needy families.”



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Holsey Chapel began with a small contingent of Christians — four women and one man — under the leadership of the Reverend Hughes, who organized the church in the early 1900s. For a short while, meetings were held in a home of one of the original members. In 1909, land was donated and the first permanent place of worship was established on the corner of Tyler Street and North Quinlan Avenue. That first church faced East Tyler Street. The building was remodeled in 1950, and the front was changed to face North Quinlan Avenue. “This remained the house of worship until 1998,” Lula said, “when the present church began to build.”

The good days of Holsey Chapel definitely outweigh the bad. In 1995, the land debt for the new church was paid in full. A groundbreaking ceremony was held. “The church rejoiced,” Cora said, “and the first ‘Red Day’ was observed.” Since 1998, Red Day has become an annual February event. The Red Day name represents Jesus’ blood and is also the color of redemption.

Dedicated members have kept the church open for 100 years. A yearly budget had to be met and assessments were made at the yearly conference. Looking back, Lula and Cora agree that “Abbie brought in the biggest money all the time. She paid lots of things that needed to be paid out of her own pocket.”

One such thing she made a habit of doing was making sure the children had something to put into the offering plate as it was passed each Sunday. “Abbie was told to treat all of us children as if we were her own. She would ask if we had money for the offering. If we said, ‘No,’” Lula confessed, “she would give each

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of us that didn't have money a quarter. You had to put something in the offering plate." Abbie taught her young charges the importance of not letting the plate pass them by without first dropping something in.

Abbie's desire was to shape the children into upstanding adults. Lula didn't have the same nerve that some of the other kids, like Cora and Saphronia, had growing up. "They would 'try' her," Lula said, referring to Abbie. "They would see just how far they could journey past the rules. One store had ice cream and one had music. They liked the one with music, which was off-limits."

What kept Lula at Holsey Chapel for so long? "I was needed, and I was used," she confessed. "I felt at home and at peace." Holsey Chapel and its members gave Lula and others like her a safe place to shine. It brought out the best in each of them. "Abbie told me I could do anything," Lula shared, "and I believed her. She pushed all the children to be their best."

"As far as you'd let her," Cora said.

"And farther than that," Lula added with a grin.

When she said, "Hop," the children hopped. The girls were ladies and the boys were gentlemen. "She taught us to respect ourselves," Lula said, "and to respect our elders." **NOW**

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# Representing the Smaller Guy

*Father and son team believe in fixing it right the first time. — By Sandra Strong*

Gary Mitchell has always loved cars. As long as he can remember they have been his passion. As he worked for others in the automotive field, Gary dreamed of one day owning his own business. On July 15, 2009, his dream came true. "Personnel changes prompted me to open Mitchell Automotive," Gary explained. "My son, Drew, had graduated from high school. He had an open desire to work in the business with me." The time was right for the father-and-son team to take the leap of faith that today has grown into the successful family-owned business Gary was hoping to create.

The experience Gary acquired prior to opening Mitchell Automotive included training technicians in the latest automotive technologies, selling diagnostic equipment, working in tech shops and dealing with customers on a personal level. Education and

experience made Gary the successful shop owner he is today. "I took every General Motors class I could over the years," he explained. "I read and further my education all the time. It's what I enjoy."

Mitchell Automotive isn't your basic automotive repair shop. "We don't do major engine and transmission repairs," Gary shared. "We focus on the electronics that are so prominent in vehicles today." The automotive electronics Gary and Drew specialize in at Mitchell Automotive include the annoying "check engine" light and instrument cluster, or what the layman calls the instrument panel that includes the speedometer, gauges and computerized alerts. "We rebuild the cluster," Gary said, "making it right for a lot less. We represent the smaller guy."

Meticulous is the one word that could describe Gary and the

way in which he runs his shop. Fixing "it" right the first time is the motto Gary lives by, and it's also the same motto he's passing down to Drew. "We may take a little longer, and we may not be the cheapest place in town," Gary shared, "but we believe in being thorough."

The shop is well-lit, orderly and organized. Just the way Gary likes it. And he's training Drew in his way of doing things. "His body build and large hands make maneuvering a bit of a challenge for Drew. He understands and follows directions well. He enjoys what he does," Gary said with pride. "Yes, we do get



along. Every once in a while, we'll cross hairs, but it's fun to see him learning the trade that I love."

He finds that personal service is best when addressing customers about their automotive problems. "I believe in being up front and honest with each and every customer," Gary stated. "All services we offer here are done on a referral basis. I'm always looking for repeat business. I feel the trust I gain for doing the job right the first time is what keeps customers coming back."

Gary is an ASE Certified Master Technician, and he holds his Dodge and GM certifications. He offers factory dealership level diagnostic equipment. Mitchell Automotive is factory partners with AC Delco, Mopar and Motorcraft, to name only a few. "It's all about building trusting relationships, doing the work right and never forgetting your customer service skills," Gary said. "The specialty is making sure we stay current and up-to-date with the newest technologies and that we are constantly working to continue our knowledge and education in an ever-changing automotive industry. It's doing the job right the first time." **NOW**

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Todd Gray and his son, Isaac, show off Isaac's first real catch during spring break.



Students at Jack Lummus Elementary participate in the Pennies for Patients program in memory of Ashton Weaver.



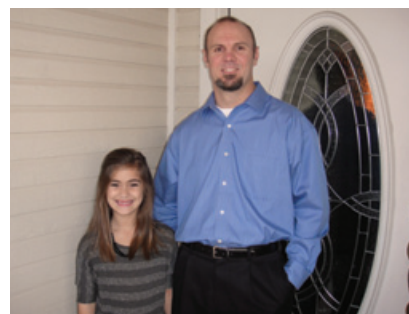
Paige Ball, Emmie Hufnagel, Genesis Baze and Gracie Marin spend their Saturday raising \$104 to help support Miller Intermediate's Relay for Life team, Reba's Rebels.




Bowie cheerleaders kick off Spaghetti Supper events.



Ennis post lady, Anna Gunn, pays a visit to First United Methodist Church's CDO program, during which kids stamp and mail a letter home.



Ella and Stuart Goedrich are ready for the Daddy/Daughter Dance.




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# Distracted Driving — Don't be the Next Statistic

— By Kim Loflin, RN

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 5,474 people were killed in 2009 due to accidents involving driver distraction and an estimated 448,000 were injured. Those statistics mean that 16 percent of fatal crashes and 20 percent of injury crashes in 2009 involved reports of distracted driving. Drivers with hand held devices are three to four times more likely to be involved in an accident that can cause injuries.

In the month of June 2011, CTIA, the International Association for the Wireless Telecommunications Industry, notes that more than 196 billion text messages were sent or received in the U.S., up nearly 50 percent from June 2009. The act of texting on wireless devices while driving, whether it's sending or receiving, takes a driver's eyes off the road for an average of 4.6 seconds. According to Virginia Tech's Transportation Institute, this is the length of time equivalent to driving 55 mph the length of a foot ball field blind. You wouldn't consider wearing a blindfold as you drive, would you? In essence, texting as you are driving leaves you driving blind, even if for a short period of time.

With the increasing demands on us every day, both personal and professional, we learn to multitask, including texting and driving. As a result, there is a new danger termed "Distracted Driving" that

is running rampant throughout our society. As cited earlier, nearly 5,500 people were killed and a half million injured in distracted driving crashes. The most alarming distraction is cell phone usage. According to a Carnegie Mellon study, driving while using a cell phone reduces the amount of brain activity associated with driving by 37 percent. And a report from the National Safety Council found that more than one out of every four traffic accidents is caused by people talking on cell phones or texting messages.

Text messaging is the greatest distraction from driving in that it combines three types of distractions — visual, manual and cognitive. To put it plain and simple- texting takes your eyes off the road, hands off the wheel and mind off the task of driving. NHTSA's message is simple: "One Text or Call Could Wreck it All."

Please remember the 5,500 people who died in 2009 because someone decided that they could do two things at once — drive and text. A fleeting text or call is not worth your life or someone else's. Please remember that texting and driving can be a deadly combination. **NOW**

Kim Loflin RN, Trauma Coordinator  
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## Become Familiar With These Five Key Areas

As an investor, what are your goals? You can probably think of quite a few — but over the course of your lifetime, your objectives typically will fall into five key categories. And once you're familiar with these areas, you can start thinking of what they'll mean to you in terms of your financial and investment strategies.

So, let's take a look at each of these areas and see what they might entail for you:

• **Preparing for retirement** — With advances in health care and a greater awareness of healthy living practices, many of us can expect to live two or three decades in an active retirement. To pay for all those years, you'll need to save and invest early and often. So, while you're working, take full advantage of your 401(k) or other employer-sponsored retirement plan, as well as contribute to a Traditional or Roth IRA. After understanding your desired retirement lifestyle, your financial advisor can help you determine how, and how much, to save to provide for your income in retirement.

• **Planning for the unexpected** — You can't see into the future, so you'll need to prepare for anything that comes your way. By building an emergency fund containing six to 12 months' worth of living expenses, you can possibly avoid dipping into your long-term investments to pay for things such as a new furnace or a major car repair. And planning for the unexpected also means having sufficient life insurance to provide for your family in case anything happens to you.

• **Educating your children** — College is already expensive — and college expenses have been rising faster than the overall rate of inflation. If you want to help your children, or grandchildren, pay for school, you may want to invest in a college savings vehicle, such as the 529 plan. You can contribute large amounts to a 529 plan, and earnings have the opportunity

to grow tax-free, provided withdrawals are used for higher education. (Withdrawals not used for education are subject to income taxes and a 10-percent penalty.)

• **Living in retirement** — Once you reach retirement, your investment emphasis will shift somewhat, from accumulating resources to making them last. By working with a financial advisor, you can develop a withdrawal strategy that can help make sure you don't outlive the income you receive from your 401(k), IRA and other sources. At the same time, given the possible length of your retirement, you can't ignore the need to invest for growth, so you may need to consider some growth-oriented vehicles in your portfolio to help your income keep pace with inflation.

• **Transferring your wealth** — When you've worked hard your whole life, you want to be able to leave a legacy — one that allows you to provide financial resources to the next generation and to those charitable organizations you may wish to support. So, when it's time to think about transferring your wealth, you'll want to consult with your financial and legal advisors to create an estate plan that's appropriate for your needs. And because these plans can take significant time to create, you won't want to wait too long to start.

So, there you have them: five key financial areas on which to focus as you travel through life. By doing your homework, planning ahead and getting the help you need, you can make the journey a pleasant and productive one. **NOW**

*This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Jeff Irish is an Edward Jones representative based in Ennis.*

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# Calendar

APRIL 2012

## All Month

*The Fantasticks* at Ennis Public Theatre, North Business Park, 2705-C N. Kaufman Street. Call (972) 878-7529 for specific dates and show times.

Ennis Bluebonnet Trails: 40 miles of mapped trails. Free maps. Trails sponsored by the Ennis Garden Club. Check current status of bluebonnets and updates at [www.visitennis.org](http://www.visitennis.org) or (972) 878-4748.

## April 6

Good Friday: Staff/Student Holiday.

## April 7-May 28

Scarborough Renaissance Festival: 10:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m., Saturdays, Sundays and Memorial Day Monday, 2511 FM 66, Waxahachie. Gate admission: Adults/\$24, children 5-12/\$9. Open rain or shine. Call (972) 938-3248 for details.

## April 8

Happy Easter!

## April 14

Brilliance: 6:00-9:00 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center, 1 Community Center Drive, Midlothian. Event raises scholarship money for Ellis County students; features gourmet dinner, live entertainment and live and silent auctions. Call (972) 938-3247 for information.

## April 21

Waxahachie Lions Club Mini Grand Prix: 9:00 a.m.,

Historic Downtown. Contact race director, Tim Bass at (972) 804-2237 or visit [www.waxahachielionsclub.org](http://www.waxahachielionsclub.org).

CureSearch Walk for Children's Cancer: registration: 8:30 a.m.; walk: 9:30 a.m., Texas Motor Speedway, Fort Worth. Event includes prizes, music, food and fun family activities. For information, contact Elena at (469) 693-5156 or visit [www.curesearchwalk.org/dfw/teamreagan2012](http://www.curesearchwalk.org/dfw/teamreagan2012).

## April 21-22

Ennis Bluebonnet Trails Festival: Tribute to the Texas state flower, bluebonnet art, crafts, souvenirs, food, free maps and live music.

6th Annual Bluebonnet BBQ Cook-off: KC Hall. Call (972) 878-2625 for information.

10th Annual Preston Street Historical District Garage Sale

## April 22

Earth Day.

## April 27-28

Southern Pacific Gone But Not Forgotten Reunion: **Friday**, 5:00 p.m.: free hobo stew furnished by Ennis folks; **Saturday**, noon: BBQ with all the trimmings, \$12/person. Paid reservations required. **RSVP by April 23**. Contact Ruby Essary at (972) 875-6278.

Relay for Life of Ennis: 6:00 p.m.-6:00 a.m., Texas

Motorplex. For information, please visit our Web site at [www.relayforlife.org/ennistx](http://www.relayforlife.org/ennistx).

## April 28

Alma Volunteer Fire Department Fundraiser: 5:00 p.m.: BBQ dinner served; 7:00 p.m.: dance with performance by The Leonard Dlabaj Band, Alma Firehouse. Event includes activities for children, silent auction, raffle and door prizes.

## May 5

Ellis County Bar-B-Que Cook-off: 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Getzendaner Park, Waxahachie; benefits Daniel's Den. For entry forms, rules and information, contact Maria Urias at (972) 937-4477 or Rhonnie Tompkins at (972) 935-9188.

## Ongoing:

## Fourth Mondays

Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis County meeting: 6:30-8:30 p.m., Waxahachie Bible Church, 621 Grand Avenue.

## Fourth Saturdays

Bristol Opry: 7:00 p.m., featuring local singers and musicians. Sponsored by Bristol Cemetery Association and Caring Hands of Bristol. Contact Jim Gatlin at (972) 846-2211.

*Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your event details to [sskoda.nowmag@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sskoda.nowmag@sbcglobal.net).*

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## In The Kitchen With Neva Roark

— *By Sandra Strong*

Neva Roark didn't prepare her first meal until after she was married. "My mother was a good cook. She never let me in the kitchen," Neva shared. "My first meal was grilled cheese sandwiches and Campbell's vegetable soup."

She has come a long way since that first meal. Her greatest successes are her blue, red and white ribbons she's won at the Texas State Fair. "After I retired, a friend grew the vegetables, and I canned," she explained. "Then I got the idea to enter some of my jars at the State Fair."

Neva also bakes, but she admits she's not good at decorating. "My two sons, Dennis and Jeffrey Dlabaj, like chocolate on chocolate cake," she smiled, "so I just spread M&Ms all over the cake." **NOW**

### Mixed Sweet Pickles

**1 gal. squash, sliced (summer, zucchini, crookneck, any mix)**  
**2 large yellow onions, sliced**  
**1 large green bell pepper, sliced**  
**1 large red bell pepper, sliced or 12-oz. jar fire roasted red pepper, drained and chopped**  
**1/2 cup pickling salt**  
**Ice, water**  
**1 qt. 5 percent vinegar**  
**4 1/2 cups sugar**  
**1 tsp. celery seed**  
**1 tsp. mustard seed**  
**1 tsp. turmeric**  
**8 tsp. garlic, chopped**

- 1.** Soak vegetables in salt and ice for at least 3 hours. Drain.
- 2.** Heat vinegar, sugar, celery seed, mustard seed and turmeric to boiling.
- 3.** Add drained vegetables. Bring back to boiling.
- 4.** Put 1 tsp. garlic in bottom of hot pint jar. Pack vegetables in hot jars and seal.
- 5.** Water bath for 10 minutes.

### Czech Chili Sauce

**4 qts. tomatoes, peeled and chopped**  
**2 large green bell peppers, chopped**  
**2 large onions, chopped**  
**1 cup cider vinegar**  
**2 1/2 cups sugar**

**1 Tbsp. black pepper**  
**1 Tbsp. salt**  
**1 Tbsp. cinnamon**  
**1 Tbsp. ground cloves**  
**1 Tbsp. ground allspice**  
**1 Tbsp. powdered mustard**

- 1.** Bring all to a boil, stirring often, for 1-1/2 hours or until it cooks down to half its original content.
- 2.** Put into hot sterilized pint jars and seal.

### Crackers to Die For

**2 sticks butter**  
**1/2 cup sugar**  
**Club Crackers**  
**1/2 to 1 cup chopped pecans**

- 1.** Melt the butter and sugar, boiling for 2 minutes.
- 2.** Line 9 X 13-inch pan with foil; cover with crackers. Spread mixture over crackers.
- 3.** Sprinkle pecans on top; bake at 350F for 10-15 minutes or until nicely browned.
- 4.** Allow to cool, then break up and enjoy.

### Banana Jam

**4 cups bananas, peeled and sliced (about 8)**  
**Juice of 4 lemons**  
**6 cups sugar**  
**3/4 cup unsalted butter**  
**3 oz. liquid pectin**

- 1.** Combine bananas, lemon juice and 3 cups sugar. Let stand 1 hour.
- 2.** Then add remaining sugar, heat over medium-high heat and stir constantly until sugar is dissolved. Boil for 2 minutes.
- 3.** Remove pan from heat and skim off foam with a metal spoon. Return to heat and boil for 1 minute. Skim foam again.
- 4.** Add butter and bring back to a boil. Stirring constantly, add pectin and boil for 1 minute. Skim off foam.
- 5.** Let mixture sit for 5 minutes and then put into hot sterilized half pint jars and seal. Process in a water bath for 10 minutes to assure seal.

To view recipes from current and previous issues, visit [www.nowmagazines.com](http://www.nowmagazines.com).



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