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APRIL 2012

A Man and His Tools

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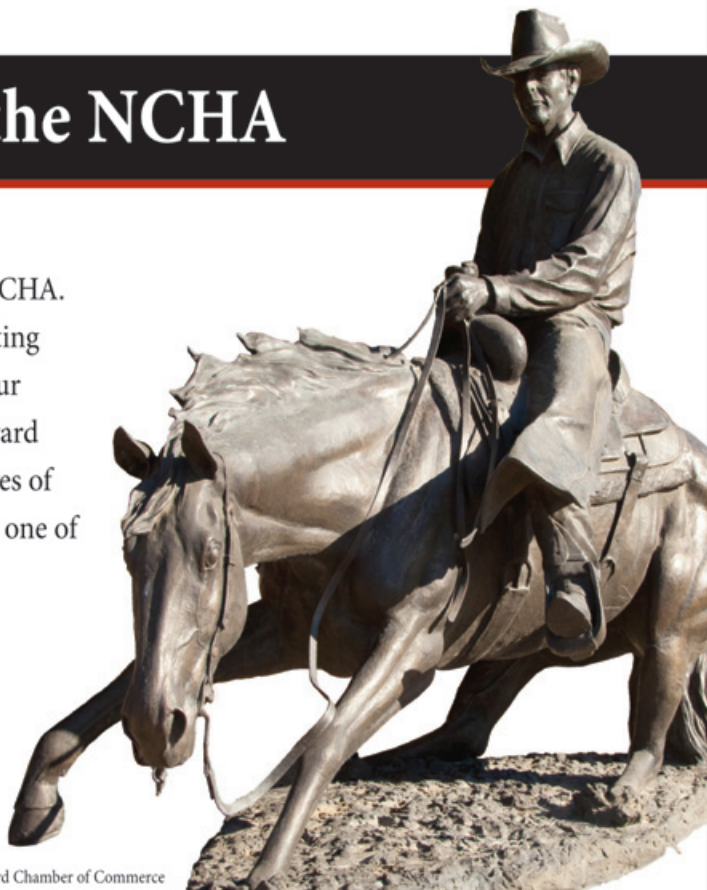
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On The Cover



For Mark and Twila Barnett
and their children, all the
world is a stage —
especially their home!

Photo by Opaque Visuals.

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Editor's Note

Hello, Friends!

When the sun is shining so brightly and a warm breeze blows my drapes in all directions, I am inspired to get my hands dirty. The garden calls me to use my creative side. Together with the One who made soil and rain, I can design a living canvas while I pray. I believe everyone is creative and hope that during this beautiful month you will give yourself the gift of art, whether that's by gardening, playing piano or painting. For some of you, it might be enjoying somebody else's work. Drop by the Parker County Attorney's office between April 23-27 to view paintings, photography and sculpture made by youth throughout the county in commemoration of National Crime Victims' Rights Week. While there, celebrate that one of these young artists will receive a scholarship to Weatherford College thanks to Zonta Club of Parker County!



Melissa

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A MAN AND HIS TOOLS

— By Melissa Rawlins

After World War II, the hospital in Mineral Wells filled with wounded veterans, the bottom floor of the Crazy Water Hotel became a maternity ward. Artisan knife maker, Jack Crain, was born there in 1946. Growing up and going to school on the south side of Mineral Wells, Jack learned carpentry, hunting and fishing from his family. He developed the finer points of his artistic side in private.





“I remember painting a picture and then standing on the window sill and putting it out on the roof so my parents wouldn’t see it,” Jack said. “If I showed too much stuff like that, my dad would take me out and put me to work on his rent houses.” Well-prepared to earn his way in the world, Jack supported himself during the ’60s and ’70s as a cabinetmaker for national and international corporations. Meanwhile, he enjoyed hunting and fishing in Parker County and wanted to make knives for use outdoors. Jack started beating out knives for himself using a forge and anvil and then filing them. “It takes a long time to make a knife that way.”

Jack’s progression as a metal worker included a lot of mistakes, but no training. “I goofed up a whole bunch of times,” he said, “but you just keep doing what you enjoy doing and after awhile you get good at it.” To this day, when he messes up a knife, he takes a cutting torch or chop saw and cuts it all to pieces. But the knives he is proud of — like the *Predator* machete with its blade of stainless steel and handle of hand-carved birch hardwood — have sold for up to \$20,000 and duplicates are trading on eBay for \$2,900.

Working from his studio just south of Weatherford, Jack is known for attention to detail. “I’m a craftsman in the sense that I have to be able to do what I do real well,” Jack said candidly. “But I’m an artist in the sense that, for example,

when the Hollywood studios contact me to commission a knife, it’s not like I’m the only knife maker between here and Los Angeles.” But he is the only one whose knives have appeared in about 20 movies, including *Die Hard*, *Commando*, *Executive Decision*, *Roadhouse*, *War of the Worlds*, and *Tales from the Crypt*.

Custom designing knives for creative use requires research and planning. For instance, the knives actually used in *Die Hard II* had to be made out of steel, aluminum or rubber, depending on the scene it would be used for. “Aluminum will sail through the air like the actor is real powerful,” Jack explained. The producer will send Jack a movie script,





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and as he reads it in his easy chair or, in nicer weather, out on his newly built deck surrounded by scrub oak, Jack will consider the kind of knife this movie calls for. One 24-inches long or only three-inches long? Should the blade slip out of a cross? He was even asked to create one with an attached silencer for *Predator*. Since Jack hunted and fished ever since his childhood — for a long time using black powder guns and now simply a bow — he knows the use of various blades and handles.

Jack collaborated with author Jerry Ahern to create the knife mentioned in *The Survivalist* books. Its handle has a twist top so its owner can store things inside. Jack may invest 70 or 80 hours in such a knife handle, starting by cutting a steel bar, hollowing it with a lathe and finally engraving the butt cap with oak leaves and flowers and embedding a decorative stone. He taught himself to carve, too, and made his first ivory knife handle in 1979. Sometimes, Jack carves precious resources — including jade, mother-of-pearl, walnut, black birch, ebony, hardwood from the Circassian area of the Caucasus Mountains in Spain, Alaskan mastadon tusks, legally-traded ivory and local deer horns — into handles. The craftsman does his work in the studio behind his forge, which he bought in 1981 when it was already 100 years old.

Melting metal is one of many skills

Jack taught himself along the way. Achieving perfection in each and every detail was a process of discovery in the privacy of his shop. Jack taught himself how to make a fancy, medieval-looking, black-colored guard for a steel sword by treating the guard with a military parkerizing chemical that turns black when he heats it. Lately, Jack's been passing along such knowledge to his friend and apprentice, Donald Middleton.

His ancient forge is fueled with coal. Once heated until it glows bright yellow, 2400 or 2500 F, the metal can be positioned over the anvil, which is held in place with a vice anchored by posts buried deep underground. Using a huge sledgehammer, a strong man can beat on the metal without breaking it. When Jack makes Damascus steel, it takes him about 40-50 hours of hard work.

"You learn over a period of time how to manipulate the metal and stretch it and make it do what you want it to do," said Jack, who started making Damascus steel in the '70s. "You laminate soft and hard steel together, like they did about the



"You just keep doing what you enjoy doing, and after awhile you get good at it."

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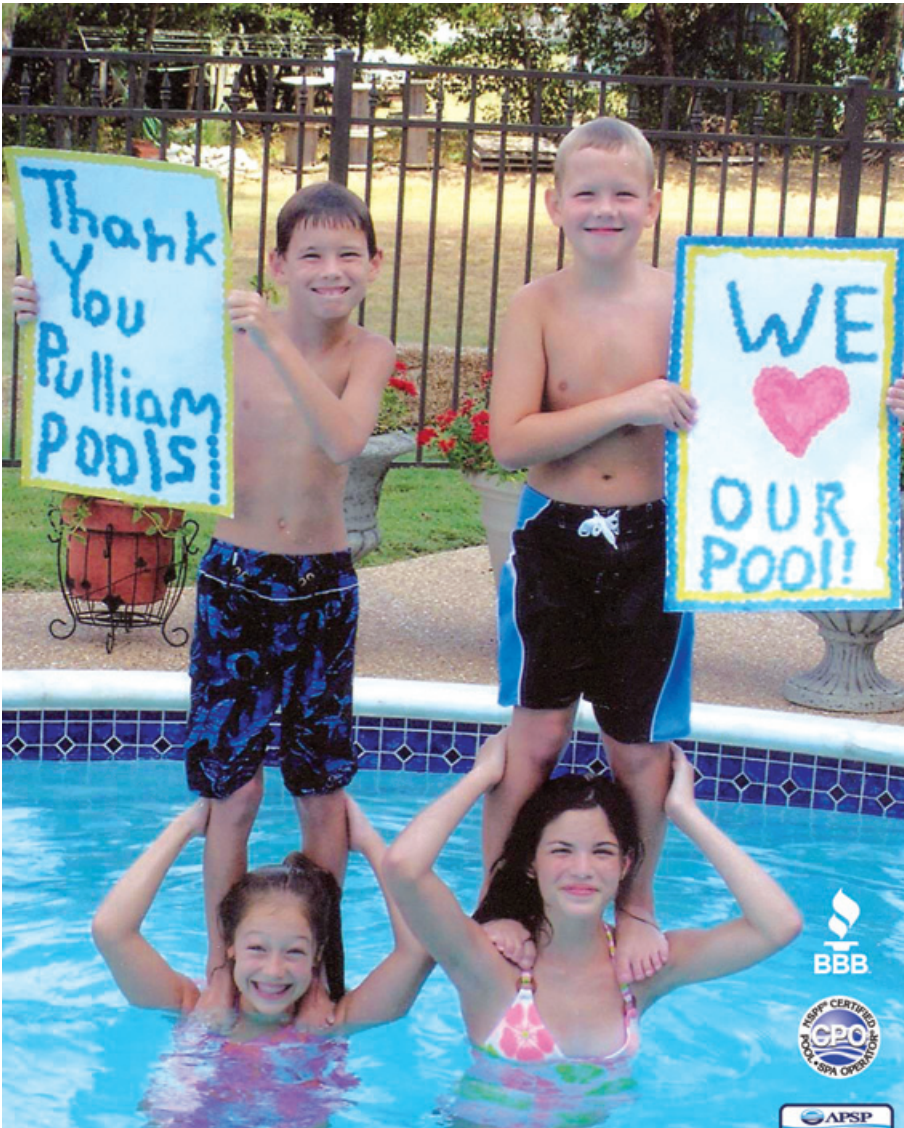
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time they were coming out of the Bronze Age into the Iron Age. There are 500 or 600 layers in a knife that is only about 1/8-inch thick. You get it hot, pound it out three times its length, then fold it, then pound it out longer, then fold it."

He still forges Damascus steel, but more often forges out thicker pieces of 440C surgical stainless steel on a smaller anvil in the shop. Then, using the stock removal method of shaping the steel using a belt sander, Jack files down 1/4-inch-thick bars of steel to create the edge on his knives. With his drill presses, Jack creates grooves and holes for pins that will eventually hold down the knife handle. Before engraving the blades, he'll sand blast using powdered glass to make a nice, soft finish on the metal. Finally, he hardens the metal by putting it into a heat-treating oven. "Before that step, it can be cut with a saw or band saw. After you heat treat it the steel gets so hard you can't cut it at all," Jack said.

Getting out in his shop, which he has outfitted with central air, is a joy for Jack. Never satisfied with the knives he makes, Jack is always trying to make a better one. His wife, Jane, once asked him what was the best knife he ever made, and he told her, "The next one." **NOW**

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The Whole Package

— By Melissa Rawlins



At Home With — Mark and Twila Barnett

Other than its rock mailbox, built like a miniature castle, the home of Mark and Twila Barnett might appear to be an average three-bedroom, two-bathroom, brown brick house built in the '70s. But scratch that word average, because the people inside the door have an anything-but-average lifestyle. Better are concepts like: fun, silly, creative, free, active, simple. Now that the kids are older, and Twila's responsibilities have lessened, she is able to do for other people the things she used to do for her children. The powerful teamwork between Mark and his wife allows him to serve our nation in foreign wars while she gives of herself to the local community. Twila founded the nonprofit Weatherford Acting Academy and has trained young actors from home ever since 2002.



In the '80s, Mark moved to Weatherford with his parents, Ted and Barbara Barnett, after his father retired from the U.S. Air Force. Ted and Barbara were working for Lockheed Martin, and Mark lived with them while attending college. A friend suggested he should meet Twila, an actress with unique ambitions. Before their first date in Fort Worth, Mark had no idea that his parents lived within five miles of Twila's.

The young lovers married, and he followed in his father's footsteps, enlisting as a soldier in the U.S. Army. They moved twice, to Florida and California, so that their children could act in television shows and movies. Once the children could manage their own careers, Twila and Mark settled in her hometown and have together revived his parents' home to make it their own.



His office is a prime example. Formerly his father's, the room closest to the Barnett's front door now holds Mark's computer, awards, military patches and souvenirs from deployments. Mark found the sky blue helmet during what appeared to be a high-stakes mission in Iraq. "We got to the border and came upon a camp. We got our formation set up, ready for a fight. When we went into the camp, it was empty — an old United Nations camp," Mark said.

Even here, the feeling is family first. Photos of Twila and his children, plus old military footlockers with Mark's

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father's name stenciled in white paint, adorn the walls opposite the antique oak filing cabinets and skeletal airplane wings that Ted built years ago in the shed behind the house. "If he wasn't doing any work outside, this office is where Dad spent most of his time," Mark said. "I gravitated here. It's my own little hole."

"This whole house is Twila's, but that one little room is mine," said Mark, who stands by ready to help Twila achieve her visions. In the house, minor adjustments

have been made. The '70s-era paneling found in the family room has been lightened by a mustard-hued paint. Here, in comfortable antique chairs handed down from Twila's mother, the couple often sits to talk and sometimes to eat with two of their four children: Dakota, now a Texas Christian University rugby player, and his elder sister, Star, who danced in several movies and has performed in Vegas and New York. The other boys, Gemini Barnett and Bug Hall, come home to visit when their acting careers allow.

The couple welcomes family all the time. Twila's nieces enjoy using her computer room as their bedroom. It feels like a sun room, with a daybed covered in bronze, yellow and orange pillows with a few straw hats scattered around. Throughout the house, Twila updated the decor with original art or hand-me-downs. She made the 3-by-5-foot retabla in the entrance by combining Iraqi prayer beads, brought home by Mark, with a cross that had been her Great-

grandmother's — all arranged inside an old frame from Goodwill on a piece of gold and brown material, which had been donated to the acting academy's wardrobe room. Next to that dramatic piece hangs a sepia-toned picture of Bug Hall when he played Tad in the movie called *Tad*.

The living room walls, erected by Mark and his father shortly before Ted died,



display romantic medieval-style paintings Twila found at a yard sale and at the Dollar Store. Set on the glass coffee table is Star's favorite jewelry box, brought to

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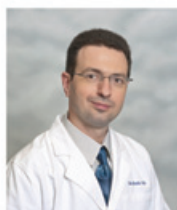
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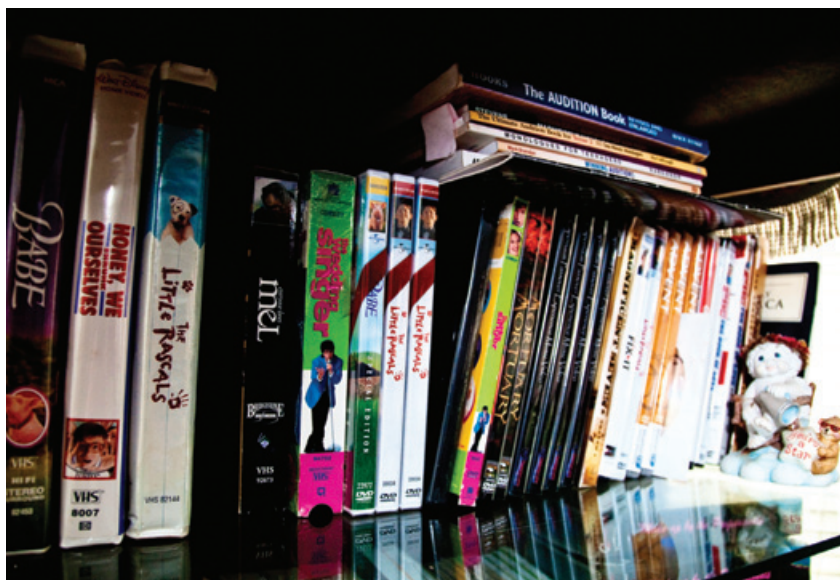


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her from Kuwait by Mark. The nearby dining table, made of long heavy wood planks, was a prop in *Second Noah*, a television show in which Gemini starred for 15 episodes. "Now, our family sits here at holidays and, of course, we do the praying thing and thank God for allowing us all to be together," Twila said.

Hundreds of souvenirs from Gemini's and Bug's childhood acting careers are displayed in the enclosed back porch, theater and memorabilia room which Mark and Twila built. "Later they might care about the souvenirs, and I feel like it's important for their future families," she said, pointing to clippings and photos of Bug, who played Alfalfa in the 1994 movie, *Little Rascals*. Tucked on a shelf is a little puppy given to Gemini for playing the voice of the puppy in *Babe*. "If your son shows up on a Shasta bottle, you gotta keep that!"

Outside in the memorabilia room, renovated by Mark from his father's old garage, several 3-by-7-foot shadow boxes display outfits that her boys wore in various movies. Two others contain costumes from other stars, including a vest Michael Landon wore in *Bonanza* and a dress Melissa Gilbert wore in *Little House on the Prairie*. Twila plans to auction these off to help fund the acting academy's production of the film *The Long Run*, which is an educational project intended to take her students through the true pre-production and post-production process. Props for the film are stored in the wardrobe room behind the theater, which used to be Mark's father's workshop. "Mark and his dad built so many things in this old workshop. When we made it a theater, my husband and boys built the stage for me," Twila said. "The seating is



made partly from his dad's footlockers, which once stored his airplane parts."

The Barnetts have incorporated Mark's family history into everything they have created on their property. Mark's private gymnasium and military training facility is an obstacle course built in the back yard where his father used to land his airplane.

When it is time to relax, while Dakota teaches Star a few hip-hop dance moves or a television show makes everyone laugh, Twila cooks and laughs with the



family through the nook between the living room and the kitchen. Mark and his sons built the bar based on a vision from Mark's mother. Now whenever Barbara visits she is pleased to see Twila enjoying her family. "I got the whole package," Twila said, "good looking husband and kooky kids!" **NOW**

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Finding What Matters

— By Erin McEndree

With 13 members and a heart full of conviction, Curtis Jefferson Jr. established New Hope Baptist Church in 1987. The church met in several locations while getting started, but each was a stepping stone to its final destination on South Bowie Street in Weatherford. In December 1988, the church planted roots in a converted house. Curtis has been the pastor for 25 years, ever since the doors opened.



“I try to win souls for Christ and live life as an example for others.”

He's learned many things about life, love and family through the years, including what is most important in his own life. “I try to win souls for Christ and live life as an example for others,” Curtis said. “Having my family around me means a great deal. They give me the support I need to keep going.” Curtis has four children and two granddaughters. Along with his family, he carries the message to people and gives hope to those who are struggling, as he continues his quest as pastor.

By his side in the endeavor is his wife of 50 years, Sarah, with whom he celebrated an anniversary March 17. She is his loyal and faithful companion and his loudest cheerleader. “I back Curtis up, and I am his helpmate,” Sarah explained. “It's a blessing to be a pastor's wife.”

“Sarah is the backbone. She is always supportive, and I love her for that. She has been with me through thick and thin,” Curtis shared. “She is a great aspect of the church.”

“I love helping people through encouragement,” Sarah added. “I especially enjoy encouraging women to be good wives and mothers and to trust in God in all life's situations.” Sarah sings in the choir with her daughter, Paula, and granddaughter, Andrianna.

Curtis began working for Gulf Pipeline in Wortham, Texas, in 1973. When Chevron Pipeline bought Gulf, they moved him to Weatherford. “There were two places I never wanted to live,” Curtis explained, “and Weatherford was one of them. But you never know what God has in store for



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you. Being in Weatherford has been a blessing.” He retired from Chevron in 2007 after 33 years of service. Curtis likes to fish, but admitted he doesn’t have time. He does, however, try to exercise a couple times a week.

In the early ’80s, Curtis began to feel he was being led into ministry. “It was a calling from God that He laid on my heart. It’s hard to explain, but when God does it, you know.” Although he had not wanted to become a minister, he was compelled to answer God’s call.

His wife gave him some advice. “Don’t do what others want you to do or even what I want you to do. Don’t do what Curtis wants to do. Do what God wants you to do. When God is leading you, even I can’t stand in the way,” Sarah stated.

“When I finally answered the calling it was like a weight being lifted off my shoulders,” Curtis said. He was ready to share his belief in Jesus Christ with others. “Our job is to win as many souls to Jesus as we can.”

For about four years, Curtis preached in different congregations around the area. Then in 1987 a lady named Cassie Chavers said she had a vision from God that a new church would be established. She contacted Curtis and the rest is history. So, with many prayers and the support of the Northside Baptist Church and the area Baptist Association, Curtis agreed.

“I believe in promoting the programs of God and reaching out to the community,” Curtis said. “We have to have love for people if we’re going to be God’s people. Our goal is to reach out and serve.”

The congregation reaches out to

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several ministries. The Center of Hope, Grace House, Kids Against Hunger and Samaritan's Purse are causes they continually bolster. One special ministry New Hope Baptist Church participates in is to honor Curtis and Sarah's daughter.

The Jefferson's youngest daughter, Darla, passed away in 2005. They host an annual Thanksgiving dinner in November and feed seniors and the elderly in their community in honor of Darla's memory. They mentor people and pray with families who fellowship with them.



Meals are delivered to those who cannot come to the church, and transportation is provided for those who need it. "Our church is very giving. We don't turn our backs to anyone. We're always there for people in need," Curtis' granddaughter, Nicole, said.

Curtis likes to sit back in his big office chair, with family pictures dotting the desk and shelves around the room. He reminisced about what is important to him: "I enjoy life so much because my family is around me. It is like seeing the goodness of God all around," Curtis explained. "I am a proud father who

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Schedule of Events

WEDNESDAY, April 25
11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. : **Lunch in the Park**
Hosted by ExxonMobil Pipeline, Corsicana
Main Street & Parks/Recreation Departments
Pocket Park - 120 N. Beaton Street
Entertainment by Byron Haynie, FREE hot dogs/drinks

THURSDAY, April 26
5:30 p.m. : "Mystery in Tuckertown"
Art Auction & Poster Contest
Benefiting VOICE, Inc. & Navarro Council of the Arts
Warehouse Living Arts Center Gallery, 119 W. 6th Ave.

FRIDAY, April 27
7:00 p.m. : **Line Dance Lessons by McMaw's Misfits**
Main Stage on 6th Ave., between Main & Beaton
7:30 p.m. : **Wing Eating Contest**
@ Main Stage on 6th Ave.
Presented by Chili's
8:00 p.m. : **Lefty Frizzell Tribute Concert & Street Dance**
Starring Cornell Hurd Band!
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6th Avenue, between Main & Beaton

SATURDAY, April 28
6:30 a.m. : **Oil Town Mini-thon**
Benefitting Corsicana Lions Club
Registration begins 6:30 a.m.; 1K & 5K Run/Walk begin at 7:30 a.m.
Corsicana YMCA, 400 W. Oaklawn
8:30 a.m. : **Biker Bash & Poker Run Registration**
\$20 pre-registered, \$25 at the gate; includes lunch, poker hand, T-shirt and games/contests.
The Remington, 122 W. 3rd St.; call 903-654-4874 for information
9:00 a.m. : **Chili & BBQ Cookoff**
Second Ave. & Commerce Street
9:00 a.m. : **Derrick Days Parade**
Grand Marshal - Outgoing Derrick Days Chairman Brad Haynie
10:00 a.m. : **1st Annual Derrick Days**
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The Remington, 122 W. 3rd St.
10:30 a.m. : **Oil History Field Tour**
Bus leaves from Main St. side of the Warehouse Living Arts Ctr.
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. : **Pet Adoptions**
By Humane Society of Nav. Co. & Corsicana Animal Shelter
Location TBD
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. : **Shakers & Scrapers 9th Annual Car Show**
500 N. Beaton St. (old Stewart Motor Co.)
10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. : **Summertime Amusements Carnival**
Commerce & Collin
11:00 a.m. : **Corsicana Cloggers**
Beaton @ 4th Ave. (in front of Miles Furniture)
11:00 a.m. : **Horseshoe & Washer Tournament**
Corner of 2nd Ave. & Commerce St.
Noon : "Corsicana's Oil History" short film
Free Admission, Martin's Music Hall, 201 S. Beaton.
Noon : **Washer Pitch Tournament**
Corner of 2nd Ave. & 9th St.
1:00 p.m.-3 p.m. : **McMaw's Misfits Presents**
Little Buckaroos Stickhorse Rodeo + Clogging
& Line Dance Performance
Collin & Commerce streets (Lighthouse of Praise parking lot)
1:30 p.m. : **Oil History Field Tour**
Bus leaves from Main St., in front of the Warehouse Arts Ctr.
5:00 p.m. : **Chili & BBQ Cookoff Awards Ceremony**
2nd Ave. & Commerce St. (behind CTBM)



gets to work with my two sons, Doug and Patrick, and my oldest daughter, Paula Gratts."

Doug is the music and youth minister at church. He plays piano and keyboard, writes songs, and has a passion for the youth at church and in the community. He guides a mentor program in the junior high schools that focuses on helping kids make good choices, keep their grades up and be all-around nice people.

"Patrick is an associate minister. He preaches and teaches and fills in when needed," Curtis explained.

"I try to give a kind word and hope to people," Patrick said. "If it seems like there is no answer, I encourage people that God can do the impossible if you just hold on to Him."

Paula serves in two positions at the church. She is the assistant secretary of the church and women's missions.

To accommodate the growing congregation, the building was remodeled and expanded in 2002. The new building was dedicated on Father's Day. The original building is used as a fellowship center. Today, Curtis wants to see growth in the congregation. Not just in numbers, but in faith and love as well. "I want to continue to reach out to the community and uphold God's plan," Curtis explained. "There will always be good and bad times, ups and downs. But I know the storms do not last. For that truth, I have joy."

Curtis' goal to help the lost is never ending. The harvest is always ripe. He has workers with him every day. Some days are better than others, but he always puts his heart and soul into his ministry. When Curtis looks around, he sees the things that matter most to him. "Having a close-knit family with me is a little bit of heaven down here on earth." **NOW**

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— By Melissa Rawlins

The white bank northwest of the Parker County courthouse was originally home to the old Citizens National Bank. Money was safely kept there during the period just after the Civil War, when Indian raids forced people to stay alert. Now the building is home to First Financial Bank, which thrives as part of the system of 11 community banks with 52 locations operated by First Financial Bankshares, Inc.

Maintaining individual charters in every community, each First Financial Bank has its own board of local directors. "That lets us adjust the way we operate according to the people in each community," Jay Gibbs, bank president, said. In Weatherford, for example, much of the lending at First Financial is geared toward ranches and horses. To further help the community

and its youth, First Financial Bank sponsors the Weatherford Independent School District (WISD) Foundation and the Parker County Livestock Improvement Association, which holds the livestock auction during the Parker County Sheriff's Posse Rodeo in June.

The friendly and helpful staff at First Financial puts customer service first. "We all try to view everything we do through the lens of the customer," Jay said. In his position as bank president, for example, Jay helps his customers achieve their goals, whatever those may be.

Creating customized plans is the first step when First Financial Bank invests in its customers. "As we talk and get to know each other, we get to the point where both sides trust each

other," Jay explained. "Customers come in all the time, just needing to sit down and talk about what's going on in the community and the economy that might affect their business.

"Sometimes, they know their business, but may not know the best way to get from point A to point B," Jay said. "If I can figure a way, while maintaining the bank's safety, that's what I try to do. There is a structure we can put together that will work, even though it's not part of a cookie cutter program." Ten loan officers in the Weatherford area help customers at six branches in Aledo, Brock, Weatherford, Willow Park and one in Fort Worth.

Beyond borrowing money, customers reap the benefits of First Financial Bank's electronic banking products and state-of-the-art online system. "Our ability to pool resources amongst all our community banks allows us to offer a wide array of financial services," said Jay, who grew up working on a cattle ranch and in 1975 began working in a bank that still kept track of ledger accounts by hand.

"We all try to view everything we do through the lens of the customer."

First Financial will soon introduce a mobile app allowing customers to conduct all their banking from their phone. Already, individuals and businesses can make remote deposits using First Financial's system to manage their money from home or the office.

For small and large businesses that need to move and collect their money quickly, First Financial Bank's treasury management products include ACH payroll and payroll card services. The bank also provides a full trust department for estate management. "We offer all the things that a large metropolitan bank can offer," Jay said. "If you ask us about it, we'll help you." **NOW**



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Main Street Mercantile's Diana Hays discusses fine wine with Joyce Morris.



Buffy Leatherman and Dawn Gregory keep the rolls coming for the Sunday crowd at Wanda's Restaurant.



Diane and Greg Regan, from Willow Park, buy raw honey at First Monday Trade Days in Weatherford.



Matt Young picks up a prescription from Jim Coleman at Davis City Pharmacy.



Elmer King is retired now, but enjoys helping out at Clear Fork Materials in Aledo.



Lisa Geron, cook at Brioche, prepares to leave for a three month mission trip to Kenya.



Tim Jensen tries on a hat at David's Western Store.



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In Parker County, we have a strong tradition of electing judges who value a strict interpretation of the law and the Constitution. When Governor Perry was faced with the decision of whom to appoint as our judge, he wanted a strong conservative who would reflect these values. After carefully considering all applicants, he appointed conservative legal scholar Trey Loftin, who was then confirmed by the Senate. ✦ Judge Loftin was a felony prosecutor with the District Attorney's office and is Board Certified in Criminal Law. He understands that a

JUDGE TREY LOFTIN

43rd Judicial District Court

judge's job is to strictly interpret the law as written and not legislate from the bench. He defends the Second Amendment and protects our property rights. ✦ Judge

Loftin serves in church, charities and faith-based programs for children and families. That is why Governor Perry called Judge Loftin "a new generation conservative who brings common sense to the courtroom." ✦ Judge

Loftin and his wife have four children who attend local schools. To learn more, visit JudgeTreyLoftin.com

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Always Greener on the Other Side

— By Nancy Fenton

Why does the grass across the street always seem to green up before mine? I realized recently upon closer inspection that I was looking at a lot of really green weeds! The St. Augustine and Bermuda that make up my front yard are still brown. They just take more heat and warmer soil than we have had yet. As soon as it starts to green up, I will put on my annual doses of molasses and corn meal. This is my organic version of quick-release, high-nitrogen fertilizer. If we don't get a good rain shortly after I apply the fertilizer, I will water the yard. This is really the only fertilizer I use all year, with the exception of mulching my grass clippings on the yard during the summer and fall.

The first few times I mow, I cut the lawn very short. The high nitrogen makes everything grow very quickly, including the weeds. They grow a great deal faster than the St. Augustine and the Bermuda in the cool early spring. The short cutting stimulates them to grow faster, and they tend to grow themselves to death. This works well in the early spring, but don't try it in the heat of the summer. That's when you want your lawn long and well protected from the heat. St Augustine does well at 2 1/2 inches and Bermuda at 1 1/2 to 2 inches in the heat.

It's hard to grow anything other than ornamental grasses in areas that are heavily shaded. Mulch is a good way to go, or you can use ground

covers or a combination of both. English ivy is a hardy choice, as is ajuga, vinca minor and liriopse.

If you are just planting a new yard, take stock of where you are and what you have to work with. Is water available since St. Augustine needs more than Bermuda? Is it sunny or under the trees, and what kind of use do you expect to have? Kickball and soccer practice, running dogs or just enjoyment make a big difference in which grass you should choose. Keep in mind that Bermuda takes less water and holds up to heavy activity, whereas St. Augustine does much better in areas with partial shade, but doesn't tolerate really cold weather. Both types do much better with a good layer of mulched clippings protecting their roots.

Regular mowing and water are essential for a great looking yard. You can get away with only one fertilizing a year, if you place all the clippings back on your yard for several years. Be sure and get going on it soon before the weeds take over!

For more questions about turf grasses or ground covers, call the Ellis County Master Gardeners at (972) 825-5175. **NOW**

Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener.

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Explore the World of International Investments

You're probably accustomed to measuring the progress of your investments, and the overall condition of the investment world, by checking on indexes, such as the Dow Jones Industrial Average and the S&P 500. And since these types of benchmarks focus almost exclusively on American companies, you might get the idea that the best investments are located right here in the United States. But that impression would be false because there are, literally, a world of investment opportunities beyond the U.S. borders.

In fact, as of the end of 2010, U.S. stock markets constituted less than a third of the total global stock market value, according to the World Bank. And you can probably just look around at the products you use in your daily life to identify many successful foreign companies.

Why invest a portion of your portfolio internationally? Here are a couple of reasons to consider.

- **Growth potential** — The United States is a mature, highly developed economy. That doesn't mean, of course, that we have no "upside" here. However, you can also find considerable growth potential in emerging markets — countries such as China, India, Brazil and Mexico that are characterized by younger, less mature economies.

- **Diversification** — The world's financial markets are somewhat dependent on one another, but that doesn't mean they constantly move in unison. In any given year, the U.S. markets may be down, but international markets might be doing better. Consequently, if during that year, you had invested only in U.S. companies, your portfolio may have taken a hit. It's important to diversify your portfolio by investing in many different vehicles, but you can also boost your diversification through geography. (Keep in mind, though, that

diversification can't guarantee a profit or protect against loss.)

While international investing can be beneficial, it does not come without risks. For one thing, when you invest overseas, you may encounter political instability, which could threaten the financial markets of a country or region. Conversely, financial problems, such as the European debt crisis, can result in loss of confidence in individual governments. Also, you might experience currency risk, which means that changes in the value of the U.S. dollar relative to foreign currencies could harm the value of your investments. And in any given year, any market, foreign or domestic, may be down.

Ultimately, you should probably limit your exposure to international investments to no more than 20 percent to 25 percent of your overall portfolio, with the exact amount, if any, depending on your situation — your goals, risk tolerance, time horizon, financial situation and other factors. You may also want to add an international flavor to your portfolio by investing in quality U.S. companies that do a considerable amount of business abroad. In any case, given the more complex nature of international investing, you'll want to consult with a financial professional before writing a check.

Still, consider the international investment world. With a little exploring, you may discover some good possibilities out there. **NOW**

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Gregg Davis is an Edward Jones representative based in Willow Park.



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April 5

Girls Night Out — Bunny Hop: 5:00-8:00 p.m., Historic Downtown Weatherford. Join Downtown Merchants for an after-hours shopping experience. Call (817) 594-8088.

April 7-8

Clark Gardens Easter Celebration, Clark Gardens, 567 Maddux Rd.: **Saturday:** 10:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.: children's craft activities and a children's book reading by local author, Marvin S. Mayer, before the picnic and the afternoon Easter Egg Hunt. **Sunday:** 6:00-9:30 a.m.: the community-wide Easter Sunrise Service sponsored by the Mineral Wells Ministerial Alliance. Visit www.clarkgardens.com or call Beverly at (940) 682-4856.

April 12

Gardeners' Club of Parker County meeting: 10:00 a.m., St. Francis Church, 117 Ranch House Road, Willow Park. Visitors welcome. Steve Chaney, Tarrant County AgriLife Extension Agent and Coordinator for Master Gardeners of Tarrant County, will speak on garden design and plant management, followed by refreshments, a short meeting and a plant swap. Bring a plant — take a plant. Contact Anita Beckman at (817) 919-6280.

April 13

Parker County Women's and Newcomers' Club meeting: 10:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Alkek Fine Arts Building, Weatherford College, 225 College Park Avenue. Newcomers to the area are welcome. Social half hour starting: 10:00 a.m., short business meeting: 10:30 a.m. and a speaker or entertainment. Buffet lunch: noon. RSVP to Carol Logan at (817) 594-0125 or Jackie Anderson at (817) 594-5127. www.pcwnc.org.

April 14

Weatherford Comancheros Riding Club Play Day: 2:00 p.m., newly renovated arena on Osage Trail, off of Horseshoe Bend. Nine different age groups from 3 to 80 years old. Family event. Bring proof of Coggins test. Call Varsi at (817) 721-8057 or Pat Farns at (817) 228-2015.

Kid Fish: 8:00 a.m.-noon, Holland Lake. Kids can bring their own fishing pole and bait or use those provided by Kid Fish. Call City of Weatherford Parks & Recreation Department at (817) 598-4124.

Countywide Cleanup: 8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Any Parker County citizen may go to the nearest precinct barn to start cleaning up their own backyard! Contact Texas Cooperative Extension office at (817) 598-6168.

April 15

Beginning Sculpting Workshop registration deadline: 5:00 p.m., The Fire House Gallery, 119 West Palo Pinto St. Every Wednesday and Sunday in May, curious artists learn more about sculpting. Need flexible measuring tape, sharp knife for cutting clay, pair of common pliers, some cloth and paper towels. Cost: \$100. RSVP to Weatherford Art Association at (817) 599-3278.

April 16

Weatherford ISD Teacher of the Year Luncheon: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Doss Heritage and Culture Center, 1400 Texas Drive. Everyone is invited to recognize Weatherford ISD's Campus Teachers of the Year. Call (817) 598-2956 or visit www.wisdef.wordpress.com.

April 20

Crossroads Youth Ministries Charity Golf Tournament and Concert: 1:00 p.m., Canyon West Golf Course. E-mail chindyhannacrossroads@yahoo.com. This first annual golf scramble will be followed by a charity concert featuring music from local musician, Courtney Patton, and Texas Country stars, Matt Hillyer of Eleven Hundred Springs, and Max Stalling. Proceeds will support Crossroads' mission of promoting the emotional, physical and spiritual well-being of struggling youth ages 12 to 18. Programs and activities empower youth to realize their intrinsic value and purpose, so they can take responsibility for overcoming life's challenges.

April 21

32nd Annual Shaw-Kemp Open House: 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Kemp Road and Hwy. 51, 6 miles south of intersection of Hwy. 171 and Hwy. 51. Free fun for entire family.

April 24

Spring Fling and Luncheon: 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Coutts United Methodist Church. Parker County Extension Education Association hosts this special day for women and men, presenting various speakers on interesting topics. Tickets: \$10. (817) 598-6168.

April 28

Aledo Children's AdvoCats 7th Annual Run, Walk or Crawl for Our Kids: 8:00 a.m., Bearcat Stadium. Event includes: 1k fun run, followed by 5k fundraiser. Last year, AdvoCats supporters donated \$35,000 to 350 children for medical expenses, dental care, school supplies, counseling, food and shelter. New this year: the Finish Line Festival, where race participants can enjoy live music, sample outstanding food from area restaurants and special food vendors, shop home goods, clothing and services from area retailers. Sponsorships are available at Bronze (\$1,000), Silver (\$1,500), Gold (\$2,500) and Platinum (\$5,000) levels. Contact Amy Turman at (817) 707-1020 or amykturman@gmail.com.

May 3

61st Annual National Day of Prayer: 7:00-8:30 p.m., Doss Heritage & Cultural Center. Pastors from ministerial alliance will lead Parker County in prayer and worship on behalf of our city, county and nation. Contact Pastor Craig Beaman, Bethel Baptist Church: (817) 458-8502 or visit www.ndpparkercounty.org.

May 11 and 12

Weekend At Kate's: **Friday:** 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.; **Saturday:** 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., 2410 White Settlement Road. A uniquely curious art and antique fair held inside a 1905 farmhouse and outside on 2.5 acres. Admission: \$1; proceeds go to Grace House Ministries. Contact Michele JuVette at (214) 535-7022.

June 2

Annual Pancake Breakfast Fly-in: 8:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m., Mid-Way Regional Airport, off of Hwy. 287 between Waxahachie and Midlothian. Event and parking are free. Breakfast tickets: \$6 for ages 8 and up; \$3 ages 3-7; free ages 2 and under. (972) 923-0080. Classic airplanes/fighters, helicopter rides, Remote Control Model Flyers, Midlothian Classic Wheels, Gold Wing Road Riders, The Classic Swing Band, kids trackless train and face painting.

Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your event details to melissa.rawlins@nowmagazines.com.



In The Kitchen With Lea' Wallis

— *By Melissa Rawlins*

Just like Rachael Ray, Lea' Wallis needs no recipes. The Easter brunch menu, below, is a Lea' Wallis original. Her creative cooking began with mud pies at the age of 3. That did not deter her mother, who encouraged Lea' to assist with dinner every night, cookies and candy for holidays and cakes for birthdays and weddings. The two still laugh and work together, serving fresh luncheons daily at their Aledo restaurant. Lea' also prepares meals for special needs children, cancer patients and sick or elderly people. Originally from Mineral Wells, she moved to family land in Aledo five years ago to give her son the benefit of growing up in a small town. Lea' especially enjoys cooking at home for her 17-year-old and his friends. **NOW**

French Toast Casserole

12 slices thick-cut sour dough or any crusty bread
1/2 cup butter, melted
1 cup brown sugar
1 tsp. cinnamon
1/4 tsp. nutmeg
5 eggs
1 1/2 cups half-and-half
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1/2 cup maple syrup

1. Leave bread out on counter for a couple of hours or overnight.
2. Melt butter and pour in a 9x13-inch pan.
3. Mix together brown sugar, cinnamon and nutmeg.
4. Whisk eggs, half-and-half and vanilla.
5. Layer bottom of pan with half the bread pieces. Sprinkle half the brown sugar mix over the bread.

6. Layer second half of bread. Pour egg mixture over the bread slices, making sure all are covered evenly. Sprinkle remaining brown sugar on top. Cover and refrigerate overnight.
7. In the morning, remove from the refrigerator and cover with a new piece of foil. Preheat oven to 350 F and bake the casserole for 30 minutes. Then uncover and bake 15 more minutes. French toast bake should be browned and set.
8. Remove from oven, pour maple syrup on top and place back in oven to caramelize for about 5-7 minutes.

Green Eggs and Ham for Garden of Eat'n

2 cups spinach, chopped fresh or frozen
1 cup ham, chopped
1 sweet onion, chopped
2 cups half-and-half
4 eggs

1 cup baking mix (such as Bisquick)
2 cups cheddar cheese, shredded
12 slices bacon, thick cut
1 cup brown sugar

1. Thaw and drain frozen spinach or chop fresh.
2. Preheat oven to 325 F. Coat bottom of a 9x13-inch pan with cooking spray.
3. Combine spinach, ham and onion in a bowl. Mix in half-and-half, eggs and baking mix.
4. Pour mixture into prepared pan. Sprinkle cheese over the top. Bake in preheated oven for 35 to 45 minutes.
5. Coat bacon with brown sugar and place on foil-lined cookie sheet. Bake until bubbly and crisp. Use as a garnish.

Mozzarella Salad

4 cups watermelon, cut into inch cubes
1/4 to 1/2 red onion, sliced paper thin
1 Roma tomato, diced and seeded
2 cups fresh Mozzarella cheese, small balls or cubes
2 Tbsp. fresh basil, thinly sliced
1/4 cup Balsamic dressing or vinegar
1 tsp. kosher salt

1. Mix first 5 ingredients together.
2. Drizzle with dressing and finish with a pinch of salt.

Watermelon Mimosa

5 cups watermelon, cut into inch cubes
2 cups orange juice
1 bottle chilled Champagne, Prosecco, sparkling wine or Club soda
1/4 to 1/2 cup sugar
1 lime, sliced

1. Blend watermelon chunks with orange juice. Add sugar to taste, based on sweetness of the fruit, and blend until you have a smooth puree. Strain if needed.
2. Chill until you are ready to serve.
3. Pour the watermelon-orange mix into champagne flutes, about half full.
4. Add the champagne or other sparkling wine, pouring it gently to avoid making a bubbly mess.
5. Stir lightly and garnish with twisted lime slices.

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

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