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Burleson NOW

M A G A Z I N E

May 2008

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Run to State**

**Anything
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**Where
Character
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**The Power of
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Editor's Note

Dear Readers,

We all have someone on whom we depend. In this issue, you will read about people devoted to encouraging and helping their families and communities.

Six women at Turning Point Wellness Center pooled their talents to be of service, and tell their story for your inspiration. Mary Lynn McClendon, with the help of her husband, Dan, literally laid down her life for her family, while Marla Bennet and her team of teachers set the example for the fifth-graders at Nola Dunn Elementary to give back to their community.

Do not miss Jerry Watts, a self-taught freehand artist, whose story might inspire you to pull out a pencil and pad! Katie Hoaldrige, a Burleson High School track star tells how she keeps her focus. Wayne and Anne English welcome us into their home this month, and the close-knit folks at Christ Journey Church prepare meals for families in need of comfort food.

Happy Mother's Day to all the mothers of Burleson!

Melissa Rawlins
BurlesonNOW Editor

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— By Alex Allred

Mary Lynn McClendon speaks and understands a language that few can. While it is English in origin, it is a language so complicated, so very convoluted that only a super mom could decipher its meaning. It is an understanding that came with time, persistence and a kind of love that movies are made of, but it is also a devotion that required the once shy, quiet Mary, so refined and ladylike, to stand up and speak out. That language is the language of her autistic son, Austin.

Truly, Mary is a strong woman who daily redefines the unbridled strength and courage of a loving mother. Qualities such as these are what led to the establishment of Mother's Day early in the 20th century.

When Anna Jarvis held a memorial in 1907, following the death of her mother, Ann Marie Reeves Jarvis, Anna hoped to establish an official day to recognize all mothers. Her mother had been a social activist and organizer

during and after the Civil War, encouraging women to become more active in the political arena and with the health and welfare of injured soldiers. Young Anna followed in her footsteps, continuing her mother's good works and carrying the banner for all mothers. By 1914, she got her wish when Mother's Day was officially recognized.

For Mary, however, she had never given much thought to this day beyond receiving candy and cards. Her life had been relatively easy. She was not particularly active in politics. Instead, she enjoyed time socializing with her friends and being physically active. While her husband, Dan, worked as a contractor for his own construction company, Mary stayed at home with their boys, Jack, now 12, and Cole, 11. Theirs was a busy, active, happy home that also included Dan's grown daughter, Angela.

When Mary went into labor with their third son, Austin, things quickly changed. "There were complications at

birth," Mary said. Austin was literally born black and blue. Shortly after birth, he was diagnosed with Lebers Congenital Amauroses, a condition that affects newborns and/or very young children with profound vision loss. There was also a concern that he had infantile autism or, Mary added, "He was just sick. We didn't know if his immune system was shot. It was hard to know."

At the age of 2 months, Austin had a doctor's appointment that marked a change in his development. Almost immediately, "he had an adverse reaction to the vaccines." Mary and Dan both noted the change. "His eyes were jumping," they said. His behavior began to change and in the months to come, a series of ongoing tests were conducted. Austin appeared to have good days and bad days, but when he was just over a year old, he just stopped eating. "The only thing we could get him to eat was vanilla custard," Mary said. "Vanilla custard and pretzels.



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That was it." At 20 months, he was on the decline.

With his autism came many ticks. He could not and would not eat anything with a temperature too warm or too cool. He stopped sleeping for any extended periods of time and because of a rare disorder called pica, an eating disorder in which young people eat non-food items, such as



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window moldings or wood, Austin had to be watched around the clock. "So that Dan and the boys could sleep, I would literally drive around at night to keep him quiet," Mary recalled. Police would routinely stop by Mary's parked car to see what she was doing at 2 or 4 a.m. "By the age of 2, whatever language skills he had were gone," she said. "He was going downhill, but therapists were tentative about giving any kind of diagnoses because he [Austin] didn't fit the mold."

A highly intelligent and curious boy, Austin was not easily defined by any medical descriptions. At times he showed signs of social awareness and coherency, humming tunes and producing a vocabulary of almost 40 words. Other times, he slipped backwards, barely making a noise. Periodically, the subject of institutionalizing Austin was broached, but Mary continually dug in. She always knew the best place for him to be was the very place he was

most loved — at his home.

She became a social activist and a politically savvy leader among chat groups for other parents of children with autism. In fact, Mary became somewhat of an expert on the highly complicated and varying degrees of autism and, because she needed to know what medicines did and did not work for her son, she became a chemist. "I failed chemistry in high school, but I guess God really wanted me to learn it," Mary laughed. Indeed, she is a walking encyclopedia on pharmaceutical products and how they act and interact with other medications.

Through it all, Mary serves as an amazing role model to her family and friends. Both Jack and Cole are active children and Mary can hardly contain herself as she shares pictures of her handsome sons and dotes on their different talents. As a mom, she is most proud of the kind of people her boys are. Because of Austin and their mother, both Jack and Cole are incredibly compassionate and caring boys. Not only are they more in tune to those with physical handicaps, but they have also developed a nurturing sense that is very rare with such young boys.

As Austin asks for yet another cookie, only Mary can really understand the request. She has become tuned in to the different tones and pitches in his voice, and she is vigilant about his diet. She suggests something better to eat and Austin agrees with a slight head nod. "The thing I would want people to know is that autism is treatable," she added.

As Mary makes her pitch for children and parents of autism everywhere, it is clear that she is much more than a spokesperson for autism. She is the poster woman for "Mom of the Year." As if on cue, as Mary stops talking, Austin leans in to his mother. Eyes downcast, he rubs her arm and a small dimple appears. He mutters something difficult to understand, yet the sentiment is so sweet and his smile is so engaging, his message is clear: Thanks, Mom. **NOW**

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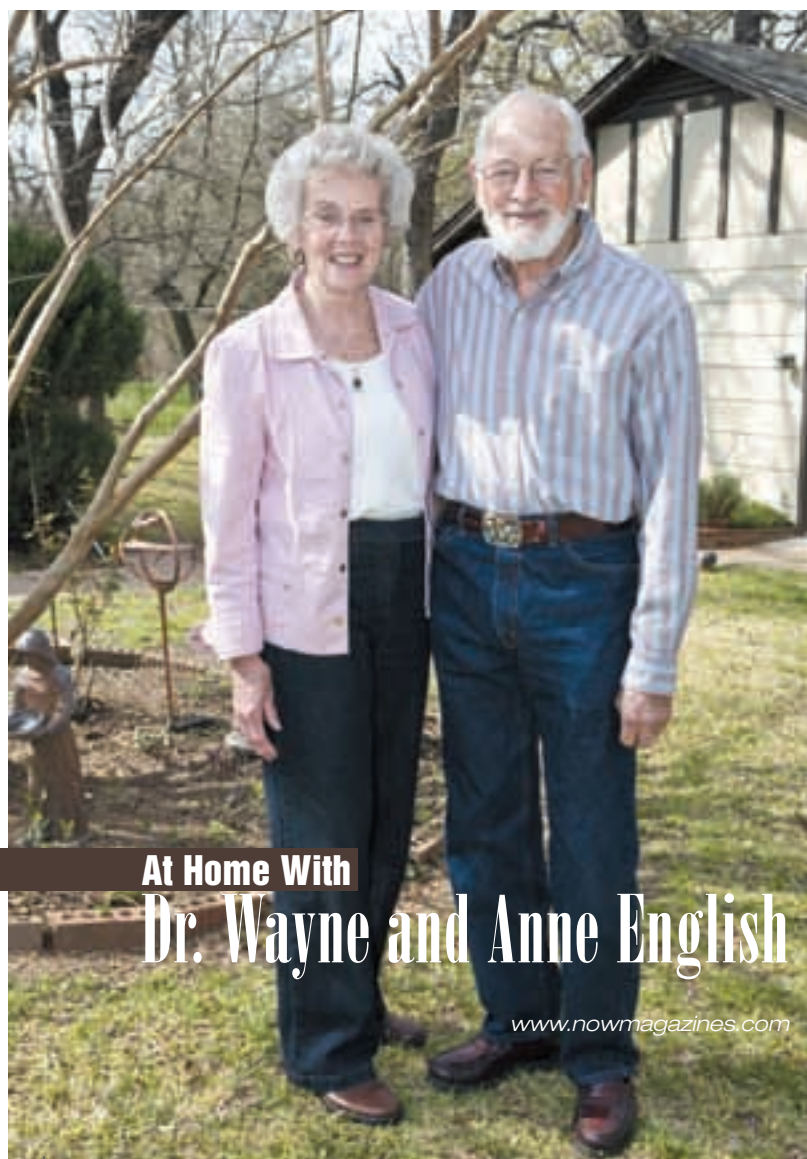
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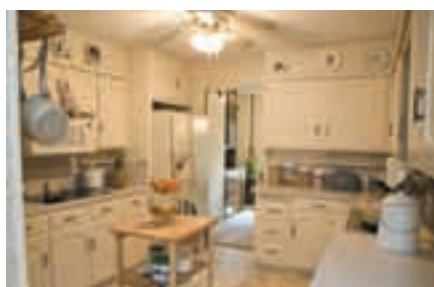




Stress relief is a learned skill. Throughout their 55 years of marriage, Dr. Wayne and Anne English have practiced the many methods of relaxing. First and foremost, explained Anne, is nurturing the family. "When Wayne would come home late for dinner, I would have candles on the table and make it very homey, so that he'd want to come home and have it so special. I have never regretted being home with our children, and always wanted to make our home cozy when Wayne would come home," she said.

"We've always had a fireplace everywhere we've been,"





Wayne remembered. "For Christmas this year, I got an electric fireplace. So our living room is a place where you can sit down, relax, meditate, pray. *Fireplace* always meant cozy to me." On their brick hearth rest two sturdy logs that look ready for stoking the fire. "In New England, Anne would always have a fire going with those white birch logs. We brought three from New England when we moved here 35 years ago, but as you can see there are only two left. We had one other, which a babysitter once put into [the] fire," Wayne laughed.

Sound also matters a great deal to the couple. Their family room boasts a piano where Anne and the children



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took lessons. Wayne plays, too. "That piano gets some use when the family comes home," Anne said. Wayne, who was a semi-pro baseball player and a director of a band before settling on a career healing people, also plays the drums and keeps his kit set up in his home office. "Once he came home, after spending a night with a woman who wanted to commit suicide, and pulled out that trap set to relax," Anne remembered. The couple subscribes to

satellite radio for the Christian and country stations, which broadcast through well-hidden speakers in their Hogan's Acres home. "When I'm cleaning house, I play it loud, because that's the way to enjoy music," Anne said.

She and her husband also enjoy the morning songs of the birds flitting outside the big picture window in their bedroom, which the couple remodeled after their six children moved out of the 35-year-old home. "When all your children leave," Anne advised, "then make the house bigger. They all come back."

When the kids are back in their own homes, and Anne has the house to herself, she finds it quite comfortable to sit reading and bird-watching in the antique rocker purchased in Granbury. Above their bed hangs a painting of a lighthouse on the Outer Banks of Ocracoke, North Carolina. "I'm hung up on lighthouses," Wayne said, "because they are beacons of safety and protection. It is appealing to have

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something there in the dark fog." Several additional lighthouse paintings are found in the home. "Even though you get a stillness feeling," he said, "you still hear the ocean."

The couple has relied heavily on their faith throughout their marriage. "Wayne wasn't home much, because he made house calls," Anne said. Her husband started practicing family medicine in Marshfield, Massachusetts — about 500 miles from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, where they first dated. "During our time in that shore town," Wayne said, "I never got to see the ocean except when I was on house calls. I decided to specialize in sports medicine and physical rehabilitation so we'd have more family time."

The decision paid off. After three moves, the English family settled in Burleson into a home that is not huge, but comfortable. "As our body is our temple, our home is our place of sustenance, retreat, and we love our home," Wayne said. "We developed the land and put a tennis court out



there so our kids could enjoy that sport." They also kept horses and German Shepherds, which the whole family enjoyed. Though none of their children were born here, they each graduated from Burleson High School and went on to careers helping people live healthy lives.

Their home is full of beautiful homages to the work to which Wayne devoted his life. In the family room hangs a framed linen tea towel, embroidered with a detailed celebration of the 1926-1931 construction of the Sydney Harbor Bridge — a souvenir of the three-week seminar that Wayne gave in Australia. Nearby, Wayne and Anne proudly display a charcoal drawing of a buffalo and calf. "This is a gift, given to me by Mel Huff, an artist patient of mine," Wayne said. In the dining room, where the family spreads holiday meals on a rich maple table, stands a gorgeous oak dry sink made by a patient in Massachusetts. "He built it for us, in lieu of payment for delivery of his wife's baby," Wayne remembered. In an

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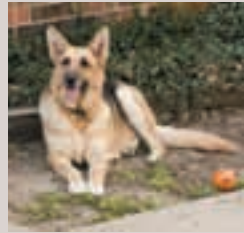
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opposite corner of the room is a maple side table given to them by a doctor in Missouri. Topping off the sturdy effect of the dining room is another handmade hutch. "This was built into the house," Anne said, "by the gentleman who built these homes. He built unique pieces into each of the homes in Hogan's Acres."

When the English family moved here, there were only three homes in Hogan's Acres. As it has taken its place as an established neighborhood, Wayne and Anne have helped establish Burleson faith circles. The couple have been deacons and involved in church for years. Wayne is now an elder in the Disciples of Christ First Christian Church, and he and Anne are both in the choir. "I've just started a wellness ministry," Wayne said, "and I'm calling it Maintaining Wellness of Body, Mind and Spirit."

"The reason I was lucky enough to



get into whole body thinking is 1 Corinthians 12 and other Scriptures like that, plus the fact that I had polio when I was 14. I was told I wouldn't walk again," Wayne said. "I had an osteopathic physician who taught my grandmother how to help me, and with God's help it worked out. So I got into the philosophy that I wanted to try to help somebody with their lives the way I had been helped with mine."

The couple garden together; Wayne's specialty is cultivating and digging, and he is always accompanied by Tasha, their 10th German Shepherd. Anne likes to do all the buying. "I see a beautiful plant and get it and then find a spot to put it. Wayne will go out some morning and see some beautiful mums or roses and cut them and I'll find them waiting for me on the table."

"I enable her addiction," Wayne smiled. 🌻🌻🌻

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Anything is Possible

— By Melissa Rawlins

Who says a person must graduate from a university before they can succeed? Not Jerry Watts, the designer who created the fairyland appeal of Burleson Babe's Chicken Dinner House. He is also the creative genius behind more than 30 different restaurants' designs around the country. A self-taught freehand artist of the baby-boom generation, Jerry grew up in Oak Cliff, Texas.

"My dad was a real craftsman who got into fine arts and portraits," Jerry explained. "He had an eighth grade education and was all self-taught. He did stained glass and built grandfather clocks." Nurtured by such an artist, Jerry learned woodworking and tried his hand at drawing.

"Anyone can teach themselves how to sketch," Jerry said. He studied mechanical and architectural drawing during four years of high school. He spent one year in college, then submitted his portfolio to an engineering service that contracted him out to draw up designs for a variety of industries.

"It was continual education," Jerry remembered. He designed components for oil companies and military suppliers until the Vietnam War was over, when he began designing retail shopping centers. The recession hit, and he joined the corporate world developing restaurants. "I became vice president at Pizza Inn when I was 30. After three corporations, I decided that really wasn't me. I knew I'd rather work for someone I enjoy and work on projects that challenged my creativity so I could always grow," he explained.

Jerry joined the family-owned Babe's Chicken Dinner House restaurants, where every building is a new creation. "With Babe's, I am in charge of real estate, negotiating contracts. I initiate design of buildings and manage the work through architects and engineers, and I have daily supervision and management over construction," he said. "We only develop one concept at a time, and there's no



prototype, so I get to put myself full-time into everything."

Jerry's advice to young artists is that anything is possible. "You need to pay attention to what's out there, see what you're looking at,

and understand what works. When I go eat at a restaurant, I'm making a punch list on construction and noticing mistakes and observing what works. The research is never ending," Jerry explained.

"It's all my conscious time that I'm working," he continued. "I enjoy what I do so much I don't know whether to call it vacation or work." To prepare for the "American Road Trip" design of the Granbury Babe's, Jerry trailored his Harley Davidson to New Mexico. "I stayed four days in Santa Fe and four in Taos, rode up and down mountains, went down the Turquoise Trail, fished and read and ate at every restaurant I could find," he said. On that trip, Jerry noticed that all the old, back-road water towers had a common design element — the metal straps that wrap around the tanks are closer together lower down on the tank. The structural reason dawned on Jerry as he sketched tanks for the new restaurant: The wooden slats lower on the tank are bearing all the weight of the water and need more support. Such authenticity goes into every one of Jerry's interior designs.

His all-time favorite research project was for the Burleson Babe's. "The owner asked me if I'd been to Carmel, California, and seen the Storybook houses built there in the '20s. I had not. So I found a book about Storybook Architecture. I sketched that entire interior in one weekend," Jerry explained. "It's inspired by real frivolous, antique architecture from the medieval era with turrets and cat slide roofs."

Speaking about the restaurant, Jerry shared, "It turned out to be a street scene at night. We took the columns in the

ARTS NOW

center of the original building to be street lights, and the columns on the perimeter became fireplace chimneys for different storybook buildings. We opened a window, put up homemade curtains and a real, small, oscillating fan to give the sense of a breeze blowing. I don't know if anyone's ever noticed, but it would be a blast if you did. It appears we used stone, but it's all thin-set material, since old buildings won't support stone. Everything has appearance of age, created with wood stains that we wipe off so it looks old."

Such knowledge about how to create the effect a restaurant owner



wants comes from both research and experience. "My personal hobby is woodworking — that I learned from my dad. I hand carve crosses, and make small boxes to give away to people," said Jerry, whose father saw the Babe's in Carrollton, Texas, before he passed away. "He was real excited about it," Jerry beamed. "That restaurant used to be a lumberyard built in the '30s. We added on restrooms and put a lot of cedar work in it."

Most of the cedar Jerry uses in his designs comes from Johnson City in the Texas Hill Country, where the designer spent about one-and-a-half years researching the project for the Texana Grill in Nashville, Tennessee. "I'd take about \$5,000 in a cashier's check and start doing my research, driving around back roads in the Hill Country," Jerry grinned. "I ended up at rodeos, barns, farms and ranches. Seems like everyone in the Hill Country is an artist, with stories to tell. Again, is that vacation or work?" **ARTS NOW**

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Sports
NOW

Making Another Run to State

— By Amanda Madden Pitt

The 800-meter dash is what Burleson High School Junior Katie Hoaldrige refers to as an “almost” all out sprint for two laps that takes about two minutes — if you are good. The 800 is also thought of as one of the toughest competitions in track.

A tremendous amount of strength and momentum is required to complete it well. Katie’s passion for running hinges on a key ingredient essential to the make up of any athlete: a love for competition. She knows what it is like to cross the finish line in the lead.

As one of 65 - 70 Lady Elks on her team last year, Katie used her know-how to push herself. She won district, took second at regionals and then placed at state, despite the fact that her region includes a challenging mix of schools. Katie had to place in the top three in district to go to regionals and in the top two in regionals to go to state — both of which she did as a sophomore. “When I just relax and don’t take it so seriously,” Katie said, “I feel and do a lot better.” Last season, Katie took second place in the region for the 800-meter dash and seventh place as a sophomore in the overall 2007 state competition.

Who does Katie have to thank for her accomplishments? “My parents are very involved. They rarely ever miss a meet, and my stepdad is always filming meets,” she said. In



Katie Hoaldrige relies on her coach, Ken Edwards, to help her succeed in track.

addition to the personal inner strength from which she derives hard work and determination, Katie greatly appreciates her coaches, her dedicated mom, dad and stepdad. Her runner’s genes are a special link she shares with her Burleson track star father Hank Hoaldrige. Hank, a 1971 Burleson High School graduate, also went to district and regionals in the 800, and attended college on a track scholarship. Hank’s personal best time was one minute 55 seconds. Katie’s personal best is almost as ambitious as her dad’s at two minutes, 14 seconds. Like her father, Katie showed early signs of being a natural. In fact, she used to win 200-meter sprints as early as elementary school. Her dad was the one, she said, who “would always say that I was an 800-meter runner.” Friends also play a large role in Katie’s life, and between juggling workouts, schoolwork and track meets, Katie enjoys spending time with them, listening to music and “just hanging out.”

Inspired by her late track coach and family friend Keith Gilbert, who passed away from cancer just before the 2007

Sports NOW

track season began, Katie's winnings were not only about making her dad proud, but also about honoring Coach Gilbert's memory, "And there and then I had the fastest time in the district" Katie said. "He was like, 'OK, this is your new event!'"

Of the Lady Elk's new track coach, Ken Edwards, a.k.a. Coach Ed, who stepped in after Gilbert's death, Katie said, "He's really supportive and takes care of me. I get really nervous before a meet and sometimes even though I've done it for so long, I ask [Edwards], 'What do I do? Do I go check in now?'"

"It is difficult to qualify for the state meet," Coach Ed said. "Only Katie Hoaldrige has gone to the state meet in her event since 2002. Winning regular meets are only practice leading up to the district meet. Only three people in each event qualify for the regional meet. Only two from each event qualify for the state meet from each of the four regions."

Although she has the genes, the perseverance and the support network to keep winning, running has not always been easy for Katie. Her passion



for track lies in her enthusiasm for competition, and despite occasional hip pain due to one of her legs being shorter than the other, Katie pushes through. "Sometimes it doesn't hurt as bad as other times. You've just gotta' deal with it. You have to think that you can run with pain and just do it," Katie expressed. "After I get into the

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season and start building back muscle around it, it pretty much levels out.”

Her routine includes working out six days a week, year-round, with her trainer. Her workouts involve fast-paced runs with short recoveries to build strength and speed. Sessions often last for two hours, followed by regular physical therapy to strengthen her hip.



**“When I just
relax and don’t
take it so seriously,
I feel and do
a lot better.”**

“Katie is a hard worker and she’s dedicated,” said her mother, Jerri McNair. “When she gets something in her mind that she wants to do, she does it and does it well. We’re proud of her.”

Katie said the most valuable thing track has taught her is how to set and accomplish goals — an invaluable lesson. “I’m hoping I can get a scholarship for a college, run there and be successful,” she said. To that we say, “Katie our support is with you!” **NOW**



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Business NOW



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More Than a Healing Touch

— By Melissa Rawlins

Over the years, the six women now assisting people to heal at Turning Point Wellness Center (TPWC) found their gifts in the midst of personal crisis. Out of those life-changing experiences came decisions that brought each woman to the new business in Old Town.

Chiropractor Kristen O'Reilly dedicated herself to the healing arts at the age of 21, after spinal adjustments reduced her sciatic pain by 95 percent. Tava Marrington chose to practice cold laser therapy for pain management and smoking cessation when her husband lost the desire for cigarettes after his first treatment. "I figured that if he could quit in one treatment, I could help others with the cold laser

acupuncture," Tava remembered.

"I do not call myself 'owner' of TPWC, because my original intention was not this large," Tava said. Partnerships have developed since June 13, 2007, when Tava and Michele Heffner (who is no longer at TPWC but continues to support the center) took over the old Harmon Insurance Company building.

In August 2007, Kristen agreed to be the center's chiropractor two days a week. In October, Dr. Shawnda Hennesay — who trained at Parker Chiropractic College with Kristen — fulfilled the need to have a chiropractor in the office the other three days of the week. Since September, TPWC has

offered hands-on healing by three friends. Kim Sharp practices Quantum Touch, Bio Energetic Synchronization Technique (B.E.S.T.) and reflexology to balance the body's energy, heal pain, relax and calm the body and mind. Sandy Patterson, a registered nurse, nurtures her clients through massage. "Pearl Daugherty, who has a special

touch in pregnancy massage and sports massage, seems to complete the center and we are very blessed to have her join the team," Tava added.

"We have six women here with a passion for helping people. We want people to come to us when they want to feel better and learn more about health," Sandy explained. "Traditional medicine has its place, but sometimes there are other avenues for finding what we need and want, and we offer those alternatives."

"We consider ourselves 'complementary' medicine," Tava commented. "Our customers can complement what they already know

Business NOW

with the information, support and education that we offer."

TPWC offers customized treatment packages for people who need either acute care for heavy symptoms of pain or degeneration or wellness care for maintenance of good habits, good posture and good patterns of health. "Our body has pain because it is saying: 'That is not working for me.' When we listen, our body stops screaming at us," Kristen said. "When we learn at an early age to listen to our

"Our customers can complement what they already know with the information, support and education that we offer."

bodies, we do not develop symptoms of illness at later ages."

Baby boomers who wish to enjoy life in retirement, and who might not have listened to their bodies in their youth, can still receive relief from arthritis and other types of pain. "Sometimes, old emotional traumas are stored in different body parts. Kim can help identify that, and help people relieve those pains," Kristen mentioned. "Alignment of the spine helped one of my clients go from daily seizures to seizures only once a month."

Sometimes a client will need only one of the treatments or, sometimes, several in combination are necessary. "The massage works because it realigns tissues," Sandy explained. "Touch has the power to change your cell structure, lower blood pressure, relieve the 'fight or flight' mode that a lot of people are in all the time. If my client leaves my table feeling safe, loved and protected, then I've done my job."

TPWC, located at 111 S. Wilson Street, is open Monday - Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m., and Saturdays by appointment. For more information, visit www.turningpointburleson.com or call (817) 295-6111. **NOW**



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Where Character Rings True

— By Jaime Ruark

Children ages 5 - 10 years old smile and skip down the hallways, waving and calling out to friends. The walls at the learning facility are hung with self-portraits and flower paintings, decorations provided by the children, our future Pablo Picassos and Georgia O'Keeffes. The air rings with laughter and excitement, which may cause unknowing visitors to do a double take to make sure they are, in fact, in a school. The Academy at Nola Dunn is most definitely not the average learning facility.

Now in its eighth year of educating Burleson's young students, the academy's mission is to inspire and empower lifelong learners. Marla Bennett, the reading and math specialist, explains the school's goals with the same excitement the students show, making it easy to see why the children seem to be having such fun. Marla graduated from Tarleton State University with a bachelor's degree in Human Resource Management. Her original passion was for teaching however, and, "after one year in the business world, I knew it wasn't for me and went back to school to get my [teaching] certification," she said, winding through the walkways and giving out hugs and smiles as students passed by. She taught in Joshua, Texas, and here in Burleson at Norwood Elementary until the academy opened its doors.

"The kids have to apply to come here," Marla shared. "It's based on a lottery system, and we have no bussing." This process of applying to the school is one of the reasons for the jubilant vibe; the students actually want to come here to learn. "We have what we call 'brain-based' learning instructional strategies," she explained. "We're very hands-on, very active and involved. We even require that the parents do 10 hours a year of work here, so that they can see what the children are doing and be involved in the whole process."

Marla's classroom is currently in a portable building, speaking to the success of the school. "We have 604 students. We just added 80 kids this year," she said with pride. Her walls are decorated with the five integral ideals the academy



"I think a child will do what it takes, and even exceed your expectations, if you just believe they can."

teaches. Students who have spent any length of time here can recite and explain what they call the Character Rings: Integrity, Respect, Accountability, Effort and Compassion. "Everyone here is accountable for their actions and attitudes," Marla continued. "We have really high expectations of our students. We want them to take ownership in their learning. I am an avid believer in high expectations. I think a child will do what it takes, and even exceed your expectations, if you just believe they can."

The forward-thinkers who created this school have done away with what may have previously been deemed a staple — grades. Marla explained, "We have anecdotal report cards. There are no number grades here. We have nine-week periods, instead of the usual six, and at the end of that time we send home reports that are in paragraph form." This takes a teacher's active involvement with each and every student, because rather than just assign a 90 for math or science, the teachers write out a report detailing the students' strengths and weaknesses. "We give the kids an E, which stands for extend and means they have gone above and beyond what was expected; an M, which means they have mastered the necessary skills; an S, which stands for showing progress; or

Education **NOW**

a T, which means more time is needed," she said, adding that the school makes sure they are still aligned with the educational requirements of the state.

Active involvement seems to make all the difference, not only on the part of the teachers but the students as well. "We have student leadership teams where children have to write an essay to explain the area they wish to be part of. There are five leadership teams, and every student wants to be part of one of them," Marla smiled, all knowingly because she is the faculty advisor for one of the five teams — the student advisory board. "We want our school to be known in a positive way. We want those character rings to really shine and our kids to be good ambassadors in the community. So we got together and brain stormed on ways we could help."

Her high expectations for her students were exceeded, and the pride she feels comes bubbling out. "In October, we collected 1,000 toothbrushes and tubes of toothpaste and took them to the Harvest House. They were totally shocked. Then in November we had a Turkey Bowl, where we collected canned goods, and in December we had a toy drive and an angel tree," she said. "In January and February we had our Penny Drive. The drive actually only lasted for 10 days, and we collected \$713 in pennies. That's a pretty amazing amount for such a short time!"

Marla, her fellow teachers and administration at the academy are truly visionaries, and the success of the students is a direct result of the time and energy they put forth. "Educators need to keep an open mind. It's important to have a sense of humor, and have fun, but it's more important for everyone, from the kids to the parents to the teachers, to be involved," Marla expressed. "If we keep the kids engaged, then failure is just not an option." **NOW**



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Around Town NOW



A ribbon cutting was held, top left, at A+ Realty Solutions. Mayor Ken Shetter, top right, presented the Burleson Goes Purple proclamation to the American Cancer Society Relay for Life of Burleson team. Amy Jackson, middle row left, accepted honors for Meals-on-Wheels of Johnson and Ellis Counties from Mayor Pro Tem Stuart Gillaspie. Lynette Earheart, proprietor of Today's Special Bistro, middle row center, chatted with Sharon White after lunch. A ribbon cutting, bottom left, was held at TNT Embroidery. Bailey Hall, bottom right, walked her dogs after she got home from school.



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Around Town NOW



A worker, top left, on the construction of Sushi Axiom and Hibachi, two new businesses, located at McAlister Square. Mayor Pro Tem Stuart Gillaspie honored the work of the American Red Cross in Burleson, top center, by presenting an award to Anita Thompson from the ARC's Chisholm Trail Chapter. Spring maintenance, top right, was underway at the Harpster home. Madison played, dad painted and mom held the ladder. Ribbon cuttings were held at Sandlot, bottom left, and FedEx Kinko's, bottom right.



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Look Who's Cooking

By Stephanie Brewer

IN THE KITCHEN WITH CHRIST JOURNEY CHURCH LADIES

CHICKEN SPAGHETTI

Submitted by: Wendy Thompson

- 2 - 3 lbs. boneless skinless chicken breasts
- 1 8-oz. box spaghetti (favorite variety)
- 1 lb. Velveeta cheese (favorite variety), cut up in cubes
- 1 12-oz. can Ro-Tel (diced tomatoes and green chiles), drained
- 1 12-oz. can petite diced tomatoes, drained
- 2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 2 cups cheddar cheese
- 1 cup shredded Parmesan cheese

Preheat oven to 350 F. Cover the chicken with water and boil for approximately 25 minutes or until done. Measure out 7 cups of broth water; set aside. Remove chicken to safe place to cool. Once cooled, cut up into bite-size pieces. Cook spaghetti in measured broth water until almost done. Do not drain. Add Velveeta to spaghetti and stir until melted. Add Ro-Tel, tomatoes, Worcestershire and 1 cup cheddar cheese; mix well. Add the cut up chicken; mix well. Pour mixture into 2 3-quart casserole dishes. Sprinkle with remaining cheddar and Parmesan cheese. Bake for 30 minutes until

cheese is bubbly. Serve with a salad and garlic bread.

TACO DUMP SOUP

Submitted by: Hollie Blackwell

- 1 lb. ground sirloin
- 1 lb. sausage
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 14-oz. can kidney beans
- 2 14-oz. cans Ranch Style Beans
- 1 14-oz. can pinto beans
- 1 14-oz. can whole kernel corn
- 1 1-oz. envelope Taco Bell Taco Seasoning
- 1 1-oz. dry Ranch mix
- 1 28-oz. can chopped tomatoes
- shredded cheese and Frito's or crackers, optional

Brown together ground sirloin, sausage and onion. Dump remaining ingredients in a big pot and stir together. Add 2 - 4 cups water; simmer 20 minutes. You can top off with shredded cheese and Frito's or crackers.

SPICY BEEF BRISKET

Submitted by: Kay Young

- 4 medium onions, thinly sliced
- 4 garlic cloves, pressed
- 1 6-lb. beef brisket, trimmed
- 4 tsp. salt
- 3 tsp. ground Chipotle chili powder
- 2 cups fresh cilantro, coarsely chopped
- flour tortillas
- lime wedges

Place onions and garlic in a 6-quart Crock-Pot. Cut brisket into 3/4-inch pieces. Rub pieces evenly with the salt and powder; add to Crock-Pot. Top with cilantro. Cover and cook on high for 8 hours or until brisket pieces are tender. Remove brisket and shred with two forks. Serve in flour tortillas with desired toppings and lime wedges. TOPPING SUGGESTIONS: shredded Mexican blend cheese, sour cream, salsa, cilantro, guacamole or black olives.

CHEESEBURGER SOUP

Submitted by: Pam Toole

- 1 1/2 lbs. lean ground beef
- 1 onion, chopped

Who's Cooking **NOW**

1 14-oz. can Hormel Chili, no beans
1 lb. Velveeta Cheese, cubed
1 16-oz. container sour cream
1 12-oz. can Ro-Tel tomatoes, undrained
1 16-oz. can stewed tomatoes, undrained
2 14-oz. cans pinto beans, undrained
1 tsp. garlic salt
corn chips, for serving

Brown ground beef and onions together, then add remaining ingredients. Cook over medium heat until Velveeta is melted and soup is bubbling. Can also be cooked in a Crock-Pot for 6 - 8 hours. Serve with corn chips. Wonderful leftover, makes a Crock-Pot full!

HAM AND NOODLES

Submitted by: Becca Russell

1 4-oz. jar mushrooms, drained and liquid reserved
2 cups cooked ham, cubed
1/4 cup onion, chopped
2 Tbsp. butter or margarine
1/4 tsp. pepper
1/8 tsp. paprika
1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
1 1/4 cup water, divided
1 4-oz. bag medium egg noodles, uncooked
1 Tbsp. flour
1 cup sour cream

Drain mushrooms, reserve 1/4 cup mushroom liquid and set aside. Sauté ham and onion in butter; stir in pepper, paprika and Worcestershire sauce. Add 1 cup of water, 1/4 cup mushroom liquid and noodles; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer covered for 15 minutes. Meanwhile, whisk flour into 1/4 cup of water. Add flour mixture and mushrooms into pan at the end of the 15 minutes. Heat for 5 minutes. Add sour cream; heat thoroughly without boiling. Variation: Add a cup of frozen corn or peas when adding mushrooms. It adds color and makes a more complete meal!

CHICKEN ENCHILADAS

Submitted by: Heidi Chappotin

1 8-oz. pkg. precooked fajita chicken strips, chopped into small pieces
1 1-oz. pkg. taco seasoning
1 14-oz. can cream of mushroom soup
1 8-oz. container sour cream
1 8-oz. can chopped green chilies
garlic salt to taste
12 flour tortillas
1/2 cup of shredded cheese

Preheat oven to 350 F. After chopping chicken, heat in a skillet on medium heat. Once the chicken is heated, add taco seasoning and a splash of water. Continue cooking until taco seasoning has blended well with chicken. Set chicken aside. Mix cream of mushroom soup, sour cream, green chilies, and garlic salt to taste. Using a 9 x 13-inch pan, pour a small amount of soup mixture into bottom of pan, just enough to cover the bottom (If you prefer crispier enchiladas, spray with cooking spray and do not use soup mixture on the bottom.) Fill each flour tortilla with chicken mixture; roll and place in pan. After all tortillas are filled and placed in the pan, pour the soup mixture over all the enchiladas. Sprinkle with cheese and bake for 20 - 25 minutes, just enough that the cheese looks bubbly. I serve this with beans, rice, chips and salsa. Enjoy!



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Health Savings Accounts: A Tax-advantaged Way to Reduce Health Insurance Costs

— By Sharon Robinson

Included in the Medicare Prescription Drug legislation signed into law in 2003, was a gift to people looking to reduce their health insurance costs. It's called the Health Savings Account, or HSA. Since that time, HSAs have grown in popularity and have become a way for consumers to keep the costs of their healthcare down.

The concept of HSAs is simple. First, to be eligible for an HSA, you must purchase a high-deductible health plan (HDHP). An HDHP is generally a plan that has an annual deductible of at least \$1,000 for self-only coverage and at least \$2,000 for family coverage. In other words, you pay for routine medical care like doctor visits, while insurance covers catastrophic medical expenses. Since you accept more of the expense of your healthcare, your premiums will be substantially lower.

This is where the HSA comes in. An HSA is a separate account into which you can deposit pre-tax dollars. In 2008, the maximum annual amount you may contribute to your HSA is \$2,900 for individuals and \$5,800 for families. If you are age 55 by the end of the year, you may contribute up to an additional \$900. Medicare enrolled individuals cannot contribute to an HSA.

To be eligible for an HSA, your high-deductible health plan must have a deductible of at least \$1,100 for

an individual HSA (i.e. self plan) or \$2,200 for a family HSA (i.e. family plan). Also, the HDHP must have a maximum out of pocket expense of \$5,600 for a self plan and \$11,200 for a family plan.

You may take federal income tax-free distributions from an HSA to pay for qualified medical expenses including doctor visits, eye and dental care and even qualified long-term care insurance premiums. Any money not used in the year can



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remain in the HSA and continue to grow tax deferred; it's not a "use it or lose it" type of account.

If you withdraw money for something other than qualified medical expenses before you are 65, the withdrawal will be taxed as ordinary income and subject to an additional 10 percent tax penalty. At age 65, the penalty tax no longer applies; however, funds withdrawn will be taxed as ordinary income if used for non-qualified medical expenses.

An HSA can be an effective financial tool, particularly for those who are uninsured or underinsured, small business owners or anyone facing the challenge of affording quality health insurance coverage. To find out if HSAs are right for you, talk to a financial services professional who knows your needs. **NOW**

Sharon Robinson is a State Farm agent based in Burleson.

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Health
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Allergies

— By Betty Tryon

The allergy season plagues many sufferers with the all too familiar symptoms — red eyes, runny nose, postnasal drip, sneezing and itchy throat — complicating their daily lives. Allergies are responses, which the body's immune system has to foreign substances in the air. The body acts out of self-defense, but the misguided allergic responses to harmless substances do damage.

Consider some of the substances that can trigger an allergic response: dander, dust mites, some food items and pollen. These substances are called allergens. The initial allergic response usually manifests itself at the first place the allergen touches the body. If an allergen, such as pollen, is in the air, then the nose and respiratory system will respond. Ingestion of an allergen, such as peanuts, fish and wheat, will cause a reaction in the digestive system. Some people are very sensitive to the scent of household cleaners or even perfumes. Sometimes the allergic reaction will be systemic, resulting in hives, or in anaphylaxis,

an extreme reaction which can be life threatening.

Avoiding the trigger or allergen provides the best cure for allergies. In order to do that, determining which allergen is causing the problem calls for an accurate assessment of many factors. Your physician can make a clinical diagnosis from your physical

exam and by evaluating a detailed history of your symptoms.

The doctor will want to know when and where your symptoms started, what they are, what brings them on, how long is the duration and what medication you are taking. Diagnostic tests are helpful in confirmation of the diagnosis.

Sensitivity to specific allergens needs to be identified by the most common diagnostic tool — the allergy skin test. A small amount of the substance you may be allergic to is injected under the skin to test for a reaction. Blood tests are available to determine allergens, but those tests are more expensive and the results take longer. Some treatment





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plans include medications such as antihistamines, nasal sprays and allergy shots. Elimination of allergy triggers in the home such as plants; dust, which harbors dust mites; pet dander and mold can be useful in controlling symptoms.

Another tool which is useful to determine if one is allergic to certain foods is the food elimination diet. Under a physician's supervision, the diet starts with a limited number of foods that usually do not cause an allergic reaction. Foods added back to the diet one at a time will reveal which one causes the allergy symptoms. Awareness and avoidance of that food remains the best treatment. Allergic symptoms, and the suffering they cause, can be alleviated with proper help. **NOW**

This article is for general information only and does not constitute medical advice. Consult with your physician for questions regarding this topic.

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DO Not Grow There!

— By Nancy Fenton

These things we call weeds are really just the wrong plant for the space they occupy. Take poison ivy for example. Very few of us appreciate enough the bright red foliage (in the fall) and the lush green leaves and stems (in the spring and summer) to cultivate it in our landscape. In reality, most of us do our best to “get it gone” post haste!

There are several methods to rid your landscape of this high-allergy plant, but you need to select the one best suited to you and your landscape. The first one that comes to mind (yes, even my mostly organic mind!) is good old Roundup® Weed & Grass Killer. Roundup is effective, if used in the hot and dry time of the year, but it does its best work with three sprayings timed two weeks apart. A disadvantage is that it will also kill all the plants around the poison ivy within the drift of the spray.

A second method is to dig the plant up, root and all. It really works well if the digger is not allergic and you can get the entire root. If you are allergic, well you know what happens then! A good scrub with soap and water helps, but even an ash from burned vines, or the sap from broken ones, can start the reaction that makes you miserable!

A third method that takes longer, but which is still effective, is to gradually rob the plant of the nourishment it needs to survive. To do this, sever the vines at ground level or below, bag it and trash it (Do not burn it!) every time you see even one leaf coming up. You will be cutting off the factory that makes the food (the leaves) and slowly starving the plant. If there are areas in or around your yard that are kept natural, you may never rid yourself completely of poison ivy because birds bring in and drop the berries, but you can keep it under control.

If you know you are allergic to poison ivy/oak, do not fool around with it without wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants, gloves, etc. Chris Russo, at Russo's Apothecary on Ferris Avenue in Waxahachie, makes a product called Poison Ivy/Oak Preventive that helps the body build up natural antibodies to ward off the dreaded rashes. It requires a weekly dose of 15 drops in water but seems to be very effective on those of us who have used it. We can even work around it without the onset of the awful rash! It is literally an ounce of prevention and much less costly in time and money than the shots and lost time from the reactions to the plant's poison!

Once again, a weed is just a plant in the wrong place. Along the roadside, even poison ivy can be beautiful — just not in my backyard! **NOW**

Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener in Ellis County.

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May 2008

Community Calendar

Second and Fourth Wednesdays

Burleson Lions Club meeting: noon - 1:00 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church. (817) 980-9436.

May 1

Health Fair at the Senior Activity Center. (817) 295-6131.

May 2

Cinco de Mayo Fiesta de Burleson, Old Town, 6:00 p.m. Contact Ike Vera with the Parks and Recreation department at (817) 447-5312, ext. 250.

May 7

Friends of the Library meeting: 10:00 a.m. at the Burleson Public Library, 248 S.W. Johnson Ave. (817) 295-6131.

May 8

Burleson City Council meeting: 7:00 p.m. at City Hall. (817) 447-5400.

May 13

Kindergarten Round-up for the Burleson ISD: 1:00 - 6:00 p.m. All parents with an upcoming kindergartener are invited. For more information, please call your home school. If you are unsure of your home school, call BISD Administration at (817) 245-1000.

Burleson Heritage Foundation meeting: 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. at the Heritage Visitors Center, 124 W. Ellison (the old Interurban Building in Old Town). (817) 447-1575.

May 15

Mystery Book Club meeting: 11:30 a.m. or 6:30 p.m. at the Burleson Public Library. Sandwiches and refreshments provided by The Friends of the Library. For more information, call Library Director Gayla Tennison at (817) 295-6131, ext. 265.

American Business Women's Association (ABWA)
Express Network meeting: 5:45 p.m. at the Waxahachie Civic Center. \$25.00 for dinner. Members are encouraged to bring co-workers and friends. Guests are welcome! For reservations, call Stephanie Kinnison at (972) 938-0703. For membership information, call Daphne at (972) 723-6551 or visit www.abwa-empoweringwomen.org.

Environmental Education Awards ceremony: 6:30 p.m. at City Hall. (817) 447-5400.

May 15 and 16

Auditions for the musical *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*: 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. at The Wilshire Room. Call Burleson Community Theatre at (817) 295-6121.

May 17

Rendon Fire Department Auxiliary's Firemens' Cookout from 4:00 - 8:00 p.m. at the firehouse, located at 12330 Rendon Rd. All donations are tax deductible and go to help the Auxiliary to aid the Fire Department. Your choice of hot dogs, hamburger or chopped brisket, beans, coleslaw, chips, drink and dessert served. \$7 adults, \$5

for children and seniors. For more information, contact Donna Stewart at (817) 401-4808.

May 19

Honeyfest: 1:00 - 3:00 p.m., 1044 S.W. Wilshire Ave. Sponsored by the Burleson Chamber of Commerce. Call Ashley Whisonant at (817) 295-6121.

May 22

Burleson City Council Meeting: 7:00 p.m. at City Hall. (817) 447-5400.

May 26

Memorial Day. All BISD school campuses closed. All City Services suspended.

June 7

Annual Pancake Fly-In at Mid-Way Regional Airport, Waxahachie, 8:00 a.m. - 11 a.m. Classic airplanes and fighters, plane rides/Discovery Flights, remote control model flyers, flight demo (T-28s), The Classic Swing Band, Midlothian Classic Wheels and other attractions. Breakfast tickets \$6.00, one child under 8 eats free with a paid adult ticket. Event and parking are free. For more information, call Tammy at (972) 923-0080.

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