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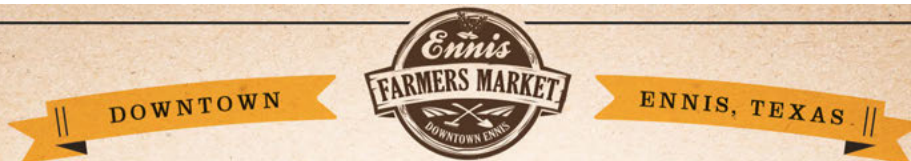
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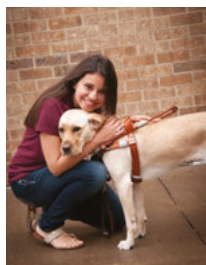
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Editor's Note

Adventures in reading!

Books have always had the ability to take me away. I'm not one who likes to fly anywhere, but words have allowed me to travel around the world many times since grade school. Those who know me best know I'm not a history buff, but give me a lengthy novel with edge-of-your-seat drama, and I'm all in. Some of my favorite reads lately have been written by local authors who know how to weave a tale. A yearning for more sets in as soon as the final page comes to an end.

The importance of reading is also something I've instilled in my grandkids over the years. I want them to learn to use their imaginations as they fly through the clouds on a magic carpet, have a backyard conversation with an orange Triceratops or feel how much they are loved based on characters they relate to in some of the books we enjoy on their regular visits to Granny's house.

Why not let a good book take you away, too?

Sandra

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HER OWN AGENDA

— By Sandra Strong

How many people can say their best friend is a four-legged, yellow Labrador Retriever named Honey? Only one. Lexi Rendon and Honey became fast friends when Lexi traveled to The Seeing Eye in Morristown, New Jersey, the summer of 2016. Lexi is legally blind, and Honey is her first Seeing Eye dog. "It was June 29. That was the day Honey and I were introduced," Lexi remembered. "It didn't take Honey's anxiety long to subside after our introduction."

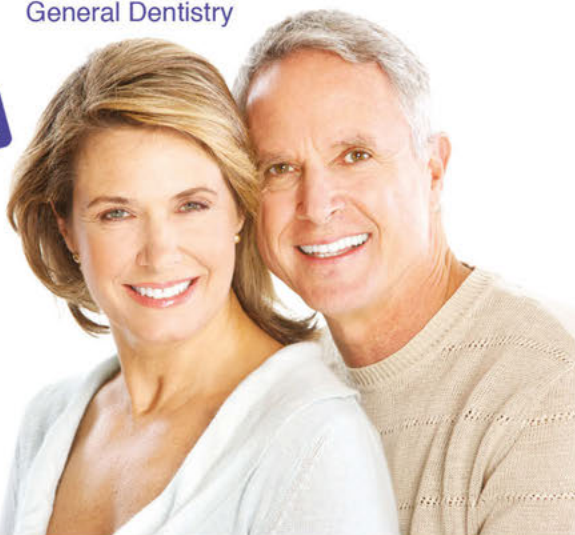
The pair trained in New Jersey from June 29 through July 21. The training was every day, all day. They kept a very tight schedule. Most of their morning sessions were held in downtown Morristown. "Honey was taught how to properly turn left and right with me by her side. As a couple, we learned about traffic, cars and people," Lexi explained. "Morristown is bigger than Ennis, but it wasn't a big city with a big city atmosphere."

The first two weeks of training consisted of learning basic commands. After that, Lexi and Honey were encouraged to take freelance trips geared



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to the life they would share once they arrived back in Ennis — a life that includes grocery shopping, eating out at restaurants and going to church, as well as attending minor league baseball games and regular CrossFit workouts. “We also took a full day and trained on the busy streets of Manhattan,” Lexi shared. “The first few minutes in the subway station were a bit overwhelming, but I quickly realized that everyone was going wherever it was they go. They weren’t worried about me and Honey. They had their own agenda.”

And Lexi now has her own agenda — an agenda that will cause her to spread her wings and fly with Honey by her side. As an EHS student, Lexi became a member of the National Honor Society her sophomore year, is the senior class reporter and is currently the “weather girl” for the EHS pre-filmed newscast. After graduating next month, Lexi will leave home in mid-August to attend college full time at Texas Tech University. Her focus will be on human development and family studies. “Before bringing Honey to school that first day, I explained the rules and regulations etiquette associated with a Seeing Eye dog,” Lexi said. “Signs were posted around the school as reminders not to pet Honey while she was working. I made a promise that on the last day of school I’d take Honey off her leash and let her go.” Lexi intends to keep that promise. She knows it will be good for her classmates, but equally as good for Honey, who will also be graduating in cap and gown with the class of 2017. Honey has a yearbook photo to prove it!

As she looks forward to embarking on a life outside Ennis with Honey, Lexi’s parents, Alex and Dena Rendon, will release their daughter to the world with bittersweet encouragement. “I am a bit anxious,” Dena said, “but I’m so proud

of who she's become. She's always been motivated and eager to do things for herself. She's ready to spread her wings."

"We're typical parents when it comes to the next chapter in life for all three of our children, but especially Lexi," Alex explained. "When you throw disabled in, that takes the anxiety up another notch. I'd much rather her be ready to go than to be clinging to family. Her disability gave her determination."

Lexi was labelled disabled at a very young age. She was 6 weeks old when her dad noticed a haze in her eyes. When he brought it to Dena's attention, she noticed it, too. After seeing the family's local optometrist, they were sent to Dallas to a specialist that same day, just one full week following Thanksgiving 1998. "That day, we learned that it's not good to have more than one doctor in the room at a time," Alex admitted. "We skipped school the next day. We were told news that no parent wants to hear. Lexi was diagnosed with retinoblastoma — bilateral cancerous tumors in both eyes."

That weekend, Alex and Dena faced their fears as they questioned God and cried until they could cry no more. That emotional weekend gave them strength to take the journey to the Texas Retina Institute where the earlier diagnosis was confirmed. "I asked the doctor how he would proceed if Lexi was his granddaughter," Alex recalled. "We ended up going to the Wills Eye Hospital in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania." Her left eye was removed, thus saving her life. They saved the right eye with cold and hot treatments and chemotherapy, but her vision today in that eye is 20/400. Three years later, after monthly visits to Philadelphia, Lexi was released back to the doctor in Dallas who originally diagnosed her.



Classmates Bethany Spaniel, Ashley Slovacek and Gwen Lefler stand beside Lexi Rendon and Honey in their high school journey.



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“Lexi’s lack of vision has never held her back,” Dena stated. “When she and Honey leave for college, their story will really just be beginning.”

“Disabled” is not a word in Lexi’s vocabulary. Others may label her that way, but that has never been the way she’s seen herself. “I’ve never liked that word. All it means to me is closing off opportunities,” she said. “I just work differently to get the same result.” Lexi has always worked hard for those things that mean the most to her. She looks at life like one big challenge. “We all have at least one thing in life we need to overcome,” Lexi said. “I’m an overcomer!”

As a family, Lexi, her parents and her brothers, Logan and Reece, stay fit and healthy, participating in CrossFit. Although the box jumps are hard, they don’t stop Lexi from excelling. “You don’t need vision to stay healthy,” she said. “It’s a one-size-fits-all sport.”

Lexi and Honey are also very active in their church, The Avenue Church, Ennis Campus. She teaches the 4-year-olds in KIDZ Avenue. “I had to explain the rules about Honey, but at the end of each class, I remove her harness so the kids can pet her. If 4-year-olds can get it, why can’t others? I don’t mind the questions, but ‘drive-by petting’ is not cool.”

Since she plans on living in a big city after college graduation, Lexi feels that training in a big city was a huge plus. “I will be able to move about and have more independence in a big city.”

As Lexi looks forward to the future, she can’t help but reminisce about the journey thus far. Like most teenagers, she cracks jokes about not being able to see. She wouldn’t change a thing about her life. “I don’t have any regrets because it’s all I’ve ever known,” she admitted. “Being legally blind will never be the end of the world for me.” **NOW**

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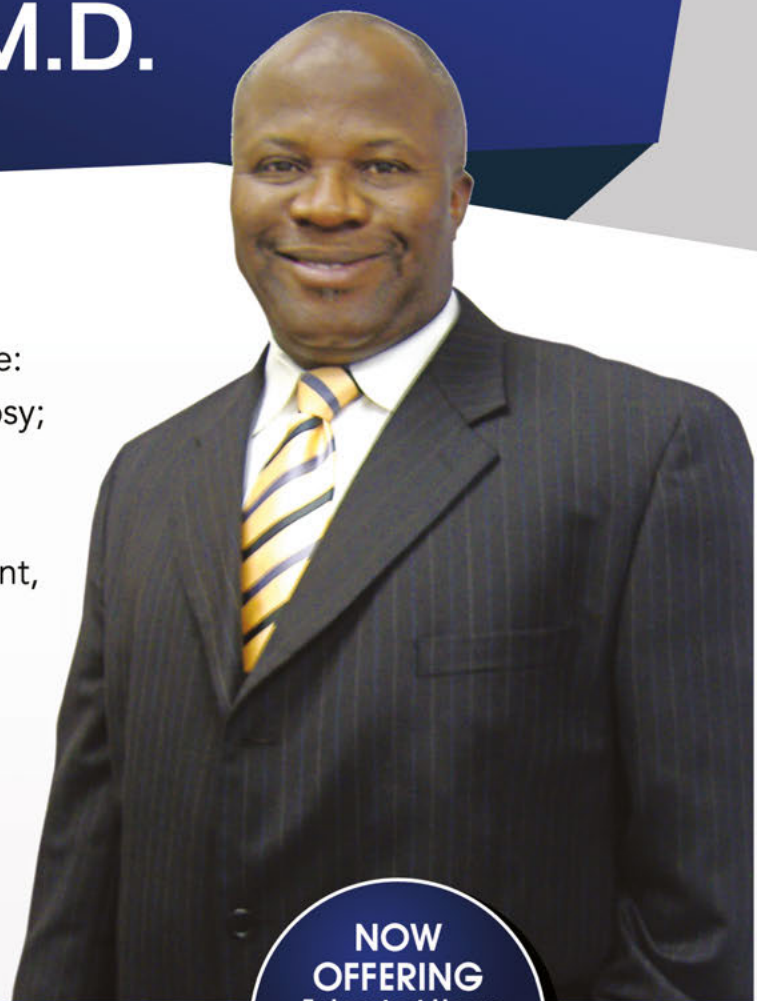


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Called to Educate

— By Virginia Riddle



Accountability has become a big word in Ruby Casillas' educational world, but she has always felt responsible for creating a classroom experience in which her students thrive and learn. "All children can learn. It's up to the teacher to find a way to make learning happen," she explained. "So many ideas come through my head. I've got a lot of tricks in my bag, and I believe in using them all."

It was early in her life when she called Victoria, Texas, home that Mrs. Casillas knew she wanted to teach. "In the third grade, I was a library helper. I must have been dependable because I ran the errands, and I was already reading to the first- and second-graders who visited the library," she remembered. By her middle school days, Mrs. Casillas was teaching catechism at church, and as a high school junior and senior, she taught adult education and ESL through the Victoria Literacy Council. "When I was



growing up, I was the first person in my family who wanted to go into education, but now there are many educators in my family," she said.

She attended Victoria Junior College and was president of Texas Student Education Association. Next, Mrs. Casillas earned her teaching degree at Stephen F. Austin State University along with her husband, Candido Casillas, now an EISD trustee. Following her graduation, she taught for a semester in Victoria ISD, and then the couple married that June and moved to Henderson, Texas, where he taught biology and chemistry courses, and she taught secondary English and Spanish

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courses for three years. It was while Mr. Casillas was working on his master's degree that he was recruited by the then Ennis ISD superintendent to teach chemistry and physics, and the couple moved to Ennis. Though Mr. Casillas eventually went into private industry and is now a retired chemical engineer, Mrs. Casillas continued her teaching career and earned her master's degree from East Texas State University (now Texas A&M University-Commerce).

The adoption of the couple's baby daughter, Cassandra, after the couple had been married for 14 years, was important enough to take Mrs. Casillas from her classroom for two years. "Ennis was a good place for Cassie to grow up," Mrs. Casillas said. Cassie met her husband, Ben Smith, while she was serving in the Peace Corps. They live in Australia, Ben's native country, and have a son and daughter. "We FaceTime every day, and this grandma has flown to Australia three times," Mrs. Casillas said.

During her 44 years of serving on the Austin Elementary faculty, Mrs. Casillas has gone through the renovation of the school, worked with four superintendents, four principals, many faculty members and taught several generations of Ennis' youth. "I just love teaching here that much. When someone wonders when or what has happened at Austin Elementary, they usually come to see me. At Austin Elementary, we are a family — a community that's there to educate the children. Parents like that."

Austin Elementary Principal Bobby White remarked, "So many children taught by Mrs. Casillas have grown up to be parents with their own kids in her class. Her experience in education and her dedication are huge assets to Austin Elementary."

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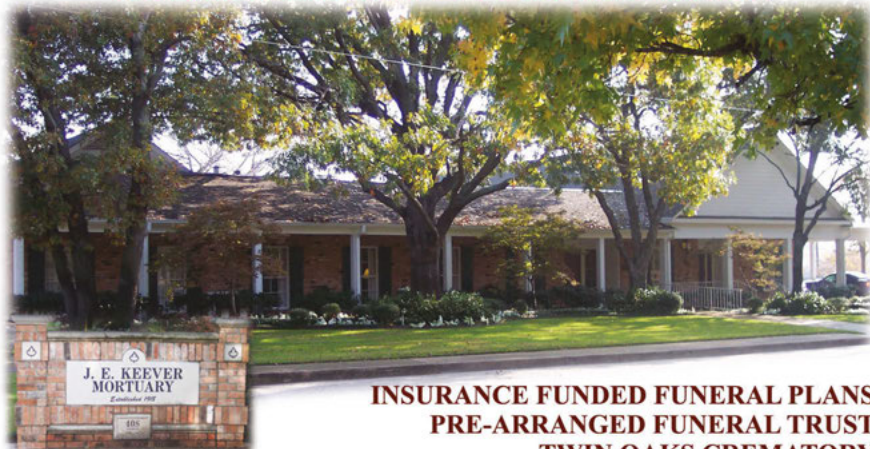


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as a reading specialist, Mrs. Casillas teaches approximately 57 students in first through second grades in a pull-out reading and writing program. "My students are usually not ready emotionally or academically to be successful, so I work to get them up to grade level," she explained. "When we prepare for STARR testing, I also work with third-graders. I'm very lucky to have a paraprofessional this year. We have five-six students at a time. She works with half of them on word work for 15 minutes, while I work with the others on writing and reading, fluency and comprehension. Then we switch students for 15 more minutes. I feel that I'm reaching the students that I was always meant to teach."

As the saying goes, reading is fundamental. "Students must have reading comprehension skills before they can write. Reading and writing are very important skills. That's just thinking and being able to express thoughts. My students need our small groupings and individualized attention," Mrs. Casillas stated. "I love to read, so when my students read silently, I read silently. I model writing, too. My reward is when students feel comfortable in my classroom, and a child's light for learning comes on. If my students read, they can do anything, can develop a lifelong love of learning and be successful in life." Over the years, Mrs. Casillas sees former students around Ennis and stays in touch with others — all of whom have achieved success. "That's when I see that I've made a difference," she said.

The district's Reading Intervention Program, in which Mrs. Casillas teaches, has offered her many challenges. "I like challenges and showing children, through pre- and post-testing, that they have the ability to learn but learning requires work on their part, too. I've taught selective mute and autistic children. I didn't know

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much about autism. My first autistic student was brilliant but had behavior issues. I wish I had known more at that time about autism, but we as teachers do the best we can for children,” she said.

She holds professional memberships in Delta Kappa Gamma Society International's Alpha Alpha Chapter, International Reading Association, Austin Elementary PTO, Texas State Teachers Association (life member) and the Ennis Retired Teachers Association. Mrs. Casillas was selected by fellow teachers to serve on the Superintendent's Committee and has been selected as Teacher of the Year several times. She volunteers through her church, St. John Nepomucene Catholic Church and Catholic Daughters of America.

As this school year, Mrs. Casillas' 48th year to teach, begins to close, she reflects on the many changes in education that have occurred in her career. “EISD is very progressive concerning technology and training. We have what we need, and the district really cares about its personnel. Techniques have changed. We've gone from learning to read through sight words to phonics and now back to sight words,” she explained.

And this teacher isn't thinking about leaving the classroom just yet. Mrs. Casillas stated, “Teaching is very important to me, and as long as I'm effective, I'll keep teaching. Every student needs encouragement. I'll do whatever it takes for my students to be successful.” **NOW**

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Saturday, April 8

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9:00am - 6:00pm: Wine Wander, Arts & Crafts

10:00am - 2:00pm: Antique Motorcycle Club of America Exhibition

10:00am: E-Flat Porch Band

12:30pm: The Purple Hulls

3:00pm: Acoustic Sound Hounds

4:00pm: Quebe Sisters

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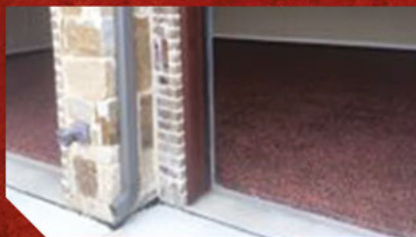


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At Home With Brent and Rylee Nelson

— THE — Legacy Continues

— By Jill Martinez

Brent and Rylee Nelson have been friends for most of their lives. Their families went to church together, and they often moved in the same circles. In a small community like Telico, that's easy to do. It seemed only fitting that this couple begin their married lives in this little hamlet, also.





In July 2016, their vows were made at the Telico Gin, a cotton gin which is now an event venue. "The gin is close to Brent's family home. We loved being able to get married there," Rylee said.

The ring Brent slipped onto Rylee's finger that day is a family heirloom dating back to 1886 when it was given to Rylee's great-great-grandmother. She passed it down for any woman in the family to use as the "something old" item for their nuptial ceremonies. Five generations have worn it so far. "Five days after our wedding, the ring turned 130 years old," Rylee shared.

Close proximity to their families was an influencing factor when the couple selected their home, which is located only a mile or so away from both their families. "Brent actually worked on the electrical in this house when it was being renovated," Rylee said. He snapped it up when it became available.

The tan exterior of their little abode is neat and tidy, but it's the inside that truly captivates. The 850-square-foot country cottage provides an intimate setting for the couple. "Originally, the house only had one bedroom and one bath, in addition to the common areas. When it was renovated, another bedroom was added on," Rylee explained.

The living room is nothing less than charming. Floor-length turquoise and white window coverings provide an inviting backdrop for an espresso-colored sofa and loveseat, a wonderful place for hubby and wife to chat and enjoy a cup of Joe. A cluster of eclectic crosses, symbols of the couple's deep faith, and other wooden furniture pieces complete the room. The Nelsons use a buffet cabinet, which once belonged to a distant family member, as a TV stand and storage unit. Signs of its age augment its beauty, and the distressed look enriches

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Rylee's decorating style. In fact, Rylee has made several of her knickknacks. She enjoys repurposing old items as a hobby. One such item, which reflects her creative style, is the wooden plaque used in their wedding, crafted by Terri Bowling, a close family friend. In place of a unity candle, the couple braided the cord that is now displayed.



The kitchen and dining area complement the living room as the wood laminate flooring, white shiplap ceiling and gray walls continue into these areas. A lovely round oak table and four high-back chairs serve the couple at mealtimes. Because the dining set belonged to Brent's recently deceased grandmother, it is very special to him. "I remember sitting around the table as a kid and playing UNO and Yahtzee with my grandma. I also loved listening to her tell me about what she read in her morning Bible study. It's so nice to have a piece of furniture that reminds me of all of her good memories," Brent said. Nostalgic

images of Brent and Rylee's courtship and wedding are displayed in a trilogy of black frames on a wall behind the table.

The kitchen sports a stainless-steel oven and microwave. The countertop, stretching the length of the kitchen, has black, white and gray flecks, which harmonize with the wall color. Rylee, a



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recent Starbucks barista, has a love affair with coffee. As a result, she reserves a corner of precious counter space for her Keurig coffee maker and accessories. There is ample cabinet space in which to store cookware and pantry items. When Rylee cooks for her sweetheart, she enjoys using her Pioneer Woman crockery, which she received as wedding gifts. When not in use, she stores them in a freestanding, turquoise cabinet.

The master bedroom was designed to encourage rest and relaxation. Daylight is muted by turquoise curtain panels, and soft light from lamps and candles creates a peaceful atmosphere. A white pinch-pleated comforter covers the bed, while an iron headboard, distressed with turquoise paint, adds a pop of color. "This used to be my great-uncle's footboard," Rylee added. Little indications of the Nelsons' love for each other can be seen all over the room, but the pillow cases just might be the most creative. The white shams display sweet phrases in black lettering: *hello handsome* and *morning gorgeous*.

Unique pieces round out the room. Wooden end tables display an elephant lamp possessing an East Asian aura. A full-length mirror framed in dark wood stands on the floor, its reflections giving the room a larger appearance. A dated five-drawer dresser, revived by turquoise and white paint, holds items not stored in the walk-in closet.

The restroom, which doubles as the laundry, lies just outside the master bedroom. Because the couple's favorite place to be is on the beach, the room has been decorated in a nautical style. Seashells, a boat picture frame and an anchor are just a few of the thematic items found there.

The second bedroom in the house has been set up as Brent's man cave. "It's nice

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to have a manly space where I can relax and unwind and keep all of my toys. I like to sit down at my computer and edit video footage for my YouTube channel,” Brent said. Brent’s love for motorcycles, which began in his childhood, is reflected in a painting hanging above the desk and in various helmets which adorn it. A tall, wooden armoire, hand-built by a friend and given as a wedding gift, functions as storage and displays various items Brent holds dear.

Soon after their marriage, the Nelsons acquired their first fur baby, Moxie. She has the friendliness of a Golden Retriever and the energy of a Red Heeler, representing the breeds of which she is mixed. Moxie is the couple’s pride and joy. She enjoys hanging out with the Nelsons in the backyard. A round, wooden bar table and two stools give the couple a place to relax on the porch while Moxie plays. Brent has set up TIKI torches and strung lights around the yard to provide illumination in the evening. Sometimes this little family enjoys sitting in front of the fire pit, taking in all the sounds of nature after a long day. “I love sitting outside soaking up this view we have — the horses, the cows and the fields. It’s so peaceful,” Rylee admitted.



As the Nelsons continue on their marital adventure, they aim to create the type of family that was modeled for them — one built on faith, hope and love. These intangible things have intertwined with new and antiquated possessions to make their house a home. **NOW**

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Jay, Kathy, Jerol and Connor Roberts represent the second and third generations offering an auto-recycling yard that deals in automobiles and light trucks only.



THREE GENERATIONS AND COUNTING

Ennis Auto Recyclers, Inc. recognizes the importance of keeping the environment safe and sound.

— By Sandra Strong

Ennis Auto Recyclers, Inc., conveniently located 1 mile south of Highway 34 just off the Highway 287 Bypass, is in their 40th year of service to the Ennis community and its surrounding areas. What started with the late Byron Roberts in 1977 has grown into a family-owned business with Byron's son, Jay Roberts, serving as the company's current owner and general manager. "My dad started in the auto-salvage business in Dallas," Jay remembered. "He didn't start up here until the late '70s."

As Jay reminisced about the years gone by, he remembered working for his dad after graduating from DeSoto High School and, also, following his two years at The University of Texas at Arlington. In 1987, Jay and Kathy were married. They didn't buy the company until 1990. "The company started in 1977, but

it didn't become what I'd call a full-blown company until 1978," Jay explained. "And the business has certainly changed over the years."

In the '70s and '80s, the inventory system in place at Ennis Auto Recyclers, Inc. was either done by memory or with the use of a manual inventory card file. In the late '80s, prior to purchasing the business, Jay talked his dad into buying a computerized inventory system. "We know exactly what inventory we have in stock," Jay explained. "We operate with a much more accurate inventory now." The Internet has allowed Ennis Auto Recyclers, Inc. to be nationwide distributors of recycled auto parts. "We ship to customers in Pennsylvania, New York and California," Jay said. "When we can ship, we do."

April is the month in which Earth Day is celebrated. Ennis Auto Recyclers, Inc. recognizes daily the importance of keeping the environment safe and sound. "Recycling is a big part of what we do and what we are about," Jay stated. "We reuse automobiles." Jay and his crew also properly dispose of car batteries, waste oil and tires. "We are very proactive about the proper disposal of all items. If it's important to the environment, then it's just as important to us."

An auto-recycling yard is a place where customers can come to find the part they are searching for, whether it be for a newer model car or an older model pickup truck. The "J" word — junkyard — isn't used to describe Ennis Auto Recyclers, Inc. "We are not a junkyard," Jay stated. "We are an auto-recycling yard that deals in automobiles and light trucks only."

Randy Yarbrough and Richard Koop are two long-term employees who are a testament to the work ethic and atmosphere provided at Ennis Auto Recyclers, Inc. Randy has been in sales for 11 years, while Richard has served as a driver and delivery person for the past 11-plus years. Until his passing in 2007, Byron worked alongside his son, Jay.

Jerol and Connor, Jay's two sons, also work full time in the family business. "They are the future of the business," Jay admitted, "and a third-generation business is almost unheard of today." Connor and his wife, Faith, have a son, Reed, who one day could possibly be the fourth generation.

Ennis Auto Recyclers, Inc. offers a definite alternative to new OEM parts at a more cost-friendly price. Jay is proud of what they've accomplished in the past 40 years. He feels they are a much-needed business because, realistically, "all cars run on used parts. Could you imagine the country without an auto-recycling company?" Jay asked. "How many abandoned, broken and inoperable cars would there be along the roadways?"

Jay is accessible to his customers. He learned the importance of this business trait from his dad. "I'm a hands-on owner," he said, "and I wouldn't have it any other way." **NOW**

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Easton McIntosh and The Cat in the Hat are all thumbs up during the Ellis County Expo held at the Waxahachie Civic Center.



Musician Jesse Jennings performs for downtown merchant visitors.



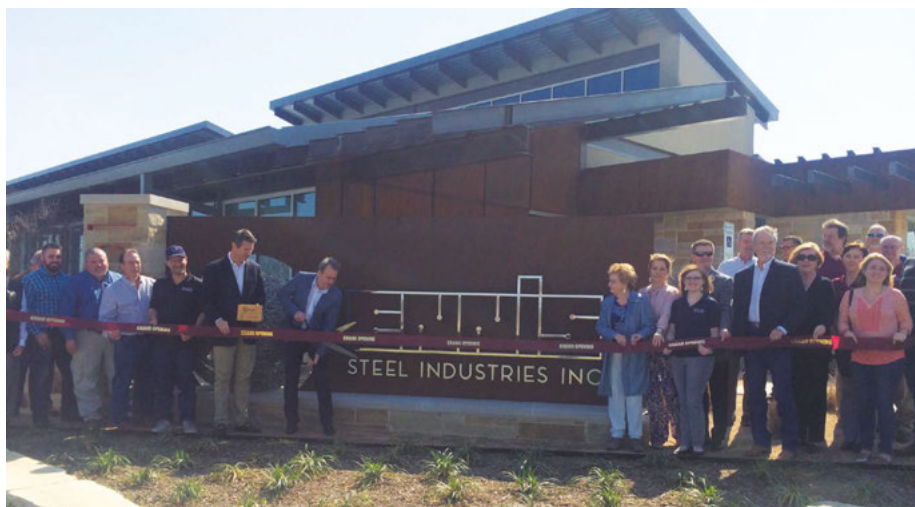
Megan Lewis and Heather Cherie greet visitors at their new business, Your Spirit Sparkle.



EISD head softball coach Glenn Banker addresses the Ennis Noon Lions Club while Ronny Doud looks on.



Ashley Colunga poses with her children, Brox and Lowe, recently on a beautiful Saturday here in Ennis.



The Chamber of Commerce holds a ribbon cutting and open house for Ennis Steel's new building.

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When You Retire, Where Can You Find Investment Income?

As an investor, your main goals will change at different times in your life. During your working years, you need to grow as many resources as possible for retirement. Once you retire, however, you will likely need to focus more on getting income from your investments. But what are your options?

There's no shortage of income-producing investments, of course. You might immediately think of bonds, which can provide regular interest payments and probable preservation of principal, provided the bonds are considered "investment grade." Still, if interest rates are low when you retire — as they have been for several years now — bonds might not provide you with as much income as you need. And just as importantly, the income you receive from most bonds won't rise over time, leaving you susceptible to inflation and the loss of purchasing power.

Consequently, you may also need to explore other types of income-generating vehicles, including dividend-paying stocks and real estate investment trusts (REITs).

Some stocks have not only paid but also increased their dividends for many consecutive years. These stocks have historically provided the potential for rising income to help combat inflation and are typically well-run companies that strive to reward their investors. Nonetheless, you need to recognize that even these stocks are not obligated to pay you dividends, and they are free to lower or discontinue them at any time without notice.

Now, let's turn to a second type of potential income-producing asset: Real estate investment trusts (REITs). Different types of REITs are available. For example, equity REITs invest in and own commercial properties, such as hotels and shopping centers, while mortgage REITs, as the name suggests, own and invest in property mortgages. Is one form of REIT better than

another? There's no simple answer. On the one hand, mortgage REITs are considered riskier than equity REITs. However, mortgage REITs often pay quite large dividends, although the payout can be inconsistent. (Like all REITs, mortgage REITs must pay 90 percent of their taxable income to investors in the form of dividends. Due to this requirement, REITs generally need to raise capital to finance their growth plans, and this necessity can affect their share prices.)

Other factors, such as changing interest rates, will affect the value of mortgage and equity REITs differently. Specifically, rising interest rates will likely cause the market value of the property mortgages inside mortgage REITs to fall, whereas equity REITs, which own actual buildings, might actually benefit if the Federal Reserve raises interest rates, as such a move would indicate a strong economy, more jobs and greater demand for office space. In the short term, though, even equity REITs can react negatively to an interest-rate increase. But over the long term, this movement can be offset by the benefits of earnings and dividend growth driven by a growing economy.

Clearly, there's much to think about when considering potential income-producing options such as bonds, dividend-paying stocks and REITs. Ultimately, you will need to weigh the merits and risks of these investments — including interest rate risk, credit risk and market risk — and determine which of them, or which combination of them, are most appropriate for your needs. **NOW**

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

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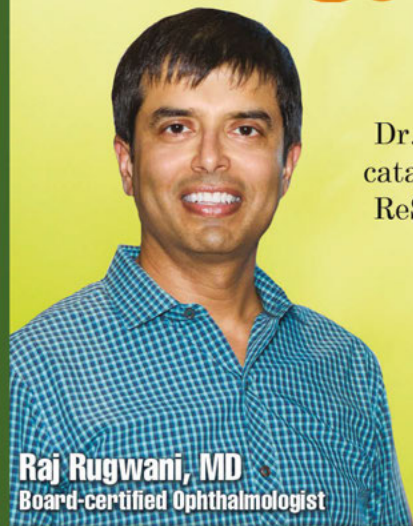
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Through April

Ennis Bluebonnet Trails: For more information, visit www.bluebonnettrail.org.

April — October

Ennis Farmers Market: 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., **Saturdays**, historic downtown Ennis.

Through April 11

AARP Tax Assistance: 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., **Tuesdays** only, Ennis Public Library, 501 W. Ennis Ave. Call the library at (972) 875-5360 for additional information on what documents to bring.

April 7 — 9

Ennis Bluebonnet Trails Festival: For more details, visit www.bluebonnettrail.org.

April 22

Kelly Boston Give & Grow Scholarship Benefit: 4:30-11:00 p.m., Sokol Hall, 2622 E. Hwy. 34. Admission: Adults \$10, children 12 and under are free. Barbecue plates will be available from 5:30-8:30 p.m. for \$10 for adults and \$6 for children. The event will also include live and silent auctions, 50/50 raffle and live music by Jesse Jennings Band and Out of the Box dance band. For more information, contact Penny Boston at (214) 354-6656,

Caleb Skrivanek at (972) 921-2697 or Matthew Zajic at (214) 801-8908.

April 22 — 29

Derrick Days Celebration: Times, dates and locations vary. Corsicana celebrates its heritage for one week of fun and exciting events. For further information, visit www.derrickdays.com.

April 28 — May 13

Snow White. Theatre Rocks! Visit www.TheatreRocks.com for more information.

April 29

Relay For Life: Veterans Memorial Park. For more details, visit www.main.acsevents.org.

Ongoing:

Mondays

Acrylic Painting Class: 4:00-6:00 p.m., Interior Ideas, 211 W. Knox St. Classes offered by Jana Jennings. \$75 (one time only) supply fee for the year, plus \$15 per class. For more information, call (972) 878-6868.

First Wednesdays

Bluebonnet Patches Quilt Guild meeting: 9:30 a.m., First Presbyterian Church, 210

N. McKinney. Contact Judy Wensowitch at (972) 921-8800 or Diana Buckley at SeldomSeenQuilting@gmail.com for more information.

Fourth Thursdays

MACS: 6:00 p.m., Tabernacle Baptist Church Life Center. Evening includes a covered dish meal and a program of singing or informational message.

Saturdays

Farmers Market: 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., 100 N. Dallas St.

Fourth Saturdays

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

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In the Kitchen With Coleta Wilkerson

— *By Virginia Riddle*

A love of home cooking and the joy of experiencing a healthier fare are Coleta Wilkerson's motivating factors to cook. "Less processed food is healthier, but so few people actually eat home-cooked meals because of our fast-paced lives. To provide a home-cooked meal to someone instead of a gift card to a restaurant is a gift of self," Coleta said. "I like to sauté food and use less salt." Cinnamon and cilantro are favorite ingredients.

As a small child in Ennis, Coleta learned to cook family favorites including chocolate pie. This licensed social worker and permanent substitute teacher at Travis Elementary School enjoys keeping in touch with friends she met during her 32 years as a spouse in the U.S. Air Force. **NOW**

Nora's Chocolate Pecan Pie

Pie filling:

- 1 9-inch deep-dish pie crust**
- 1 1/2 cups sugar**
- 4 Tbsp. cocoa**
- 4 Tbsp. flour**
- 2 cups milk**
- 4 eggs yolks, reserve whites for meringue**
- 1 cup pecans, chopped**
- 1 1/2 tsp. vanilla**

Meringue:

- 4 egg whites**
- 1/2 to 3/4 cup sugar**
- 1/4 tsp. cream of tartar**
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla**

1. For pie filling: Bake pie crust according to

package instructions; set aside.

- 2.** Combine sugar, cocoa and flour; heat milk long enough to remove chill.
- 3.** Combine milk and egg yolks; add dry ingredients; mix well.
- 4.** Cook over low heat until mixture thickens while stirring constantly; add pecans and vanilla.
- 5. For meringue:** In a glass bowl, beat egg whites until soft peaks form.
- 6.** Gradually add sugar; add cream of tartar and vanilla.
- 7.** Pour filling mixture into pie crust; top with meringue; bake at 350 F until meringue peaks brown.

Baked Chicken

- 1 7-oz. pkg. corn beef, thinly sliced**
- 6 chicken breasts, halved**
- 1 slice bacon for each halved chicken breast**

Toothpicks

- 1 10.5-oz. can cream of mushroom soup**
- 1 10.75-oz. can cream of chicken soup**
- 1 8-oz. tub sour cream**

- 1.** Place 1 slice of corn beef on each halved chicken breast.
- 2.** Roll up the chicken breast; wrap bacon around the roll; secure with a toothpick; place in a baking dish.
- 3.** Mix the soups and sour cream together; pour mixture over the chicken rolls; bake 3 hours at 250 F.

Chicken Salad

- 3 cups chicken, cooked and diced**
- 1/2 cup celery, diced**
- 2 Tbsp. fresh parsley**
- 1 tsp. salt**
- 1 cup mayonnaise**
- 2 Tbsp. lemon juice**
- 1/2 cup slivered almonds**
- 1/2 cup heavy whipping cream**

- 1.** Mix well all ingredients except whipping cream; chill.
- 2.** Just before serving, stir in whipping cream.

Pineapple Cheese Casserole

- 1/2 cup sugar**
- 1/2 cup flour**
- 2 20-oz. cans pineapple tidbits, drained**
- 1 cup mild cheddar cheese, grated**
- 1 sleeve RITZ crackers, crushed**
- 1 stick butter/margarine, melted**

- 1.** Mix sugar and flour together.
- 2.** In a 7x11-inch dish, layer pineapple, sugar/flour mixture, cheese and crackers; pour butter on top.
- 3.** Bake 20 minutes at 350 F.

Marinated Green Bean Salad

- 1/3 cup oil**
- 1/3 cup apple cider vinegar**
- 2/3 cup sugar**
- 2 14.5-oz. cans French cut green beans, drained**

- 1.** Bring oil, vinegar and sugar to boil for 2 minutes; put green beans in a sealable container.
- 2.** Pour oil mixture over beans; mix well.
- 3.** Seal container; set in refrigerator; let marinate at least 8 hours.

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