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Midlothian NOW

M A G A Z I N E

May 2008

**From
Cast-off
to Upscale**

**The Team
Comes First**

**A Star
for Everyone**

**Keeping
Watch**

At Home With

**Jim and Helen
McCarthy**

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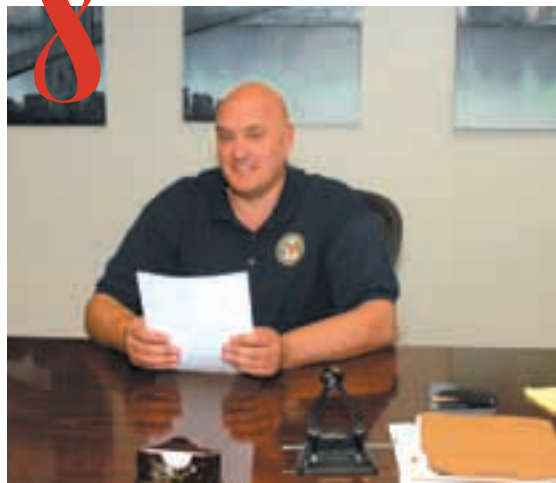
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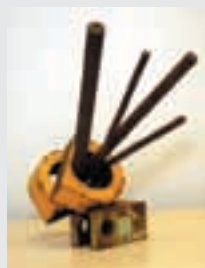
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Midlothian NOW

Editor's Note

Dear Readers,

Everything changed when I became a mom. Before motherhood, I considered myself a relatively stylish person until I showed up in the grocery line with dried regurgitated milk on my shoulder. Before motherhood, I could walk blissfully unaware of anyone. Now whenever a child yells, "Mom!" in a crowd, I always turn to look, just to make sure it is not for me. My children are now older, but I still turn at the word "Mom!" Such is the power of motherhood. It never ends. Yes, everything changes when you become a mom. Happy Mother's Day to you!

Congratulations to all of the graduates! As you enter the next phase of your life, our good wishes go with you. Midlothian ISD also celebrates education this month with the Education Showcase Hollywood Style on May 5, 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. Shara Backus discusses it in our education feature. The entire community is invited to this extravaganza of knowledge.

Betty Tryon
MidlothianNOW Editor



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Great things are happening in Our Schools



Vitovsky Elementary student, Jasmin, won a Gold Medal at the Math Pentathlon Tournament in Austin, TX.

The Midlothian ISD Education Foundation (MEF) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, which exists to enhance the education of MISD's 6,900 students by awarding teacher grants for worthy classroom projects that are not funded by the district's operational budget. These grants contribute to innovative teaching in the schools, thereby ensuring the fulfillment of the Foundation's mission - the promotion of educational excellence for all students through community advocacy and financial support. MEF also funds an annual Academic Stars Banquet honoring top seniors and selected teachers.



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A.H. Meadows Public and High School Library

Residents receive a free library card. With over 30,000 selections of books, movies, and music, the library has something for everyone in the family at no cost. A library card also gives access to downloadable audio books and videos.

In May, library services will include:

- Weekly "Spanglish" classes - conversational Spanish
- Free weekly American Sign Language classes.
- GED preparation classes
- Friday morning story times with free crafts and treats.
- Monthly meetings for senior, adult, and teen book clubs.

In June, library services will include:

- Tuesday and Friday - Free Texas Reading Club Story Times.
- Free Wednesday afternoon movies.
- Free community computer classes - call the library to reserve your spot.

For more information call (972) 775-3417 or email susie_yarbrough@midlothian-isd.net.

Public Library Hours
Mon. & Wed. 8am-6pm
Tues. & Thurs 8am-8pm
Sat. 10am-4pm

Free Community Computer Classes!

Attend the free community computer classes this summer at Meadows Public Library and learn the basics of formatting, internet navigation, and setting up an email account. Learn what is going on your child's school through Powerschool and Homework Online.

Computer Basics: Formatting, saving files and finding those great pictures you downloaded.

June 14 10am-12pm
June 16 6pm-8pm

Internet: Keyword searching, web address, new tools from Google.

June 12 10am-12pm
June 14 6pm-8pm

Email and Database: Learn about useful research tools and set up an email account.

August 16 10am-12pm
August 18 6pm-8pm

Calendar of Events

- May 5 Educational Showcase, 6:30-8:30pm
No School - Staff Development
(Open to the public at MHS)
- May 6 No School - Inclement Weather Day
- May 10 School Board Election, 7am-7pm
- May 19 School Board Meeting, 6:30pm
- May 23 No School - Inclement Weather Day
- May 26 No School - Memorial Day
- June 4 2-hr Early Release
- June 5 2-hr Early Release
Last Day of School
MHS Graduation
(Multipurpose Stadium, 9pm)
- June 16 School Board Meeting, 6:30pm

Access the athletic, campus, district and testing calendars of events at www.midlothian-isd.net/calendar.

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Keeping Watch

— By Betty Tryon

Hours after Hurricane Katrina, the C-130 military aircraft, brimming with a precious cargo, coasted to a stop at the Joint Reserve Base at Carswell Field in Ft. Worth. It transported people from New Orleans who were victims of Hurricane Katrina. The city, under water and its citizens at risk, needed assistance in a dire way, most particularly the sick and elderly. Bill Bossert, an Area Emergency Manager with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), acknowledged the federal government assists in disasters, but only when asked. He stated, "All disasters are local. The federal government is not coming, the state is not coming, unless the mayor and the county judge of an area decide it is more than they can handle. They [the mayor and county judge] first call the state officials who will then determine if the federal government needs to be called. That's where I come in. I am the 'mom and pop' organization that takes care of things."

This means taking care of anything that needs to occur in order to rescue



and place survivors. From ice to hospital beds, someone has to be in charge to make sure the supplies and services get to those who need them.

Bill explained, "The VA takes care of civilians during a disaster and steps in to help until the community gets back on its feet. This could be X-ray

technicians, doctors and nurses. The VA has a roster of people already identified who have approval from their boss to volunteer during a disaster. It takes time to arrange transportation for the volunteers to get to the site. Someone has to get rooms and rental cars for workers and keep up with their time worked. That is the mom and pop part of it in taking care of things."

Although many organizations exist to help through disasters, the federal government has its role also. He



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explained, "It all happened so quickly with Katrina. I was sent to Jackson, Mississippi, to help support the hospitals. As soon as I got to Jackson, my boss called and said, 'It's worse than we thought in New Orleans, come back.' My assistant had to have a meeting with the fire department, the city emergency manager of Ft. Worth, the ambulance company and the police because I couldn't be there. We had 50 ambulances waiting to transport people to the hospital as they arrived. I got back to Carswell at 5:00 a.m. and the first plane arrived at 6:00 a.m.



From ice to hospital beds, someone has to be in charge to make sure the supplies and services get to those who need them.

We had 10 planes and worked for 24 hours straight. When the planes arrived, we would offload the patients, triage them, get them into ambulances and send [them] to where they could be cared for."

The majority of the patients flown in from Katrina were the elderly. Bill said, "They were very confused and fragile. Some had Alzheimer's and didn't know their name. The hospital they came from was under water so there were no medical records. We had to identify patients by the color of their pajamas. These were the people who could not get out."

When a catastrophic calamity



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occurs, such as in Katrina, there is a great need to get there quickly. That is not always possible. According to Bill, “In the case of Katrina, part of the problem was people couldn’t get in. The airport was in bad shape and you couldn’t land big planes. It also takes time for the state to assess it [the need] and decide they can’t handle it. The federal government used

to not go until called. As a result of Katrina, some of the rules have changed. When a hurricane threatens, the state now pre-positions and waits for a call

**Contingency plans
are constantly
worked,
re-worked and
practiced.**

from the local authority. A lot of people who respond to disasters have regular jobs. Someone has to fill in for them when they go to a disaster area. If Midlothian sends a fire truck to Dallas to help with a fire, someone has to cover Midlothian while they are gone.”

Bill makes many of these situations

happen either by setting the process in motion or locating whatever is needed for a safe resolution of the crisis. "This is not a 'me' operation," he said. "I have a counterpart who works in the VA hospital in New Orleans. When Katrina happened, the first two floors were under water. So, the patients and staff had to be flown out of there. The helicopter can only take one person at a



time. Some patients can't be moved; therefore, some of the doctors and nurses must stay. We had to fly in food and water for them. I always tell hospitals to have a thousand water bottles hidden somewhere and have packages of MREs (meal, ready-to-eat) on hand just in case."

Contingency plans are constantly worked, re-worked and practiced. Bill said, "Two months before Katrina, we practiced patient reception at Carswell Field. We had police, fire and ambulance out there to find out which hanger we'll use, where will we offload the plane, how will we triage, which hospital bed will they go to."

Bill does not focus just on hurricanes in his planning sessions. For the possibility of pandemic flu (outbreak of a disease globally), Bill has a plan in place. "We do exercises on continuum



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"We have lived in Midlothian for 12 years. We chose it because of the schools."

Bill's organizational and administrative skills have made him one of the best in his position. His collegiate education prepared him for the job he does today. In college he received a bachelor's in bacteriology and public health. He stated, "I was always interested in bugs, which is why I went into bacteriology. I went to Long Island University in New York and received my master's degree in hospital administration." Although Bill's job takes him many places, he and his family call Midlothian home. "We have lived in Midlothian for 12 years. We chose it because of the schools." Bill and his wife, Donna, have two daughters, Nicole, who is a freshman at Midlothian High School, and Britt, a student at the University of Texas at Austin.

As we go about our busy days, it is good to know that there are dedicated professionals keeping watch for the next storm. **NOW**

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Light and Bright

— By Jaime Ruark

Not often can a stranger walk into a house for the first time and feel instantly at home. Sometimes a home is so elegant and new, a person feels they should exercise caution before even sitting down. Sometimes a house has become so cluttered with beloved belongings the eye is overwhelmed at being pulled in too many directions at once. It can be difficult to decorate a home in a way that makes each and every visitor feel comfortable. Jim and Helen McCarthy's three-bedroom, three-bath residence, tucked away in a newly developed part of Midlothian, imparts this feeling of instant coziness the moment you walk through the front door. Their house is truly a home.

Jim and Helen met while he was in the Marine Corps. Helen, who is originally from Scotland, has lyrical, almost song-like speech, still accented with her native Scottish tongue. The two met on a ferry, and Jim was unable to resist the pretty young blond with the winning smile. Twenty-eight years of marriage

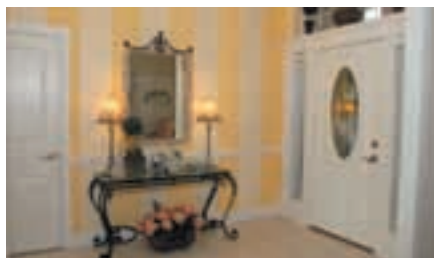
*At
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With*

**Jim
and
Helen
McCarthy**



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later, finds them in Midlothian, where they have lived for five years. "We lived in Illinois for 17 years and have been in Texas for 10. I just love the weather here," Helen expressed. "The winters are so nice." The couple has two sons and one daughter, as well as one cute-as-a-button granddaughter, Emily.



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A winding path leads to the welcoming entry, with sweet little iron rabbits scurrying around the doorbell cover. Wicker chairs offer a place to sit and visit while viewing the visible expanse of the front yard, a beautiful green in the spring, ringed by trees and a fence that Jim and his son are building together. Inside, bright and cheery walls striped in two complementary yellow tones open onto the formal dining room to the left and a room that was previously

Helen's daughter's living room and will soon become the formal living area. Each room is artfully decorated and well-appointed. Yet, as Helen

revealed during her tour, "Our house is a work in progress. There's still a lot to do. We have a lot of plans for the future."

In the center of the formal dining room is a glass-topped table with a bouquet of tulips resting in the middle. A china

hutch contains some of Helen's favorite treasures. "This is my pride and joy — my wedding china," she twinkled,



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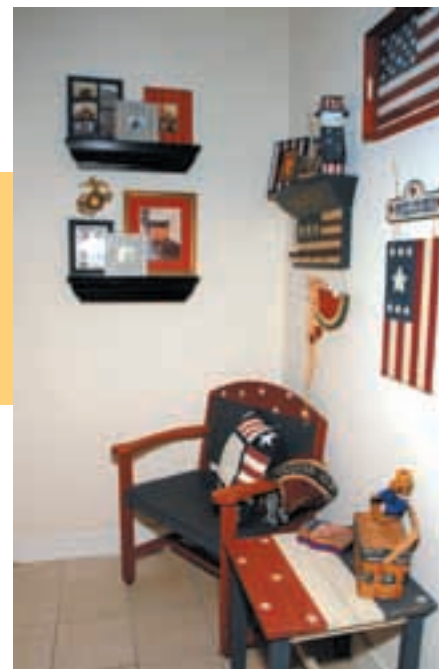


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showing off her polished crystal and delicate pink rose-patterned display. "My sister and my mom just came out last November and brought champagne glasses to complete the set," Helen interjected. "It's Victorian Rose. Over the years I've added to it."

In Helen's kitchen there is a space dedicated to the honor of her father. "He was in the second World War. He was in Burma, Germany and Normandy, France. I keep his testimonial there," she pointed out. She has framed his soldier picture along with a commendation



telling of his valor. "We always giggle at the wording — 'a reliable and sober man.' He liked his whiskey," she shared, pride bubbling through her laughter. Helen has another corner dedicated to Jim, for his time in the service. "My little Americana corner," she has named it, with red, white and blue coloring the decor. Here she also has framed medals earned by her father, again a



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Helen's custom-made cabinets are maple with a clear finish allowing the integrity of the wood to show through. Granite counters in shades of blacks and browns blend with stainless steel appliances, and a bay window lets in abundant light, offering a view of the backyard. The window also serves as a backdrop to Helen's tea service. "My mother-in-law gave this to me and we think it's over 100 years old," she said as she delicately fingered the porcelain teacup. "It was her mother's before her and is hand painted. I don't have many family heirlooms, because we started new with us, but this is a special one." Granddaughter Emily, up from her nap, shyly wanders into the room to hug Helen's leg, clutching her toy ponies in her wee hands. She allows herself to be coaxed into joining her "Papa" in his big chair where she snuggles sleepily to watch some television on his 65-inch flat screen.

Off the hallway is a guest bathroom, the McCarthys' humor reflected in the sign posted on the door reading, "The Throne." The throne is, in fact, one of Helen's very unique pieces: a pull-chain toilet. She shared, "I was so excited when we got this, and my mom says, 'When we got rid of these we thought we were coming up in the world and now you are going back to the old!'"



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The master bedroom boasts a grand four-poster bed, the white bedspread a bit of a compromise. "My favorite color is pink, but of course you can't do that through the whole house," she laughed. "Jim already complains about my girly bedroom." Here again are echoes of Helen's personality; much like the rabbits and bunnies that greet you when you walk in the door, angels and fairies flit through many decorations throughout her home, from wall hangings to picture frames.

In every room, a different cat finds a home, stretched across a floor or curled in a tight ball on a couch, including one very friendly, but very cross-eyed cat, named Gus. "We're down to four, but we had eight at one time," she chuckled. "I started off with four, but when my oldest son moved back in, he brought two kittens with him. Then when my daughter moved out, she took one with her but came back with three. I tell them now, 'If you come

back, no more cats! The cats go with you.'"

Jim and Helen have allowed for family touches throughout the house, which is perhaps part of what gives it



such a warm and familiar charm. Their 17-year-old son has decorated his room with "The Sultans of Slapstick," the Three Stooges. Little Emily has a sparkly door hanging that declares, "It's not easy being Princess Emily Rose."

Speaking of her decorating style, Helen said, "I think maybe because I'm European I like a lot of light colors, and I steer more toward the French Country style. I like the Swedish look. I like a lot of white furniture and light colors. My mama says the reason we go for the lighter furniture is because in Scotland we have such dark winters so they brighten the rooms up." In fact, her style is simply an echo of the light and bright woman herself. **NOW**

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From Cast-off to Upscale

— By Betty Tryon



Imagine rusted metal somehow coaxed into an original and exclusive piece of art. Imagination replaces reality in Carol Cull's world. She specializes in utilizing what may seem like useless scrap metal. "I call it junkyard art," she stated unabashedly. "The part I like the best in creating my art is finding pieces of metal. I go shopping at junkyards. Sometimes I walk along railroad tracks looking for pieces of metal. Many of my friends know I do this, so when they find something interesting they give it to me. There is a machine shop that gives me scrap metal also."

Carol has always wanted to weld, but it took a friend in a motorcycle group

to get her going. "I ride motorcycles and am part of a group. There is one member who knows how to stick weld, and he offered to teach me." Carol became so enthusiastic about stick welding that her husband gave her a wire welder as a Christmas gift. "I got a torch, and now I can melt things and stick things together," she said smiling.

Carol's creative spirit began long before her stick welding lesson. "I have always had an interest in art. I think I was born with the ability to do it. My mom was artistic and painted pastels. I don't remember her actually painting, but my Dad said she did. I was an Air Force brat, and we would stay in a place one-and-a-half years tops. By going to so many different school systems, living and training in different places, the teachers exposed me to different things. It was the only training I ever had in art." Because Carol moved so often, she found comfort and a sense of stability with her art. "It was something I could do all by myself. It's just like someone who writes music or plays, I can do it with others or alone."

After an unofficial sabbatical from art for about 30 years, Carol married and had children. Other than little craft projects with the kids, art was



pretty much absent from her life. After the kids were grown, that all changed when she and an employee challenged each other to explore their more artistic side. Carol stated, "We went to a meeting of the Ellis County Art Association and decided to join. They

ARTS NOW



meet once a month, and someone does a demonstration on different things each time."

Other than the crash course Carol received from her motorcycle friend, her knowledge about welding was woefully lacking. "My training was mostly by trial and error. I don't know a tenth of what I need to know," she said. "I always take a magnet with me to make sure it is the kind of metal I need. I started out making yard pieces like a sunflower with cut glass in it. To get that rustic look, I set the metal outside in the sun and spritz water on it."

Most of Carol's metal art has a rustic look to it but one piece on display, called *Rising Star*, is partly rustic and partly smooth. "You can polish some parts," she explained. It consists of huge metal nails from the railroad welded together with a wheel-looking apparatus salvaged from the machine shop. One of her more interesting creations is colored metal that resembles letters with metal poles attached to it. It is named *Tumbled*.

Creating art out of discarded metal is not Carol's only talent, she also paints, creates intriguing collages and conversation pieces out of gourds and



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metal. The first pastel painting Carol did won first place at Ellis County Art Show, DeSoto and Midlothian art shows. She humbly explained why she did the painting in the first place. "I did this pastel as a tribute to my mom.



We don't have any of her works. Dad said everything she painted, she gave away as soon as it was finished. I have had offers on it, but I won't sell it."

Another expression of Carol's expansive talent was demonstrated in oil painting. Several years ago, her first work, a painting of flamingos posing against a blue background, won second place at the Texas State Fair.

Her collages present a different aspect to her art. "I took an abstract class at Mountain View College in Dallas. The professor had us bring in a flower, draw the flower and then told us to tear it up. He had us look at the different shapes. Doing that helped me learn how to do collages."

Carol's efforts as an artist do not occupy all of her time. She and husband, Mike, own and operate Gingerbread Press and Fun Time Products. Her office is decorated with many of her creative pieces. She is fortunate to get to do something she loves every day — create and make things beautiful and unique. **NOW**



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The Team Comes First

— By Alex Allred

Two things can be said of Audrie Bowers. She is the ultimate team player and the girl-who-made-good for her hometown. Upon graduation, many young people leave their small hometowns in the quest of finding bigger, better opportunities. In particular, standout athletes eye the bigger schools and the bigger cities.

By all accounts, this could have been Audrie. Throughout her athletic career at Midlothian High School, she ran track and played volleyball, softball and basketball. She was elected captain of her basketball team — a position she accepted with pride. “It really meant a lot to me,” Audrie said. “I tried to be a leader and a mediator for the team.” Undoubtedly, it was just one of many qualities that helped earn her a partial academic college scholarship to Tarleton State University in Stephenville, Texas, where she also played basketball.

After one year, Audrie received a phone call from home. Her father had been diagnosed with cancer on the heels of her grandmother’s diagnoses of lung cancer. It was an incredibly difficult time and, as Audrie saw it, there was only one viable option. She came home. The close-knit family rallied, taking turns watching over their loved ones. Her siblings eventually

moved back to their out-of-state homes, while Audrie remained in Midlothian for good and graduated from the University of Texas at Arlington.

While her grandmother ultimately succumbed to the cancer, her father continued his battle for another 16 years. He never stopped fighting and in those remaining years with his family, he reinforced the meaning of teamwork to his daughter. “My parents supported me,” Audrie said, referring to how they supported her in whatever she did. This support included her sudden interest in pharmaceuticals. As she watched her grandmother and father battle the horrible disease, she realized the importance of medications and became extremely intrigued with the idea of becoming a pharmacist.

While working as an assistant technician to a pharmacist, Audrie was introduced to her husband, Jon. She soon realized working with pharmaceuticals was not her true calling. Her passion could only be realized in coaching. “Without him and all his help with Jacob, our 8-year-old son,” Audrie said, “I’d never be able to do what I enjoy doing as a coach.”

Using her leadership skills and life experiences, Audrie actively sought the middle school for a chance at coaching,

Sports NOW

saying, "I love this age group. I love to watch them bloom. It's so much fun to be a part of their lives because they are going through so much right now."

The middle school years, while arguably the most challenging for any educator, are also the years, according to Audrie, to build a foundation. When she accepted the position as head coach of girls' athletics at Walnut Grove Middle School, she took on the



While coaching sports has always been her dream, serving as a leader and mentor is her passion.

role of captain once more. "We teach the four Ps here," Audrie said, listing the code of conduct the school expects from their students. "Be prompt, prepared, productive and polite." It is, she said, a lesson that carries over into everyday life. "Lifelong lessons start right here, and I want my kids to know that I'm always here for them. I like to think of myself as their home-away-from-home parent. They spend so much time with us [the coaches and teachers]," Audrie said. "We want them to know they can come to us for any reason." While coaching sports has always been her dream, serving as a leader and mentor is her passion.

Many parents would be surprised to learn that Coach Bowers dutifully checks the grades of all her students in all of their courses, noting if there are unexplained absences or fallen grades. "If there are," she said, "I'll investigate it." This can mean a gentle "reminder"

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to turn in homework which can then translate into running during athletics or a sit-down for more serious problems. "It helps because I have the best coaching staff I've ever worked with," Audrie said. "The administration and teaching staff also work closely with us. We're all invested in the future of our kids."

Both professionally and personally, Audrie has already achieved her goals. She has made a difference in the lives of the children here in Midlothian.



When Walnut Grove first introduced pre-athletics to the sixth-graders, Audrie was on hand to personally see the fruits of the school's labors. "When those sixth-graders came in as seventh-graders, I saw tremendous results," she explained. "They already knew the fundamentals and the four Ps. It made a huge change in their attitude and skill level."

For Audrie, every year is a new challenge with new faces; one that she greets with open arms. This has been a particularly gratifying year for Audrie because, "for the first time, I get to watch my kids who moved on to high school." Although her schedule is very full, Audrie makes time to go to the high school games and watch her former students. "When they see me, they give me hugs," she said. "I love that! Just to get a hug is awesome."

Personal success has always been important to Audrie, but never more so than the team. The team has always come first. Team family, team kids, team Midlothian. "I can't imagine being anywhere but here," Audrie said. "This is home." **NOW**

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They Can Hear Me Now

— By Sandra McIntosh



As a doctor of audiology, Dr. Alice Wilson finds great rewards in waking up each morning long before her alarm goes off. “I wake up every day with a satisfied feeling that I’m going to positively affect the lives of the people I come in contact with,” Alice said, referring to the patients she sees at her Midlothian office. “What I do makes an impact.” This so-called ripple affect means the world to Alice. “I love knowing I’ve helped people hear the simplest sounds,” she explained. “The passion to help individuals hear definitely outweighs any other aspect of the business.”

Alice comes to the practice with 21 years of valued experience combining

science with human interaction. Her knowledge has grown with what she likes to call the “advent of the digital hearing aid.” Her journey to Midlothian included a move from Dallas to Waxahachie, where she helped set up an audiological office. “When I heard of a need in Midlothian,” she laughed, “I came running.” She opened the doors for business at Audiological Services of Ellis County “The Hearing Center” in 2001 at her first location on 6th Street, moving a little over two years ago to her present location at 1000 E. Main Street. “Patients come from as far away as Corsicana, Ennis and Waxahachie,” she said. “I have been incredibly blessed.”

Carrying a brand that fits the price range and need of every patient is important to Alice, as well. The Dot is sleek and modern, almost invisible to the untrained eye. The quality has been so improved in the past few years that the life of the batteries has doubled from five to 10 days in most cases. The Epoq XW by Oticon is Alice’s best-seller. This is the world’s first stereophonic hearing system with wireless Bluetooth connectivity. “It’s simply the most advanced hearing aid in the world,” she said, reading directly from the Epoq brochure. “Each ear works together as a system. Since your ears listen in stereo, shouldn’t your hearing aid work in stereo, too?”

Business NOW

The Epoq XW has the ability to do what other hearing instruments cannot. The system knows when you are listening and when you are talking. "It actually understands the difference," Alice said, as she explained the need her senior patients have when it comes to the loss of hearing. "They hear, but they don't fully understand what's being said. They need clarity. The sounds with the Epoq are richer and more distinct." Other added benefits include the

"I love knowing I've helped people hear the simplest sounds."

Epoq's ability to effortlessly connect with a cell phone in both ears with no wires, no interference and no hassles and the option to choose the size hearing aid that is right for you since they honestly come in a range of shapes, colors and sizes. "They really are state-of-the-art, quality instruments," Alice added.

Her staff includes the mother and daughter team of Becky and Lindsey Ovington. They are available during office hours to help make appointments and answer any questions you may have. As the office administrator, Becky takes charge of scheduling, advertising and serves as the first contact with patients, both new and returning. Lindsey is Alice's assistant when it comes to teaching patients, ranging in age from 3 to 98, how to properly care for their hearing aids — from inserting them and removing them correctly to changing the batteries and keeping their aids clean and well-maintained for longer life. "We all work very well together," Alice said, proud of the dedicated staff she has in place. Office hours are Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. For more information or to make an appointment with "your hometown hearing doctor," call (972) 723-6181. **NOW**

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Education **NOW**



For one spectacular night, every school in the Midlothian Independent School District presents some of its best and brightest students in one location. Educational Showcase Hollywood Style will treat the community to dazzling art productions and performances, share the secrets of science and math, impress you with the languages and make you proud of the students who labored so hard all year. Shara Backus, assistant principal at T.E. Baxter Elementary School, is part of the committee working to bring you the fourth Educational Showcase. "The showcase is an opportunity for parents to see how deeply engaging the lessons are," she said. "Teachers are finding ways to keep kids excited and learning.

Organizing and getting others to participate remains a part of Shara's life as she and others on the team face the mammoth task of putting the showcase together. "We start having meetings early in the year," she said. "Each school picks a different subject. Every first grade in each school chooses what subject to work on and the same with all the other grades in every school. The teachers come together and choose a project and what to display. The booths will be set up by subject, so you can see a continuum of progression of learning." A parent can see the work completed by first-graders, and see for themselves how the learning process progresses in those areas all the way to high school. The students participating in CBI (Community Based Instruction) have a booth as well.

The exhibits are not limited to required classes. After-school activities, such as

A Star for Everyone

— By Betty Tryon

Students will want to learn if they are engaged and you don't have the discipline problems. What is happening in classrooms now is so different than what we were exposed to, and it continues to evolve and change every year. There is nothing in your life that can change it more than getting an education. I have a passion and commitment to making a difference in the lives of children."

Shara's heritage led her into education, despite her efforts of choosing her first career in the grocery industry. "All of my aunts were teachers. My mom was a teacher and I didn't want to follow that path. Still, I remember when I was little and my friends would come over to visit, I'd make those poor kids fill out my worksheets. It's a wonder I had any friends," she said laughing. "I still have the desk where I had my friends sit and work."



Education **NOW**

Math Pentathlon, are also represented. Shara, who works with the Math Pentathlon students, said, "It is all about problem solving and strategic thinking and of course, math skills. The easiest way for us to showcase math skills is to play games."

There will be many booths at the showcase that feature different areas of interest or study in which the students are engaged. The exhibit booths are pre-K kids through 12th grade. Shara stated, "One of the booths from last year was the Spanish class — kids speaking that language at their booth and having Spanish food."

This year for your listening and viewing pleasure, all facets of the performing arts will be represented. "We will have a separate area for performing arts," she said. "There will be choirs from the elementary and intermediate schools and high school performers. The high school choir will present a combination of entertainment." Students in the fifth grade from Vitovsky Elementary will use their creative talents to make an original

**"Teachers are
finding ways to
keep kids excited
and learning."**

single CD while the art students design the cover for the CD. From Mountain Peak Elementary, fifth-graders, using iMovie will actually create a movie. The script, video tape and editing is part of the process.

Other exhibits being presented reflect the student's interest in community affairs. The Community Problem Solvers of the Middle Schools turned their attention this year to the Senior Citizen Food Pantry to aid with improvements. Kindergarteners from

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Education **NOW**



Mountain Peak Elementary will have a demonstration on community workers with a PowerPoint presentation of parents who spoke to the children. Also from Mountain Peak, third-graders will man a very unique booth. Displaying nine different habitats, and dressed in the clothing corresponding to those habitats, will turn their exhibit into a living museum.

Shara is especially proud of the students from T.E. Baxter Elementary School, who did a comprehensive study on World War II (WWII) integrating language, math, science, social studies, technology and an interview with Mr. T.E. Baxter, a WWII veteran. Their presentation during the showcase includes the creation of scrapbooks of the diaries of child Holocaust victims and spreadsheets on countries calculating casualties of war. The social studies unit completed a Radio Podcast showing events of the war with an interview with Mr. Baxter as a WWII veteran. An extra treat for the community will be the students demonstrating their presentations in full costume.

The Education Showcase presents a great opportunity to visualize our students' progression through the school years. This occasion will celebrate what they have learned. Shara stated, "This is not a money making project. We want to celebrate what students have been doing. When you give kids an audience, it encourages them to learn." **NOW**

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Around Town

NOW



A ribbon cutting, at top, was held at GMAC Real Estate. Members of the Midlothian Legacy Chapter of DeMolay International, bottom left, built bears for the Texas Baptist Home in Waxahachie. They also stopped by the Midlothian Senior Citizens Center, bottom right, to unload trailers and help restock the food pantry. The MISD Education Foundation Star Patrol, second row right, surprised teachers at T.E. Baxter Elementary with innovative teaching grants.

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Dr. David A. Gardner

Around Town NOW



Mt. Peak Elementary School students and their families, top left, raised over \$12,000 for the American Heart Association during the Jump Rope for Heart event. David Hutchinson, Joe Fallis and Edward Lopez from Midtech Power and Control, second row left, were recently honored with the Thomas M. Drury Award. MHS Pantherettes, bottom left, won many awards at the MA Nationals held recently in Fort Worth. Keri Pace, Jo McCool and Jennifer Dunn, teachers from Longbranch Elementary, top and bottom right, became human ice cream sundaes for a good cause.

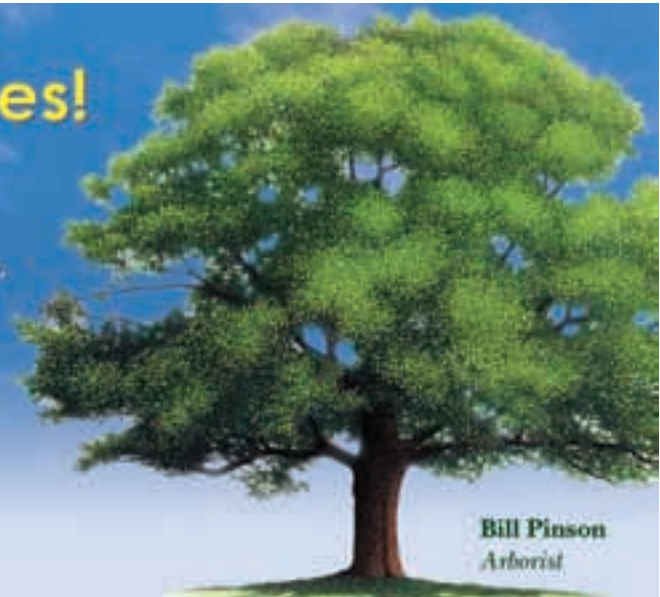
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Look Who's Cooking

— By Faith Browning

IN THE KITCHEN WITH JESSE WILSON

Since developing a love for cooking early in life, 14-year-old Frank Seale Middle School student, Jesse Wilson, can now prepare meals with ease. "I can always remember wanting to help my mom in the kitchen," he said. His mom, Kristi Wilson, remembers his interest in cooking starting around age 7. Kristi now values the mother-and-son teamwork they share in the kitchen. They enjoy spending quality time together watching cooking shows and getting new recipes.

During holidays, Jesse has always enjoyed helping in the kitchen. He has established his own Thanksgiving tradition: preparing his Spaghetti Salad Supreme recipe. His favorite activity in the kitchen is baking cakes. He believes young men should be comfortable in the kitchen. "My girlfriend thinks it's great," he beamed. *******

To view more of your neighbors' recipes, visit our archives at www.nowmagazines.com.

SPAGHETTI SALAD SUPREME

1 10-oz. pkg. spaghetti noodles, cooked and drained
3 bell peppers, chopped
6 - 8 green onions, chopped
6 Roma tomatoes, chopped
1 6-oz. can black olives, sliced
6-8 ozs. Italian dressing
1 8-oz. bottle McCormick Salad Supreme

Mix all ingredients together. Chill for at least 2 hours.

HOMEMADE CHICKEN NOODLE SOUP

1 whole chicken
2 large bay leaves

2 carrots, chopped
6 green onions, chopped
1 garlic clove, chopped
4 chicken bullion cubes
3 celery stalks, chopped
1 bag egg noodles

Wash chicken; place in large pot; cover with water. Add bay leaves, 1 chopped carrot, 3 chopped green onions, garlic and bullion cubes. Boil for 1 hour. Remove chicken; set aside to cool. Remove vegetables from stock. After chicken is cooled enough to handle, remove skin, de-bone and cut up into bite-sized pieces. Return chicken to the stock; add remaining chopped carrot, green onion and celery. Add egg noodles; cook until noodles are done. Serve with warm French bread.

FRENCH DIP

1 small onion, sliced
1 pint sliced mushrooms
1 32-oz. box beef broth
1 loaf French bread
1 lb. roast beef, thinly sliced
8 slices Provolone cheese

Sauté mushrooms and onions until soft. Add beef broth; simmer. Cut the top of the French bread lengthwise, so the bottom section can be scooped out making a bowl; scoop out the bread in the center. Pile roast beef in bread bowl. Drain onions and mushrooms, keeping the broth. Pile mushrooms and onions on top of roast beef; cover beef with cheese. Place top of the loaf on top of beef and cheese. Bake

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at 350 F until cheese melts. Cut loaf to preferred servings. Serve with saved broth for dipping.

FRIED CABBAGE AND BACON

- 1 lb. bacon
- 1 head green cabbage, chopped

Cut bacon into small pieces; cook in a small frying pan. Add what cabbage you can get on top of cooked bacon. Coat cabbage with bacon juices allowing cabbage to cook down. Continually add more cabbage until all is in the pan. Cook until all cabbage is done.

RAVIOLI ALFREDO

- 1 24-oz. jar mushroom Alfredo sauce
- 1 pint fresh mushrooms, sliced
- 2 1-lb. bags frozen ravioli, cooked and drained

Combine mushrooms and sauce in a pan; bring to a light boil. Cover ravioli with sauce in a large bowl or individual servings for preferred sauce coverage. Serve with bread sticks and salad or Portabella mushroom steaks sautéed in garlic butter.

TOMATO RANCH SKINS

- 4 large baking potatoes
- 1 14-oz. bottle ranch dressing
- 1 8-oz. can diced tomatoes, drained
- 1 8-oz. bag cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1 pint grape or cherry tomatoes
- bacon bits

Bake potatoes until done, about 1 hour. Roast whole grape or cherry tomatoes on cookie sheet at 350 F for 2 minutes. Cut potatoes in half and scoop out insides. Combine the insides of potato with 1/2 bottle of ranch dressing, diced tomatoes, 1/2 bag of cheddar cheese. Stuff mixture into potato skins. Top with bacon bits, roasted tomatoes and remaining cheese. Bake at 350 F for 20 minutes. Serve with remaining ranch dressing for dipping.

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Get More Value

— By Tim Tobey

In today's busy world, filled with concern over the rising cost of gas and housing, many of us look for ways to get greater value for our time and money. One way you may not have considered is having all of your insurance needs taken care of in one place.

There are advantages to having your car, home and family protected by the same insurance company. Switching all your policies to one well-respected insurer might save you time and money, not to mention the convenience of having only one number to call for questions or claims.

Many insurance companies offer a range of discounts that vary by state. Be sure to ask the agent about the availability and amount of any discounts offered by the insurer. Here are some common discounts you should know about:

- **Multiple line:**

Your premiums may be reduced if you have more than one policy with the same company or family of companies that covers your car.

- **Good student:**

Full-time students (high school or higher) maintaining at least a "B" average may qualify for reduced premiums.

- **Multiple car:**

Your premiums may be reduced if there are two or more private-passenger cars in the household insured by the same company or family of companies.

These are just a few of the discounts that may save you money. Once you have considered price, think about the quality of service you expect. The best value should save you both time and money. Here are a few things to consider:

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- Is the insurer available to discuss your needs and help customize a package of services that is best for you and your family?
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Be sure you are getting the most value for your time and money. Call your agent or insurance company today and ask if you can get more value by having all your insurance needs taken care of in one place. **NOV**

Tim Tobey is a State Farm agent based in Midlothian.

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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. **XXX**

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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Community Calendar

Every Tuesday

Midlothian Rotary Club meeting, noon, Midlothian Civic Center, 224 South 11th Street. (972) 775-7118.

Second and Fourth Tuesdays

Midlothian City Council meeting, 6:00 p.m., City Hall, 104 West Avenue E.

First and Third Thursdays

Midlothian Lions Club meeting, 7:00 p.m., Midlothian Civic Center, 224 S. 11th Street. (972) 775-7118.

May 3

Bluegrass Music Fundraiser for Midlothian Relay for Life, Midlothian Civic Center. Contact John Dodd at (972) 670-9040 for more information.

Midlothian Chamber of Commerce Arts and Crafts Spring Fling, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., Heritage Park. Contact the Chamber at (972) 723-8600 or visit www.info@midlothianchamber.org.

Me & My Monkey (Beatles tribute band) concert, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m., Kimmel Park. (972) 775-7777.

May 5

MISD Educational Showcase, 6:30 p.m., Midlothian High School. This event spotlights students as they demonstrate the quality work created on a daily basis.

May 6

No School. Inclement Weather Day.

May 10

Movie in the Park, Hawkins Springs Park. Starts at dark. Sponsored by Gateway Church. (972) 775-7777.

May 15

American Business Women's Association (ABWA) Express Network meeting: 5:45 p.m. at the Waxahachie Civic Center. \$25.00 for dinner. For reservations: (972) 938-0703. For membership: (972) 723-6551 or visit www.abwa-empoweringwomen.org.

May 16

Relay for Life Walk, Midlothian Chapter, Walnut Grove Middle School. Contact Judy Ford at (972) 775-7152 for more information.

May 17

Jazz Night, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m., Heritage Park. MISD Jazz bands and others. Call (972) 775-7777 or visit www.midlothian.tx.us for additional information.

May 19

School Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Administration Building.

May 23

No School. Inclement Weather Day.

May 24

8th Street Dance, 6:00 - 10:00 p.m. Featuring King Creole and the House Band at Gilley's. (972) 775-7777.

May 26

No School. Memorial Day.

May 31

Movie in the Park, Hawkins Springs Park. *The Final Season*. (972) 775-7777.

June 5

MHS Graduation, 8:00 p.m., Multipurpose Stadium.

June 7

Annual Pancake Fly-In at Mid-Way Regional Airport, Waxahachie, 8:00 a.m. - 11:00 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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