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APRIL 2016

## First Year, First Grade

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purpose and passion in  
teaching

## Angels and Destiny

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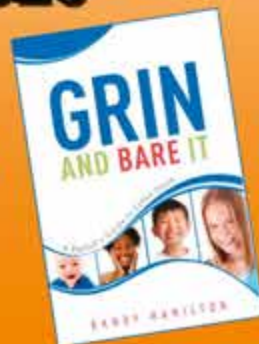
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## ON THE COVER



*Elisabeth Stewart's students respond to her enthusiasm.*

*Photo by Vanessa Polozola.*

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## Editor's Note

*Happy Spring, Friends!*

Are you one who whistles while you work? Al Jolson and Bing Crosby have both sung the song we're all familiar with, "April Showers," and this month I'll be whistling it 'til I get to the third verse, which I'll sing:

*And where you see clouds upon the hills,  
You soon will see crowds of daffodils,  
So keep on looking for a blue bird,  
And list'ning for his song,  
Whenever April showers come along.*

That resonates with me for so many reasons. Firstly, my mother always gives me daffodils to plant because she is a joy promoter. Her birthday is on Earth Day! Secondly, that blue bird we're all looking for just might be visible this month — but not for the rest of the summer. Rather smallish, the Eastern Bluebirds, thought to be a symbol of happiness, love and hope, have rusty throats and chests and white bellies with blue above. Females are colored more subtly than males. Keep your eyes open for blue birds and yellow daffodils, y'all!

*Melissa*

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# FIRST YEAR, FIRST GRADE

— By Mira Rollins







"Being with my students is  
truly my happy place."

*When Elisabeth Stewart decided to pursue education as a career, only those closest to her understood the magnitude of this achievement. Her first year as a licensed elementary school teacher has brought closure and confirmation to her personal obstacles and challenges. She listens to parents of her first-grade students at J.L. Boren Elementary School, and her students stay interested in learning, as she uses simple methodologies that keep their energy focused on the classroom. As a young student attending school in Clear Lake City south of Houston, Elisabeth struggled to keep pace with other students in her class. She vividly recalls the frustration and isolation she experienced during her years of grade school. "No one, including me, understood the way I thought," she shared. "I would eventually get from step A to step B, but it just took me more steps to get there." These few extra required steps would officially be diagnosed as auditory dyslexia and ADHD.*





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Auditory dyslexia is difficulty processing basic sounds of language, letters and groups of letters causing slow reading. ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) is a condition characterized by inattention, impulsivity and hyperactivity. Elisabeth showed slight hesitation in stating her exact diagnosis. This hesitation was not attributed to embarrassment, but out of a desire to identify with all those with learning challenges. "There are many types of learning disorders, but the majority of them boil down to a person having a unique way of learning," she said.

Despite specific programs in school targeted at tapping into her learning style, it was not until college that she unlocked the mystery of her mind. "Once I figured out my learning style," she said, "I jumped from an average struggling student to a straight A student."

Her own learning journey is what she attributed to her effectiveness as a teacher. "I make it my mission to understand what type of learner each one of my students is," she said. "Once I figure that out, I engage them in that way." Her empathy gives her increased patience and passion to ensure each of her students stays on target.

She admitted the difficulty to individually assess all of her students and to tailor a teaching technique for each one of them. "It's a challenge, but I enjoy it. One technique I use is reinforcing lessons in





small groups of four or five,” she explained. “While the other students are doing self-guided activities, I group certain students with similar learning styles together. I reinforce the lesson in the manner they best understand. Those groups are often the highlight of my day because so many of the kids have lightbulb moments. It makes me proud when something I’m teaching ‘clicks’ for a student.”

Those “clicking” moments seem to come often in Elisabeth’s class. Being concerned about sounding boastful, she cautiously confessed, “As a first year teacher, I think I’m doing pretty awesome.” She credits her success to a well-structured college program and a great mentor teacher.

Elisabeth obtained her bachelor’s degree from The University of Texas at Arlington. Though ultimately solidly finishing school with A’s, it was not without struggles and setbacks. At one point, she even took a semester off from school in order to refocus, refresh and what she describes as “reboot.” Though family and friends were concerned she might not return to finish, she assured them and herself that it was only a break.

Upon returning to school, she connected with a great counselor at UTA, Teaira Little. “She was so helpful. She guided me each step of the way by giving me all the information I needed to complete my degree. Without her, I would have truly been overwhelmed.”

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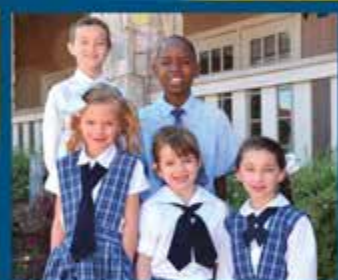


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Once settled back into the rhythm of college, Elisabeth began to excel in her studies. "UTA was a great program," she admitted. "The structure of their student teacher program truly prepared us to be full-fledged teachers by the time we graduated."

It was during her student teaching at J.L. Boren Elementary that she would link up with veteran teacher Kathy Fletcher. Elisabeth regularly stayed at school long after her required hours were completed. "I think this is what Kathy noticed," she said. "She saw I was there because I wanted to be and not because I had to be." This was the beginning of an amazing mentor relationship that is now made official through a program called KEEPS (Knowledge-based Encounters Ensuring Professional Success).

KEEPS is offered to all Mansfield teachers new to the district or to the profession. The intent of the program is to increase success and retention of new teachers. Participants in the program are given valuable resources, with a mentor teacher being among the most impactful. When describing her own mentor, Elisabeth cannot contain the feelings of appreciation and gratitude. "She's amazing! She took the time to figure out how to teach me to teach. She never gets tired of the million questions I ask. She knows I just want to get better."

Her desire to get better is noted in the amount of time she spends working on lesson planning. When not teaching, this self-proclaimed homebody is most often



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Principal Tracy Johnson (left) and Assistant Principal Mico Rhines (right) appreciate Elisabeth Stewart's unique teaching style.

sleeping, watching movies or having board game nights with friends. She started a small business, painting window themes for businesses, and she also spends time with her mother. Yet every Saturday, Elisabeth goes to her classroom and spends at least half of her day preparing for the week to come. "I spend so much time preparing because I want to create a loving and safe environment for each of my students," she confessed. "I want them to love learning."

When visitors show up, the possibilities of what they observe are endless. They might find students circled up in the dimly lit room reading a book with the atmosphere intentionally set to enhance imagination. Other times, they may find the entire classroom, teacher included, feverishly dancing during one of their "brain breaks." Whatever the scene, it will always be centered on Elisabeth's methodical efforts to maximize her time with her students. "I want them to forget they are learning and just have fun," she said with a smile.

Her path to teaching was paved with personal challenges, ultimately overcome by support and belief in her and her abilities. Daily, Elisabeth seeks to return the favor by giving this same confidence to her students. The irony, karma or what she refers to as blessings is not lost on Elisabeth. "I feel so blessed to have graduated from college, then to have received the job I wanted, in the grade I wanted, in the school I wanted," she reflected.

She bashfully admitted she gets along with children more than most adults. "I love and respect their honesty," she stated. "They are where I am comfortable. Being with my students is truly my happy place." **NOW**



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# TEAM SPI

*Heather had no idea that running late for work one day would actually reap lifelong benefits. As she rushed past a neighbor and his friend working on a car, she returned a quick and fleeting greeting, not stopping to make eye contact or any other causal exchanges. Not turned off, but actually intrigued, AJ asked his friend to give "the girl running by" a call on his behalf.*

After a small amount of convincing, she made the first of many phone calls to AJ. "He was talkative!" she laughed as she recounted. "He was also very sweet, funny and kindhearted."

AJ was quick to return the compliments. "I could tell she was business minded and focused, but also very outgoing," he said. "It was amazing how similar we were. We shared the same values about family, life and sports."

Through their courtship, they continued to connect based on their commonalities, with their love of sports being at the center. Most dates were centered on and around sporting events, with each of them either spectating or often participating. The love of the game soon grew into the love for one another.

Dating for less than a year, the couple wed in April 2001. During this time, AJ was active in the Navy. Desiring to get closer to his family, the couple requested orders to be stationed in Texas. Soon after, the couple made the move from Virginia to Mansfield. AJ was happy to settle down and set down roots. Joining the Navy immediately out of high school in 1994, his travel portfolio was extensive. He traveled to Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, Guam, Thailand, the Persian Gulf, United Arab Emirates, Korea and Hong Kong, all before his 21st birthday. The couple joked, "I think the farthest we've been since having kids is Ohio and Florida."

"I miss the days she and I had hanging out all day together from one tournament to the next," AJ continued. Though life with three kids is different, they love their family and its dynamics. They have shared their love of sports with their children and each has their own unique talents.

Madison, 14, plays basketball, competes in field events and is a trainer for her middle school football team. Jayden, 12, plays football, basketball and runs track. Brendan, 11, plays soccer. Brendan's natural athleticism is not his only innate talent. Recently, he has discovered an ability to play the piano and certain percussion instruments by ear.





# RIT

— By Mira Rollins



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It was during the time Jayden was playing recreational basketball at the YMCA that the couple began developing the idea of their joint venture. While observing countless practices, they noted the basic fundamentals of the game were not being targeted as they should. “We didn’t want to complain,” Heather admitted. “We wanted to be part of the solution.” One evening when Jayden asked his mom to coach him, the lightbulb came on. Heather signed her son and five other neighborhood kids up at the YMCA, where she agreed to be their coach. This first team would eventually spin off into their current nonprofit company.

Arlington and Mansfield Dragons Sports Group, a nonprofit youth sports organization that bridges the gap





between youth athletics and high school, was officially developed in 2014. The organization is a community junior high sports league with special emphasis on fitness, conditioning and agility training. "We identify those specific areas in our kids that will take them to the next level — techniques like counting and decreasing steps, advancing down the court faster and foundational training." The organization also gives area youth the opportunity to compete and learn the fundamentals that will help them find success as they move into competition at the high school and college levels.

They started with seven kids and have since grown to serve 40 children who learn the fundamentals of basketball, football and overall fitness. The results of their training have been evident in many of their athletes. The physical changes in one young man have been amazing. He has lost weight, gained muscle and has improved his basketball and football



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game tremendously. Another one of the boys has ADHD and struggled on the baseball field. Since training with AJ, his attention and game skills have improved by leaps and bounds.

Heather played basketball while growing up and continued while in college at California University of Pennsylvania. She shares her knowledge and skill as coach of the basketball division of their organization. A lifelong football player, AJ uses his expertise to lead the A&M Dragons football team. They each have their roles, but they often share observations and advice with one another.

They have been extended an invitation to participate in a clinic with high school football players. Both of them expressed feeling greatly validated by having their efforts receive this sort of recognition.

Parents were so impressed and appreciative of the results they were seeing with their children, many of them began to specifically ask for one-on-one training. These increasing requests led the couple to start a for-profit business.





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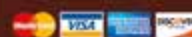
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AJ now trains youth and adults in conditioning training.

Their partnership in business, both nonprofit and for-profit, has made the partnership in life that much stronger. "There is always something to talk about," Heather expressed. "It's exciting and so fulfilling for both of us."

When not on the court or the field, the two make sure to carve out some one-on-one time with each other. "We are still dating," AJ confirmed with a smile.



The two spend time going to movies, restaurants or taking drives just to talk. They also make it a point to spend quality time with their children. They often go for nature walks, have game nights and all gather together for movie nights at home.

Heather and AJ have made a life out of sports, health and wellness. They agree that the benefits of what they've created are not just for their participants. AJ flashed a grin and stated, "Although tough at times, keeping up with the kids keeps us young."

AJ and Heather's individual interests would cross at a wonderful intersection to include the passions found in both their personal and professional lives. They share the same desire to develop youth into the best athletes they can become. They continue to bridge the gap between junior high and high school sports with precision and excellence. **NOW**



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# Angels & Destiny

— By Carolyn Wills

## At Home With Monty & Pamela Freeman

*More than the story of an elegant home, this is a love story. It begins in 1997, the year that Monty Freeman set out to find his dream home and, fortunately, sought the help of a top Realtor by the name of Pamela Payne. The search was lengthy. They looked and looked until custom plans were at last drawn, and the deed was signed for 1.25 acres off a two-lane, oil-topped country road in what was then the outskirts of Mansfield. Monty's 4,500-square-foot beauty was completed in 1998, and though it might have signaled an end to this story, it had just begun.*







Several years later, Pamela would return. "I was researching ideas for a client who had just purchased property, so I called Monty, and he invited me over," she explained. To their surprise, the reunion sparked interest beyond the beautiful home. "It was like we had always been together," she said with a smile. The two were married in 2007.

Today, that quiet, two-lane road is a four-lane thoroughfare. Mansfield is thriving and, remarkably, the Freemans' picturesque French country home has become a remodeled masterpiece. "We thought about building fresh, but both of us love this house," Pamela said. Two stunning chandeliers from Craigslist finally clinched the decision to remodel. "Those chandeliers opened Pandora's box," she grinned. Pamela is a gifted decorator with an eye for romantic, timeless design. "I love architecture and can look at homes all day," she shared. "This house has wonderful asymmetry. There's not a flat wall anywhere, yet it feels balanced."

One of the chandeliers (the largest) now graces the foyer. From furniture, art, floors, counters, appliances and paint, to each and every light socket, everything in the house has been redone. The heart of the home is a free-flowing den, formal living room, kitchen and dining area, a breathtaking panorama of elegant furnishings, statues, art and floral arrangements, all bathed in Pamela's

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favorite fall colors. “My decorator friends call it a mix of Romantic, Tuscan and Old World Baroque,” she shared.

From the front entry, the den occupies the farthest corner. Its size anchors the open core and, as with all good dens, it’s about comfort and warmth. Light carpeting contrasts with dark wood accents. Soft upholstered seating in shades of brown face a magnificent fireplace surrounded by brick and moss stone. Beyond the den, floors become a rich, dark hardwood, while tall windows line the wall facing the backyard.

The formal living room is cozy, yet open, with another gorgeous fireplace and two beautiful sofas on either side of a large coffee table. The table, positioned under the other beloved chandelier, displays floral designs that adorn a statue



of an angel. “I love statues and angels,” Pamela said.

A slightly more secluded formal dining room to the right of the entryway boasts a wall with windows; a long, elegant dining table; and a collection of floral arrangements handcrafted by Pamela. Much of the home’s elegance is the result of careful attention to contrasts. For the most part, walls are a pale gray-tan, crown moldings are white, wood floors are dark and lighting throughout combines natural, overhead, task, chandeliers and lamps.

Perhaps the most wonderful contrast, though, comes from Monty and Pamela’s love for their pets. At home, the Freemans are typically joined by 5-year-old shelter cat, Tabby Tiggers; 6-year-old Doberman Pinscher, Striker; and



5-year-old black and white Boxer, Tinker Bella. “This is their home, too,” Monty shared. It seems the handsome and quite formidable Striker actually talks. “He’s kind of a ‘human dog,’” Monty said with a grin.

The den is flanked by a state-of-the-art kitchen and butler’s pantry, each furnished with stunning walnut cabinets. Dramatic counters are topped with gold, rust and black Mascarello granite, while the floors are laid with honed travertine.

The main floor also includes Monty and Pamela’s offices. “I run a Snap-on Tool franchise, and Pam is in real estate, so we’re both in sales,” Monty said. “I see maybe 400 people a week, and she may show as many as 20 homes a day.”


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The Live Outdoor Theater Downtown, better known as The LOT Downtown, is presenting the first of its many events this spring.

The grand opening of The LOT Downtown is Saturday, April 30, 2016. Sawyer Brown headlines and Mario Flores and the Soda Creek Band open to kick off the concert season of Mansfield's new performance venue.

"We cannot wait to bring years of hard work and collaboration to fruition this spring," said Justin Gilmore, a founding board member. "The LOT Downtown will be a great addition to Historic Downtown Mansfield, and we are so excited to welcome the community to it."

The LOT Downtown is funded by generous donations from citizens and businesses of Mansfield. The outdoor venue will bring the community together for arts-centric experiences. While most events will be free to the public, a few events, including the grand opening Sawyer Brown concert, will be ticketed to help provide free events throughout the year. Tickets are on sale now at [theLOTdowntown.com](http://theLOTdowntown.com). Sponsorship opportunities, such as naming rights, are still available. Contact [MKdonald@theLOTdowntown.com](mailto:MKdonald@theLOTdowntown.com) for more information.

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since 1981 and still tours across the U.S. With three certified gold albums, more than 50 U.S. Billboard Hot Country Songs and the 1997 Vocal Group of the Year award from the Country Music Association, Sawyer Brown is sure to entertain the whole family.

Upcoming concerts in 2016 include Jake Ward on May 14, The Unlikely Candidates on May 21, The Band of Heathens on May 28 and many more. Summer Family Movie Night is June 3 and will feature a family-friendly movie.

Guests are encouraged to bring lawn chairs and blankets as The LOT Downtown features open, first-come, first-served seating. In addition, guests are welcome to bring their own food and drink to events. Select events will feature concessions.

For more information about the venue and the season calendar, visit The LOT Downtown on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram or at [theLOTdowntown.com](http://theLOTdowntown.com).

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That's one reason they love staying home, and why it is important for them to have individual home offices.

Pamela's stunning office, once intended as a fourth bedroom, has an exterior door. Her massive, carved-edged, solid-wood desk, credenza and file cabinet are exquisite. Monty's office is accessed through French doors to the left of the foyer. "I applied a faux wall treatment to add texture," Pamela said. "We also added crown molding and incorporated a light fixture into the ceiling fan."

A secluded hallway with an angel statue in a lighted alcove leads to the luxurious master bedroom. A massive oil painting depicting three Old World cherubs hangs above the bed. "A client had it hand-painted as a gift," Pamela said. The bedroom features a fireplace, a







totally renovated spa/bath with a vaulted ceiling and an enormous walk-in closet.

Stairs to the second floor are covered with a tiger-patterned carpet. "I love animal prints, and stairs seemed a fun place for it," Pamela said. The upstairs opens to a pool table, granite bar and complete movie theater, embellished by a large leather wall hanging.

Monty and Pamela each have two grown children and now share five grandkids. "Since we've lived in the house, my daughter, Lacey, was the only one to actually live here," she explained. One of two upstairs bedrooms was designed for her, and although she's grown now, Pamela still refers to it as "Lacey's Luxury Room." "It overlooks a beautiful oak tree," Pamela explained. "I wanted it as 'girlie' as possible and had fun decorating it." The red velvet drapes lined with black beads were Pamela's design. Another special touch is her old stand-up hairdryer. "My mom was a hairdresser," she said.

A sweeping view from the upstairs balcony reveals the full extent of this amazing home. There's a patio, pool, tennis courts and a three-car garage, plus a freestanding 2,000-square-foot home for Monty's Kenworth truck.

"Monty enjoys motor sports. I love decorating. We both like to travel, work out and play tennis," Pamela said.

There is another important chapter in this story. After becoming engaged, Monty and Pamela decided to fly to the Bahamas. An issue with the plane's landing gear caused them to circle the airfield, unload fuel and make a slide-landing on the runway. After almost perishing together, Pamela thought maybe it was best to go ahead and get married. "That's what we did," she smiled. "I wore a white bikini on the beach and, then, on the way to the airport, the taxi driver sang 'Forever I Do.' It was a beautiful life moment." **NOW**



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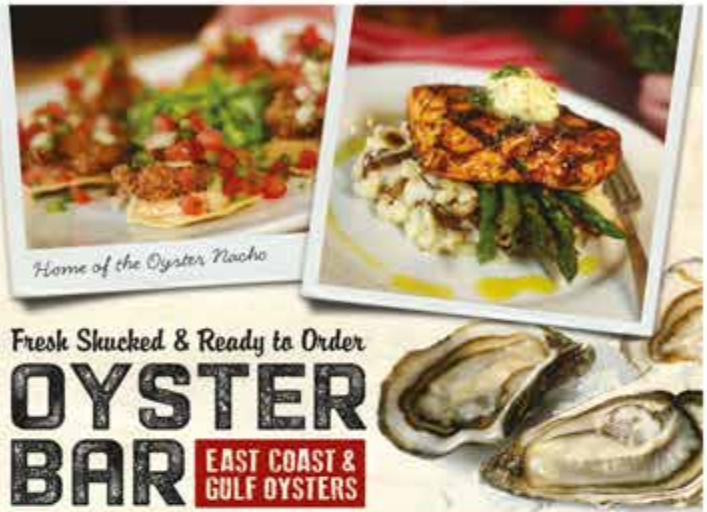


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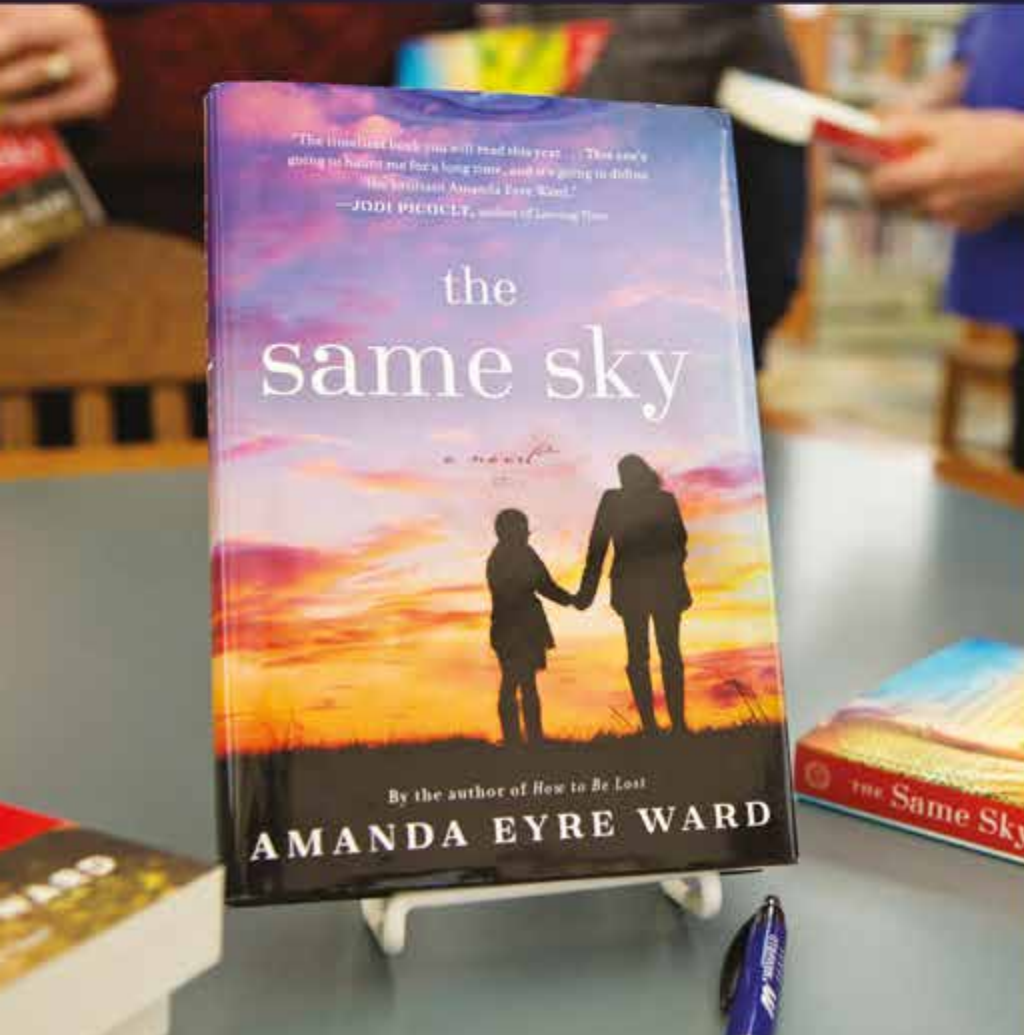
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# Something to Talk About

— By Melissa Rawlins

*Every year since 2004, The Friends of the Mansfield Public Library have given the community something to talk about. Their gift is called Mansfield Reads! It comes wrapped in layers of appealing activity, attractive art and alluring appetizers. When all is said and done, ideas*



*cultivated by the buzz around the Friends' chosen book stay with people forever. In the process, the many volunteers in the organization freely give time and energy on behalf of their love for all things literary.*

This year's indulgence focuses on *The Same Sky*. Author Amanda Eyre Ward's website says this novel is about finding courage to trail blaze your own path in life with faith, hope and love, no matter the struggle or the tragedy. The volunteers in Friends believe *The Same Sky* is both eye opening and heartbreaking, since it's based upon true stories of undocumented immigration.

"This is not one of those books you have to sit down and pore over," Paula Highfill said. "But when you get to the end, you touch your chest and say, 'O! My heart!'" Starting in January, Paula went into high gear to help produce the program with Jenny Elliott and Joyce





Sternberg, co-chairs of the committee that planned an event bringing more awareness of the issues raised in this book to Mansfield.

"We want to reach different parts of the community to engage people in reading something they wouldn't necessarily have read," Jenny said. To bring into the library people who may have never stepped into its doors, the Friends host a catered party on Friday, April 29, for people who want to hear the author speak and hopefully shake her hand.

This Evening With the Author — as it has been known since the first-ever program when Elmer Kelton, who was billed as the greatest western author in America, shared his book, *The Good Old Boys* — is what hooked Jenny into the Friends. Jenny owned her own catering company, and was asked to provide the heavy hors d'oeuvres, tea, water, coffee and desserts for the evening with Mr. Kelton in the library's community room. She loved the way the Friends introduced the author and brought literacy to the town.



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“When you get to the end, you touch your chest and say, ‘O! My heart!’”

Librarians report to the Friends that in the month preceding the Evening With the Author, they take many calls asking where the library is located. “To have people in a city of 60,000 say, ‘We did not know this library was here,’ is amazing,” Jenny said. By encouraging the entire city to read the same book, the Friends achieve one of their major objectives: getting people involved in a library program and interested in service for the public library.

Jenny has long since retired from the catering business but acts as the Friends’ liaison to Savvy’s Bistro, MISD’s culinary program at Ben Barber Career Tech Academy, which provides a very high-quality catering service at bare-bones cost for the Friday evening fun. “It’s been very exciting, to maintain





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the relationship with the chefs over there,” Jenny said, “and watch new students every year prepare the food. They’re very professional!” Of course, Friends volunteers tidy up after Paula takes the author back to the hotel.

Paula enjoys the privilege of escorting the author for the duration of Mansfield Reads! During the day preceding the Evening With the Author event, the author visits the high schools and the creative writing or history classes that might be interested in speaking to him or her. “Almost every year, there is some connection between the students at the high school and the book selected for Mansfield Reads! There are a couple of occasions when students have really been moved,” Paula said.

She’ll never forget the time local

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author Tim Madigan, who wrote *I'm Proud Of You*, went with the Friends to Timberview High School to tell about his journey to find peace regarding his father. "There were two different girls, both very emotional, and after he stopped speaking he came down to talk to one of the girls who was just sobbing."

Paula recalled during the second year of the program, Robert Olen Butler gave a speech on the craft of writing. A young, Hispanic high school student in the audience aspired to write poetry and approached the author after his speech. Mr. Butler took from his shirt pocket an envelope that he'd been jotting notes on. "I saw him give it to the student, and talk to him about what was on the envelope. You could see in this kid's face that it made such a big impact on him," Paula said. "He came the next morning to our Saturday writer's workshop."

Jenny has seen the program provide unique intersections between youth cultures. "Buzz Bissinger, the author of *Friday Night Lights*, is a character who comes off like a real New Yorker," she said. "The year we featured that book, the high school brought the football team in to hear Buzz, and you rarely get football teams in on writing programs." Buzz used his own honorarium to fly in James Earl Miles, the real man on

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whom he'd based his character, Boobie, who talked to the student athletes about planning for their future.

Last year, the Timberview High School theater students built a stage set to look like a Southern front porch — complete with a rocking chair — in anticipation of their visit with Fannie Flagg. "These kids were so moved by her talk," Jenny recalled. Afterwards, Fannie was all set to sign books until she realized they didn't have any of her books. "She said, 'Just bring me anything, and I'll sign it.' Some of them brought notebooks, and one brought a beautiful rose he'd sketched while she was talking."

None of these literary moments could happen without upwards of 300 volunteer hours contributed by the Friends. Several people worked with the school district, setting up author visits with the students. Rick Sales, graphic designer for the city of Mansfield, enhanced the image of the book cover and designed the poster, from which a local printing company graciously donated brochures, invitations, programs and even promotional bookmarks highlighting all the sponsors of Mansfield Reads!

"We try to find groups such as JROTC, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts and Key Club to distribute the posters," Carol Ann Grantham said. As president of Friends of the Mansfield Public Library, Carol Ann is proud of all the people who stepped up to help this year, whether by brainstorming prospective sponsors, marketing, thanking sponsors and addressing invitations or producing the various events and transporting the author between the high schools, library and hotel.

The Friends will soon be reading in preparation for selection of the book for 2017. Then will begin many hours of meeting of the minds: evaluating committee submissions, contacting publishers and authors and arranging details for the next Mansfield Reads! All in all, it's as much fun for the Friends who produce the program as for its wide-spread audience. **NOW**

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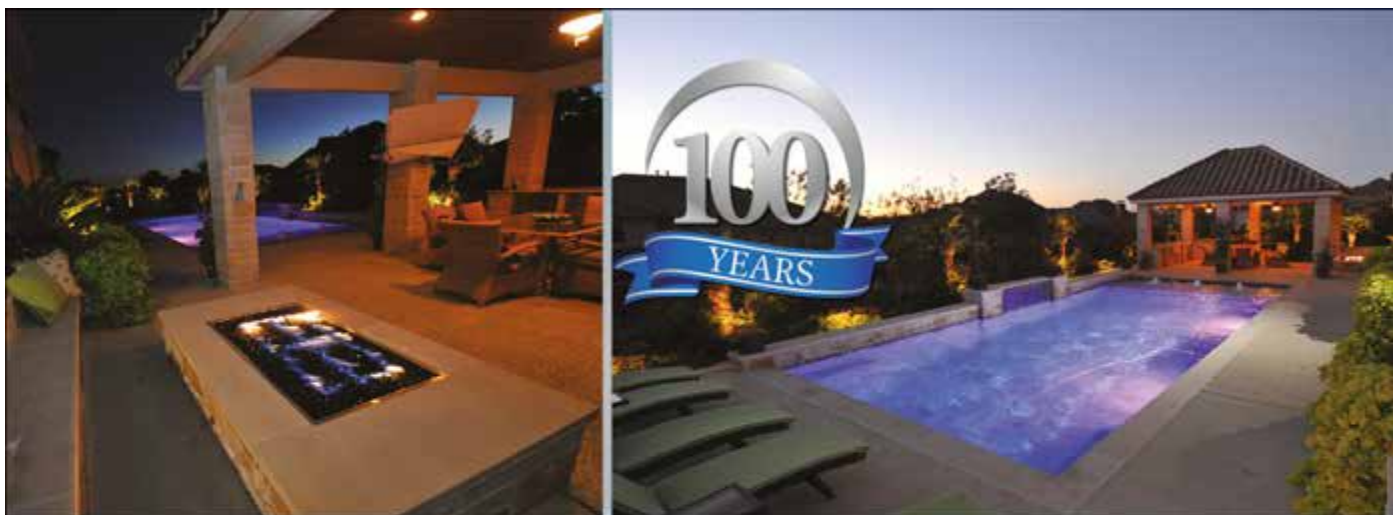
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# Added Appeal

— By Carolyn Wills

*How cool is it to add a pergola to a home? Potentially, very cool. With the right design, this time-tested outdoor structure can increase a home's curb appeal and useable living space, and when the time comes to sell, it might be the one "extra" that wins a buyer's heart.*

The love affair between homebodies and pergolas began long ago. Earliest evidence traces back to a garden plan belonging to an Egyptian high court official around 1400 B.C. Initially, pergolas were perceived as elite structures reserved for the wealthy. In the mid-1600s, they were seen at European villas and majestic estates while, at the same time, in Eastern Asia, they were being treated to curved beams to match magnificent arched pagodas. During the Italian Renaissance, architects and garden designers upped the artistic aspect by using enormous and dramatic stone pillars.<sup>1</sup>

Today, these structures are in reach of most homeowners thanks to modern technology and materials. Although, for the most part, not as elaborate as their forerunners, present-day pergolas offer function and affordability at a time when "at-home" outdoor living is high on the list for homeowners and buyers.

A recent preference survey by the National Association of Home Builders and *Better Homes and Gardens* shows that, in 2016, homebuyers of all ages want storage, energy efficiency and outdoor space. What's more, emerging homebuyers





known as Millennials especially want outdoor living places to entertain family and friends.<sup>2</sup>

This excitement is not limited to emerging buyers nor is the trend new. In 2014, Saber Grills surveyed 1,500 homeowners to discover 83 percent say outdoor living space is their favorite part of the home. Interestingly, Saber Grills calls Baby Boomers “super relaxers”

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who consider outdoor amenities as major factors in home buying and who are also very engaged in making those amenities comfortable.<sup>3</sup>

Across all ages, then, home ownership is sparking a desire for outdoor living spaces, be it a pergola, deck, patio, porch, pool, outdoor kitchen, garden, stand-alone fountain, fire pit or barbecue. On the simplest level, pergolas are practical and relatively affordable. On a grander scale, they can tie together multiple outdoor structures, lend definition to landscaping and upgrade a home's aesthetics.

If popularity inspires options, it's understandable that pergola styles, sizes and materials seem endless these days. As with any home addition, though, preplanning is the difference between loving or regretting a finished project. The following are essential "preplanning pergola" considerations:

## Purpose

First, consider how the pergola will be used. Is it to shade a garden or passageway, cover a patio, extend entertainment space, tie together existing structures or, maybe, add a quiet spot for meditation or yoga? Will it need features like lighting and electricity?

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## Budget

Today, pergolas are made of everything from vinyl and fiberglass to varieties of wood. Construction options range from “do-it-yourself kits” found at home improvement stores, retailers and manufacturers, to skilled do-it-yourselfers building from scratch, to hiring a professional designer and/or architect and contractor. Costs, then, vary dramatically.

Writing for the website, Landscaping Network, North Coast Gardening owner,



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Genevieve Schmidt, said, "Installation of a small open-roof pergola made of inexpensive wood can be as little as \$3,000 while more elaborate pergolas with solid cedar or redwood beams and a solid roof can run \$15,000 or more, particularly if engineering and permits are involved." She adds that Dan Berger of LandPlan's Landscaping, Inc. in Pleasanton, California, cites costs ranging from \$3,000-30,000 with the higher end reflecting large structures with a solid roof.<sup>4</sup>



## Design

Typically, pergolas are square or rectangular with a slatted, latticed or solid roof supported by two or four beams. They require weather-resistant materials which are, most commonly, painted or stained cedar or redwood, and they can be free-standing or attached to a structure like a house or garage.

Optimum pergola size and design is best dictated by budget, anticipated use, sun patterns, landscaping, style and size of the home, property and any other outdoor structures. For example, a pergola that is 10 feet by 10 feet with at least an 8-foot ceiling height will comfortably accommodate two chairs and a small table. If the intention, then, is to entertain large gatherings and/or accommodate an outdoor kitchen, the project definitely calls for a bigger structure. Pergolas are adaptable to any width as long as they include the proper number of beams to support the roof.

Accessories are also important considerations. A simple garden or garage pergola is quite different from an elaborate dining/entertaining space with needs for lighting, electricity and climate control.

Lighting can be as simple as bulbs strung from an outside outlet or as





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complex as a mix of general, task, overhead and accent lighting. For safety's sake, all lighting or other electrical fittings in or near a pergola should be waterproofed to a rating of IP67 or better and, importantly, all electrical installations should be performed by a licensed electrician.<sup>5</sup>

Other possible pergola accessories include solar panels, misters, ceiling fans and heaters. Solar panels lend energy efficiency, while misters and ceiling fans (especially in Texas) provide comfort on hot days and nights. Free-standing or wall-mounted heaters serve warmth in colder times.<sup>6</sup>

When incorporating any accessory, it's important to hire experienced installers and licensed electricians. As an afterthought, accessories can be costly and time-consuming, so preplanning is critical. Pergolas are the answer to outdoor fun with the comforts of home. **NOW**

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An independent financial advisor since July 2015, Todd positioned Simmons Wealth Management as part of a larger group of advisors called 360 Wealth Management (an independent registered investment advisor), who are part of an even larger group of advisors registered with, and securities are offered through LPL Financial, Member FINRA/SIPC. "That

gives us many more investment opportunities to build a portfolio truly structured for the individual," Todd said.

Choosing quality in all he does, Todd inspires confidence and trust. "There are people counting on me on both sides of this deal," said Todd, pointing to his family pictures on the walls around him. Originally from Louisiana, Todd and his family moved to Mansfield in 2001. His wife, Rona, teaches school. Their children graduated from Mansfield High School. Alana, their daughter, is a nurse and a newlywed. Their son, Nolan, is an artist who recently graduated from Centenary College of Louisiana in Shreveport, where Todd earned his master's degree.

Todd looks at life as an opportunity to make long-term investments in people. While still in Louisiana, where he merged




his talents in customer service and accounting on behalf of the city of Shreveport, he served a two-year term as president of The Center for Families. Almost immediately after moving to Mansfield, Todd joined the Kiwanis Club and is the current president. He and Rona are active members of Walnut Ridge Baptist Church. And as a member of the Mansfield Chamber of Commerce, Todd is serving on its board of directors. In the past, he co-chaired the fundraising committee for Mansfield Methodist Hospital before it was built and recently had the pleasure of meeting the very first baby born at the hospital.

With faith in long-term results, Todd's passion for investing keeps him calm through crisis. Pointing to a copy of a 1987 *Fort Worth Star Telegram* front page sensationalizing the day the Dow plunged 500 points, Todd explained risks are inherent in every investment, including the loss of principal, and summarized: "Even though we have value fluctuations, if we're focusing on the goal as opposed to the value, then we may increase our chances for success."

He approaches his personal investing in a similar fashion. He focuses on researching investments to get a feel for how certain investments work. "I have to understand the investment before I recommend the investment for a client," Todd said.

After 15 years in the business, having managed clients through 9-11 and the financial crisis of 2008, all the while navigating rising and falling interest rate environments, Todd has strong capabilities as a financial advisor for small businesses and individuals. This time of year, Todd is making time for people considering how to fund their retirement. The window for funding IRAs closes April 18 for 2016.


"Small business owners can actually do what's called a SEP IRA and really make a larger contribution for tax purposes than they could with a traditional IRA," Todd explained. While each person's situation is different, and no strategy can guarantee success or protect against loss, Todd would be happy to help you determine which options might be appropriate for you. **NOW**




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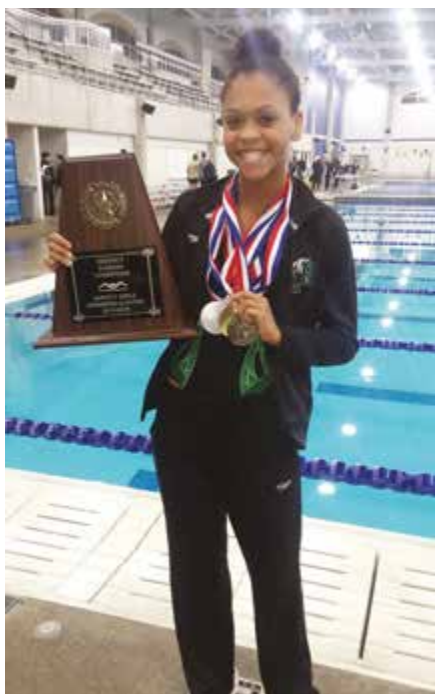
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*Frontier High School students London O'Connell, Sarah Tse, Melanie Do and Alana Lewis pose before presenting their web design project at the BPA State Competition in Corpus Christi.*



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*Deborah Skeete encourages her boss, Dr. Marcelle Petry, to take a whole food supplement instead of a piece of candy.*



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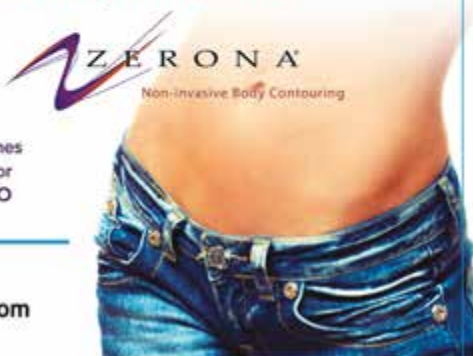
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# How Should You Respond to Market “Correction”?

As an investor, you may be gaining familiarity with the term “market correction.” But what does it mean? And, more importantly, what does it mean to you?

A correction occurs when a key index, such as the S&P 500, declines at least 10 percent from its previous high. A correction, by definition, is short-term in nature and has historically happened fairly regularly — about once a year. However, over the past several years, we’ve experienced fewer corrections, so when we have one now, it seems particularly jarring to investors.

How should you respond to a market correction? The answer may depend, to some extent, on your stage of life.

• **If you’re still working** — If you are in the early or middle parts of your working life, you might not have to concern yourself much about a market correction because you have decades to overcome a short-term downturn. Instead of selling stocks, and stock-based investments, to supposedly “cut your losses,” you may find that now is a good time to buy more shares of quality companies, while their price is down.

Also, you may want to use the opportunity of a correction to become aware of the need to periodically review and rebalance your portfolio. Stocks, and investments containing stocks, often perform well before a correction. If their price has risen greatly, they may account for a greater percentage of the total value of your portfolio — so much so, in fact, that you might become “overweighted” in stocks, relative to your goals, risk tolerance and time horizon. That’s why it’s important for you to proactively rebalance your portfolio — or, during a correction, the market may do it for you. To cite one aspect of rebalancing, if your portfolio ever does become too “stock-heavy,” you may need to add

some bonds or other fixed-rate vehicles. Not only can these investments help keep your portfolio in balance, but they also may hold up better during a correction.

• **If you’re retired** — After you retire, you may need to take money from your investment accounts — that is, sell some investments — to help pay for your cost of living. Ideally, however, you don’t want to sell stocks, or stock-based vehicles, during a correction because when you do, you may be “selling low.” (Remember the most common rule of investing: Buy low and sell high. It’s not always easy to follow, but it’s still pretty good advice.)

So, to avoid being forced into selling, you need to be prepared. During your retirement years, try to keep at least a year’s worth of cash instruments on hand as well as short-term fixed income investments. By having this money to draw on, you may be able to leave your stocks alone and give them a chance to recover, post-correction. And it’s important to maintain a reasonable percentage of stocks, and stock-based vehicles, in your portfolio, even during retirement because these investments may provide the growth necessary to help keep you ahead of inflation. Consequently, as a retiree, you should have a balance of stocks and stock-based vehicles, along with fixed-income vehicles, such as bonds, certificates of deposit, government securities and so on.

Being prepared can help you get through a correction — no matter where you are on life’s journey. **NOW**

*This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Shawn M. Malley is an Edward Jones representative based in Mansfield.*

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**All-Star Tryouts:**  
April 25th, 6 - 8 PM  
(For ALL current Cheer Texas members.)

**Open to the Public Tryouts:**  
May 14th  
9 AM - 1 PM  
\$25/per person  
• All ages  
• All levels

**Parents Night Out:**  
April 8th, 15th & 22nd  
6 - 10PM  
\$15/per child

**Back Handspring Clinic:**  
Sat. April 9th  
9 - 11AM  
\$35/per child

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### April 2

Bingo: 6:00-9:00 p.m., St. Thomas Hall, St. Jude Catholic Church, 500 E. Dallas St. Lots of good food and family fun. Call ahead: (817) 473-6709.

### April 9

Household Hazardous Waste Drop-off: 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Mansfield Environmental Collection Center, 616 S. Wisteria. Bring your hazardous wastes, electronics and recyclables along with proof of Mansfield residency. Contact David Macias, (817) 276-4239.

### April 6, 20

Happy Hour: 4:00-6:30 p.m., The Pavilion at Creekwood, 2100 Cannon Creek Dr. Socialize with people who care about enhancing the lives of everyone in our community while enjoying wines and cheeses selected for the season. RSVP to Emily Featheringill, (817) 779-6500.

### April 14

Spring SuperConnect: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Mansfield Chamber. This exclusive event encourages connections among professionals, membership associations and organizations in key industries. Just complete the registration form, and then The Mansfield Area Chamber of

Commerce facilitates the connections. Contact (817) 473-0507.

### April 22

Kiwanis Afternoon Clay Shoot: 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Alpine Shooting Range. Proceeds support the Stay Safe, Stay Sober Scholarship fund. For info, contact Wayne Simmons at (817) 239-4438 or waynermt@gmail.com.

### April 23

How2Grow Spring Living Festival: 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Katherine Rose Memorial Park, 303 N. Walnut Creek Dr.

### April 26

Beth Oakes Art Festival: 5:00-8:00 p.m., 3251 Ovilla Rd., Worship Center at ORBC. The event, hosted by Ovilla Christian School, is free. For more information or for details on submitted artwork, email Jami Navarro at jnavarro@ovillachristianschool.org.

### April 28

Mansfield Chamber Business Luncheon: 11:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Walnut Creek Country Club, 1151 Country Club Dr. \$30 for members; \$35 for non-members. RSVP to (817) 473-0507.

Pass in Review: 6:30-8:00 p.m., MISD Vernon Newsom Stadium, 3700 E. Broad St. The public is invited to this annual showcase of Mansfield school district's five JROTC units, on parade! Army and Air Force cadets in uniform will be inspected formally by reviewing officer Superintendent Dr. Jim Vaszauskas. (817) 299-6300 or jrotrcmansfield@misdmail.org.

### April 29

Mansfield Reads!: 6:00-8:00 p.m., Mansfield Public Library Community Room, 104 S. Wisteria. The Friends of the Mansfield Public Library hosts an evening with Amanda Eyre Ward, author of *The Same Sky*. Come for books, conversation and refreshments. mansfieldlibraryfriends@gmail.com.

### April 30

Sawyer Brown in Concert: 5:00-9:00 p.m., The LOT Downtown, 108 S. Main St., Mansfield. Mario Flores and the Soda Creek Band open for Sawyer Brown. Tickets \$45. www.thelotdowntown.com.

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



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## In the Kitchen With Kay Klenzendorf

— By Melissa Rawlins

With a mom who could make any meal taste delicious, Kay Klenzendorf and her sister cooked Sunday dinner for their family. Kay learned to always prepare enough to invite extra people to join the family at dinner. Operating by the same philosophy to help others, she volunteers with Common Ground Network, Feed the Kids, serving 265 students in 19 Mansfield ISD schools through the Weekend Backpack Ministry.

When not ensuring children in the community are eating, Kay is caring for her own family. Her children are grown, so she mainly cooks for her husband. “Thankfully, we have many family members in the Metroplex, so we have lots of family get-togethers,” Kay said. For these special occasions, she serves desserts like her grandchildren’s favorite Strawberry Cake. **NOW**

### Creamy Chicken Enchiladas

A *la Southern Living Magazine*.

- 2 Tbsp. butter
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 4.5-oz can green chilies
- 1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, cut up
- 3 1/2 cups cooked chicken breast, chopped
- 8 flour tortillas
- 1 16-oz. pkg. Four Cheese Mexican Cheese
- 2 cups whipping cream

1. Melt butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add onion and green chilies and sauté. Incorporate cream cheese and chicken, stirring constantly until cream cheese melts.
2. Spoon chicken filling into flour tortillas. Place in a greased 9x13-inch baking dish.
3. Sprinkle with cheese and drizzle with whipping cream. Bake at 350 F for 20 minutes. Remove from oven, cover with foil and bake for an additional 25 minutes.

### Corn Dip

- 1/2 lb. cheddar cheese, grated
- 1 15.5-oz. can white corn, drained
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 3/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1/2 medium onion, chopped
- 6-8 slices pickled jalapeño, chopped
- 1 10.25-oz. bag corn chips

1. Mix first 6 ingredients well and serve with corn chips. Double this for family cookouts.

### Sour Cream Coconut Cake

*Cake:*

- 1 16.5-oz. box Duncan Hines French Vanilla cake mix, without pudding
- 1 16-oz. container sour cream
- 3 eggs
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 15-oz. can cream of coconut
- 3/4 cup oil

*Icing:*

- 1 stick butter
- 1 lb. powdered sugar
- 1 8-oz. block cream cheese
- 1 tsp. vanilla

1. *For cake:* Mix all ingredients well. Pour into a large pan or 3 round cake pans. Bake at 325 F for 40 minutes.

2. *For icing:* Mix ingredients well. Let cake cool before icing.

### Strawberry Cake

*Cake:*

- 1 16.5-oz. box white cake mix
- 1 cup oil
- 4 eggs
- 1 6-oz. pkg. strawberry JELL-O
- 3 Tbsp. flour
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 15.5-oz. pkg. frozen, sliced strawberries (divided use)

*Frosting:*

- 1 16-oz. box powdered sugar
- 1 stick butter, softened

1. *For cake:* Mix all ingredients together, reserving half the strawberries for the frosting. Beat with a mixer for 2 minutes. Bake in a 9x13-inch Pyrex cake pan at 350 F for 30-40 minutes. Let cake cool 10 minutes before icing.

2. *For frosting:* While cake cools, beat half of the strawberries with the powdered sugar and butter. Once smooth, spread frosting on sides and top of cake.

### Green Bean Bundles

- 1 lb. bacon
- 1 cup butter, melted
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 tsp. garlic salt
- Dash soy sauce
- 3 14.5-oz. cans whole green beans

1. Cut each bacon strip in half lengthwise.
2. Mix together butter, sugar, garlic salt and soy sauce.
3. Wrap a bacon strip around 12 green beans, hold together with a toothpick. Repeat until all green beans are used. Pour sauce over bundles and marinate overnight.
4. Bake at 350 F for 30 minutes. If you prefer the bacon to be more done, simply cook longer or turn up the heat.



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