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May 2009

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**Battle of  
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At Home With

**Eddie and  
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Subscriptions are available at the rate of \$35 per year or \$3.50 per issue. Subscriptions should be sent to: NOW Magazines, P.O. Box 1071, Waxahachie, TX 75168. For advertising rates or editorial correspondence, call (972) 875-3299 or visit [www.nowmagazines.com](http://www.nowmagazines.com).



## Editor's Note

Dear Ennis,

May is here with all its attendant festivities. Spring in Ennis brings Polka Fest May 22 through May 24. The local color, pageantry, tradition, music and food of Czech culture appeal to everyone.

The Encore Choirs are presenting *Willy Wonka, Jr.* this month. Come out on the evenings of May 8 or 9 to see the performance at San Jacinto Auditorium. It will be thrilling for the kids who have worked so hard, and you will have a wonderful time.

I will not be missing the Battle of the Bands at the new Ennis High School auditorium on May 16. Come and witness the next generation of music in Ennis performing live and perhaps see history in the making!

Inspiration, Inc. presents *Crowns*, a musical by Regina Taylor May 15 and 16. The play celebrates a young African-American woman finding her place in the world.

Kelly Kovar

EnnisNOW Editor

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# Culture Club

— By Kelly Kovar

Victor and Joanie Havel moved to Ennis in 2005. "I am Czech, and it was a very pleasant surprise to me to find the Czech community here," Victor said. "One of my passions is genealogy. Ennis is kind of an exciting place for that, because every time people get together, the conversation always ends up, 'Say, aren't we related?' When I moved here, I started going to the Ellis County Czech Heritage Society meetings (ECCHS)." Victor became very active in the ECCHS and, before long, was elected president.

Genealogy is one of the cornerstones of the ECCHS, which was founded in 1987, but they also provide local Czech activities. Czech movies, with English subtitles, are shown at the library. Christmas brings the big social event of the year, the soup and salad night. Last fall, they hosted a state-wide meeting of the Czech Heritage Society of Texas. "We had an excellent turnout, made some money for our scholarship fund, and apparently put on quite a show because we received a lot of compliments about how to do a state meeting," Victor said. "We could draw upon the talent we had here. We had our own Czechadee dancers and the Junior Historians dancers from West High School. The 2008 Czech Heritage Queen from Hillsboro, Ashley Sulak,

performed, and David Slovak played for us." This year, the Czech Heritage Queen contestant from Ennis is Michelle Barak. "Michelle's *krój* [native Czech attire] is from Bohemia and she will be wearing it on our float at the Polka Fest."

Victor's grandparents were also from Bohemia. "They were brought up only 50 miles apart, but they didn't meet and marry until they were both in

was installing chimneys at the estate."

Victor's grandparents eventually came to the United States when Victor's dad was 4 years old, settling in Little Pilsen, a Bohemian neighborhood of Chicago. Victor still remembers the wonderful pastries his grandmother made. "Her cuisine was Viennese, because that was where she had learned to cook. She made deep-fat-fried doughnuts that

were jelly-filled. You could take them right out of a fryer and put them in a sack with powdered sugar and shake them up."

After Victor graduated from the University of Illinois, he went overseas working for Hughes Aircraft, based in California. "I think every young person should spend a year after school doing some sort of service in order to

get out of their community and see the world before they settle down," Victor commented. While he was working in Europe as an electrical engineer, Victor researched his family in Czechoslovakia. "In 1966, my folks came to visit me in Europe, and it turned out that the Czechoslovakian government had just decided two weeks earlier that they were going to open the borders for



Vienna in the 1890s during the Austria-Hungarian Monarchy," Victor recounted. "In that time, life was pretty poor on the farms and the young people would head to one of the big cities, which meant either Prague or Vienna. My grandfather was apprenticed off as a tin smith. My grandmother was a cook in the estate of a lesser nobility and they met while my grandfather





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Western currency. They would allow you to drive up to the border and get a 48-hour visa. So, we decided on the spur of the moment that we would do it, and it was quite an experience.”

As a student of genealogy, Victor has learned some fascinating information. “Thanks to DNA testing, people have been looking at what is in a native Czech’s DNA. It turns out the largest percentage of any identifiable culture is Celtic. The Celts always interested me. The original Celts were Central Europeans who lived north of the Alps, but south of Scandinavia. They were the iron makers of Europe, during the



**“The Polka Fest has a connection with the old country and culture, and it brings color and enthusiasm to the community.”**



Iron Age. They established a wealthy chieftain class and their graves, found all over the Czech Republic, Ireland and other parts of Europe, have a lot of gold in them. They were warriors and trading people who were inventors” Victor informed.

Victor met his wife, Joanie, in Frankfurt, Germany, where she was working for the Corps of Engineers, in 1985. “I was born in California and grew up on [the island of] Guam,” Joanie said. “Growing up on Guam, my friends were Samoan and Hawaiian and Tahitian plus Americans from all over the United States.” She lived in Texas for 30 years and then went overseas to Europe, where she found she was very comfortable, perhaps since



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she is of three-quarters German ancestry. "Coming to Ennis, I get the pleasantness of Texas along with the European culture. It is a lovely little town which reminded me of my hometown in California. Ennis is a family town and they accept me so graciously, even though I am not Czech."

The ECCHS has several goals it hopes to realize in order to have a more active program. "We need to re-establish the Czech language because the younger generation doesn't know it," Victor said. "We are currently looking for a teacher to restart our language class." He hopes to interest more young people in being members. "The good news is the Czech heritage among the young people is still very much present." In order to attract a younger generation, Victor and Joanie have considered bringing in some other elements of music and dancing, beyond polka dancing. "Among Czechs, Ennis is known as the music capital."

"It would be nice if we could get together some bands that play, not only polka music, but cross the line and play more modern music, country western, Tejano and rock 'n' roll in order to connect with the music of the local population and showcase the breadth of culture here," Joanie explained. "We have some great history here. We could do an international dance with Czech *keřoj*, beautiful Spanish costumes and country western costumes."

"In Europe and in the Czech Republic, there is a fascination with the American West — and Texas as the epitome of that," Victor said. "If we were to put together a dance group and wanted to go perform in the Czech Republic, they would enjoy seeing something that is uniquely Czech-Tex."

"The European culture that Czechs bring is a major contribution here," Joanie said. "They infuse energy and enlightenment. They have brought music and an appreciation for the joy in life. The Polka Fest has a connection with the old country and culture, and it brings color and enthusiasm to the community." **NOW**



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## At Home With Eddie and Terri Richardson



— By Sandra McIntosh

Before they met, Eddie and Terri Richardson had been shopping at the same stores, eating in the same restaurants and even shared some of the same friends. Eddie lived in Ennis for several years before he and Terri had the opportunity to meet. “It really is amazing how two people can go so long in a small town before meeting each other,” Terri said. “The time just had to be right,” she added.

In 1995, Eddie had relocated his business, Red River Machinery, to the Ellis County area based solely on the encouragement of Johnny Cody. “Johnny Cody was my first customer back in the ’70s,” Eddie explained. The rest, it seems, is what many would consider the proverbial “domino effect.” Once Eddie and Terri finally met, it was not long before they were engaged.

“We were very happy being engaged,” Terri smiled, “but Eddie decided we needed to make some plans for the future.” Plans for the future included a trip to Hawaii where the two were married on Terri’s birthday, October 8, 2000. “It was a very nice





time to say the least. It was a fun time," Terri recalled.

Once married, they took up housekeeping in Terri's home located within the city limits. As time moved forward, the couple began driving around town to look at the different home styles and see what was available. It was on one of these trips that they both fell in love with the home of Buddy and Harriett Jeffers. "At one point in time, I asked them if they would sell us their home," Eddie laughed. "They said, 'No,' but they



were gracious enough to let us tour the home."

After returning home from the house hunting tour, Eddie began to sketch the three-bedroom, three-full and two-half-bath home they enjoy today on Cody Road. "Eddie designed the home from scratch," Terri said, with pride in her voice. The plans were then taken to a local architect so they could be formalized for the building process. The building started in April 2001. "I'd come out every day to look at the progress during the building process," Terri admitted, "and every day something on the plans changed. Eddie likes crooks, turns and recessed lighting." He may have kept changing his mind, but the changes only added to the ambience, comfort and coziness of the finished home, which the couple moved into that September.

Visitors to the "Lazy R" are greeted

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by sculptures Eddie acquired from Florida — including a red stag, two leopards and several birds — as they make their way through the double gates to the porte cochere. Once under its protection, the hunter's lodge style of the home becomes even more apparent. The oversized front entryway door was shipped from Brazil, while the massive quantity of woodwork throughout the home was completed by local artisan, Ed Vrana. "The woodwork is so detailed," Eddie stated, as he pointed

to the built-in entertainment center that spans the length of the living room wall. "Ed told us that there's more customized woodwork in this house than any other house he's worked on." The entertainment wall has open shelving for three of the couple's Remington statuettes.

Austin stone was the choice for the interior accents such as the fireplace and the wall surrounding the stove, but Eddie decided to go with ridge stone for the exterior. Another local artisan,

David Maliska, was the contractor for the home which is foundationally held in place by 180 piers. All the countertops are granite, the wood used throughout is oak and each room has its own unique tray ceiling. "The ceilings are anywhere from 10 to 26 feet high, depending on the room you're in and no two are alike," Eddie stated. "The doorways are all 8 feet." The antler chandeliers, which hang in the entryway and in the great room area, were designed by Terry Hilger, while the



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As a blended family with three children and four grandchildren between the two, Eddie and Terri made the decision to downsize on the collectibles when they moved into their new abode. "I still collect glass balls and tea cups," Terri mentioned. "People still gift me with both, and I still buy a few myself."

Eddie is the proud owner of two rebuilt antique slot machines that date back to 1924 and 1940. Both are in perfect working order. "They are more

to look at than to actually play," he said.

The one possession that Terri was unable to part with was her mom's antique table and chairs. They take their rightful place in the eating area of the great room. "Eddie refinished the table and we had the chairs re-upholstered," Terri explained. "He's very artistic that way. He's a 'can do' kind of guy." Her mom's chairs are spaced around the great room, while much more comfortable chairs that belonged to Eddie are placed around the table. "The table must be at least 100 years old," Terri added. "My parents

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bought it in 1957 from a couple of kids who said their parents had used the table for at least 50 years.”

The entire home is an artistic masterpiece, but Eddie’s crowning glory can be found in the master bathroom. Large river rocks frame a fireplace on one side of the room. On the opposite side of the room, the circular double shower, also framed with the river rocks, gives the appearance of a well. Counter to ceiling mirrors, large walk-in closets, plenty of storage space and the barrel ceiling complete the overall peaceful

feeling for which Eddie was striving.

Memories of the couple’s years together are displayed throughout the home in perfect harmony. Hunting trophies are seen high above the cabinetry in the kitchen, while framed Vincent van Gogh prints that Terri has grown to love, grace the entire width of the hallway going to the guest bedrooms. A pencil drawing of Sam, Eddie’s longtime pet dog, was done by local artist Marty Sanchez. It hangs regally on the wall outside the master suite. Two new puppy additions, Louie

and Max, are filling the void that was left at Sam’s recent passing.

The country life is peaceful, serene and quiet. It took time for Terri to get comfortable in her new surroundings, but she soon realized it was not the house or the location that brings a couple happiness. “A house is just four walls. A house itself will not make you happy,” she said. “The feelings that are shared make it a home. I still say my guardian angel brought me to Eddie. It had everything to do with the right timing.” **NOW**

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# Jak Se Do

— By Kelly Kovar

*“Jak se máš?”* or “How do you do?” can be used interchangeably to inquire into someone’s well-being, and in the case of Tony Vitovsky, he is doing just fine. He has led a local polka band, Jak Se Do, (pronounced: yock say dew) for the last six years. “We are opening the Polka Festival this year,” Tony said. “We play Friday night at KC (Knights of Columbus) Hall. That is the biggest night, and it is the biggest crowd because it is in one place. That is where they crown the king and queen.” Since Jak Se Do will be playing all evening, Tony may have to wait until Saturday to get in some polka dancing of his own. “My wife, Debbie, and I are really good dancers. We do the double shuffle and really tear the floor up!”

At the very first Polka Fest, Tony, as a young teenager, played accordion in his first band, The Polkateers. “We have a plaque engraved, ‘1967 First Annual Polka Festival.’ Thereafter, it seemed like I played every year in the polka festival in some band.” Tony’s parents, recognizing his musical aptitude, gave him a \$50 Sears and Roebuck accordion when he was 12. “I was bound and determined I was going to learn this thing,” he recalled. “I wanted to play so bad, I just kept working and taught myself.”

After his stint with The Polkateers, Tony played accordion and then electronic organ for the Johnnie Mensik Band for several years. “We played for dances throughout the Ennis, Dallas, Fort Worth areas, and some down South — I had a blast.” In the following years, Tony went on to play accordion with several groups, including: The Melody Masters, Lone Star Czechs, Sulak Brothers and The Cash 5 Band. Tony sat in



with a number of other polka bands, such as: the Music Masters, Charlie Adamcik Band and the Eric Honza Band.

Playing in a band is demanding, and Tony gave some thought to retiring. “The late nights of loading and putting away your equipment and the worry that goes into making sure your musicians will show up for practice, is hard work. You get to bed about 3:00 a.m., totally beat. It is a hard life. You would not believe how much time and work it is to run a band, and my hat is off to my wife, Debbie, for her constant support. But, it is fun work; it is rewarding and I like it,” he shared.

After taking a little time off from music, Tony decided to invest in a professional accordion with a MIDI (musical instrument digital interface) built into it and a tone generator. With his new equipment, he could produce the sounds of a bass player, a drummer and other instruments. “It sounds like a six-piece band. I began to play some really good functions by myself. I played for The Taste of Ennis for 11 years,” he said.

In time though, Tony missed playing with a band and got a few guys together. “It just worked right back into a band,” he said. “This time we are having a lot of fun.” They played casually for a few years, until getting an official name, Jak Se Do. “I was about to say *‘Jak se máš?’* to someone where we were playing, when I realized he wasn’t Czech, and I stuttered and it came out *‘Jak se . . . do?’*” It became an inside joke, and eventually someone suggested it as a band name. “It has been a really good conversation piece,” Tony said.

“My right-hand man, Ab John Sulak, who played saxophone, passed on a few years ago and we miss him dearly,” Tony



reflected. Sulak's white hat is on the cover of their recently released CD, *Memories of the Past . . . Memories to be Made*, which is dedicated to him. "I have some good musicians with me, though: Bobby Adamcik, Chris Valek, Mike Snapka, Rick Barto and Byron Palla."

Along the way, Tony enjoyed a lengthy career as a supervisor with Leggett and Platt in Ennis. "I went to Leggett and Platt while I was still in high school," Tony recounted. After taking some time off to attend electronics school, he returned there in 1973. This year, he took early retirement from his

**"It became an inside joke, and eventually someone suggested it as a band name."**




position as operations manager. He devotes his time now to being band manager and leader for Jak Se Do and to his passion of passing down a love of Czech culture and music from generation to generation. "My grandparents, on Daddy's side, came over on a boat. We are from Moravia. I am third generation. My dad actually played banjo in a band in the 40s. Now, my daughters, Anne and Sara, love music as much as I do. They both played in the high school band. Anne's son, my grandson, Ethan Ludwig, loves Czech music and is tinkering with the accordion. You can tell he is very talented and interested. We hope that people like him carry on and have memories of us when we are gone," Tony said. **NOW**

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# Home to Serve

— By Patricia Anthony

game. “While some students worked as office or library aides in their off period, I would go to the tennis building from 6:30 to 7:00 in the morning and help with the junior-high program,” Wyatt explained.

At that time, the number one tennis player in the world was Pete Sampras. “He was, and still is, my favorite of all time,” Wyatt enthused. “His playing style, his strokes, the way he conducted himself impressed me. That year, he was playing in Wimbledon and other tournaments. I just wanted to keep watching him. That’s how I got the bug,” he said. “He and Coach Howard are the two that inspired me the most. I’m now Coach Howard’s assistant. The big joke here at ‘the club’ [the EISD Tennis Center] is that he did the same thing I did. He grew up here in Ennis, went to college, was a coach in Waxahachie and then took this job in Ennis.”

Wyatt trained under Coach Howard in junior high and high school. After high school, he attended the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma (USAO) on a scholarship and played tennis there. After receiving a double major in business administration and business management, with a minor in liberal arts, he worked in the business world for a while. “But there wasn’t anything there for me,” Wyatt commented. “There was no passion; it was all boring.” After that, Wyatt attended the

University of North Texas and received his teacher’s certification, moved to Sherman and ran a facility similar to the one in Ennis.

After being there for two-and-a-half years, Wyatt received a call from Coach Howard to return to Ennis to teach tennis. “It was good to come home,” Wyatt stated. “Being a teacher for the Ennis Independent School District [EISD] is awesome. There’s such camaraderie here among the teachers. I love coaching tennis. It doesn’t even seem like a job; I get to play every day. I get to show kids how to hit shots, and then we play a game,” he explained. “When we’re playing, we’re having fun.” For Wyatt, it is such a great feeling to teach a student a concept about the game and watch them as they “get it.”

“Our wins versus losses may not look too good these past two years, but I still feel quite a sense of accomplishment because of the work I do with the students. I’m teaching students the love of tennis the same way I learned it from my coach,” he

Ennis may not yet be known as a tennis town, but the tennis program is good and growing at an amazing rate. The credit for this growth lies totally with Coaches Keith Howard and Wyatt Johnson. “There are no tennis clubs in Ennis,” Wyatt shared. “If a student gets introduced to tennis in this town, it’s through us. That’s it; we’re the only two tennis guys in Ennis.”

Wyatt is not from an athletic family. He grew up on a ranch outside Ennis near Kaufman. “My family were outdoors people who did things like fishing and hunting, so for me to play tennis was a big change for my family,” he said.

Wyatt started playing tennis in 1996, the summer after he graduated from junior high school. He fell in love with the



continued. "Also, it feels good to know the parents trust me with their kids. I've influenced a lot of students at all levels. I'm their role model, so I make sure I set the right example.

"Coach Howard and I work well together, but we are different. That's good for our kids because they will relate to one of us. They come to us — oh my goodness — with everything and we help them. Sometimes, we play the role of part-time parents, and that's a huge



responsibility. But they come to us because they know they can, and that's awesome. It's comforting to know that we can do that."

The EISD Tennis Center is a very nice facility with both indoor and outdoor courts. "Coach Howard and I volunteered this as a back-up site for college teams, because we want our kids to see professionals play," he said. "Baylor will play teams like Texas Tech, Virginia, UCLA, Stanford — all these schools are awesome schools that some dream about [attending], and our kids get to see their players. Most colleges don't have indoor courts, so they come here. That's how special this place is."

The flip side of this is that there is never a day off. "I'm a year-round employee of EISD," Wyatt said. However, he does not appear to mind the long hours; he is just happy to be able to instill the love for tennis in Ennis' youth. In the three years he has been here, the junior high tennis program has grown from 50 to 100 student participants. With growth like this, Ennis may soon be known for its tennis program. **NOW**

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# The Wonder of a Seed

— By Kelly Kovar

Suzanne Holley, owner of Outdoor Texas Landscape, is open for business at a delightful new location. From the wide front porch of the historical home, which belonged to her great-grandfather, she can look out over the bedding plants and spring flowers that are ready for customers. “I’m just thrilled that I am at a location where I have the room to set up the trays for my seeds,” Suzanne exclaimed. “I grow plants from seeds all year long. The wonder of planting a seed is that you get a handful of seeds for a dollar and see how many plants that will make. It is just wonderful. I love to watch things grow and tend [to] them.”

Outdoor Texas Landscape specializes in designing and installing complete landscape plans. When Suzanne comes to a client’s home, she knows what to look for and what to ask in order to plan exactly what is needed. Using a surveyor’s wheel, she takes precise measurements and then the design goes on a graph paper grid. “You have to know the spacing between the plants. I am mesmerized by the whole process; the creation of something beautiful.” When a client bought a number of plants recently and did not know what to do with them, Suzanne came to the rescue with an attractive, livable plan. “I designed the plants into a sitting area with a swing, and across the back, put two tall pine trees, crimson pygmy barberry and bright green creeping juniper.” Red bark mulch was accented with red moss rocks. A crepe myrtle tree-ring with knock-out roses and boxwood completed the plan.

Organic gardening is the method used. “The whole concept of the plant life in your yard is that by not using chemicals, you get a lot of beneficial bugs, and butterflies, hummingbirds and frogs and worms. All of that helps your plants to do better,” said Suzanne, who offers trees, shrubs, grass and drought-resistant



plantings. She can provide mulch, compost and top soil, as well. Patios, stonework and waterfalls can be added to any plan, and Outdoor Texas Landscape will do the construction and installation.

One of the main things Suzanne offers is bedding plants that re-seed. "People don't realize that annual plants that re-seed will come back." In addition, she offers "how-to" classes on Saturdays in the expansive front room of the business. "I will be having classes on rose pruning, upside-down tomato baskets, "welcome" hanging baskets, decorated birdhouses, personalized stepping stones, creative wind chimes and "Planting in Squares" veggie gardens. It is so much more fun to have a hands-on class. For a small fee, people can come and make something to take home."

Suzanne sells affordable, potted start-up plants for vegetable gardens. "I just took a vegetable garden by-the-foot class and it is a wonderful technique. You take a 4-foot by 4-foot raised bed and divide it into 16, 1-foot square plots. The right potting mix for vegetables is compost and vermiculite and peat moss. The peat moss provides a little bit more acid, which vegetables like. Depending on the size of the vegetables, you plant one or two or three and then they grow and you can save the seeds. Those grow with their time frame and they are ready to eat. When you pull them up, you can plant something else in its place. It saves space, it is easier. You don't get 20 plants of broccoli that are all going to mature at the same time. I will set these up for people and also show people how to make them."

Stop by Outdoor Texas Landscape at 306 E. Jefferson in Palmer Monday through Saturday from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. for a pot to brighten up a front porch or kitchen window. Suzanne is available mornings for landscape design appointments. Call (972) 845-3333 to register for classes or to discuss a landscape design plan. **NOW**



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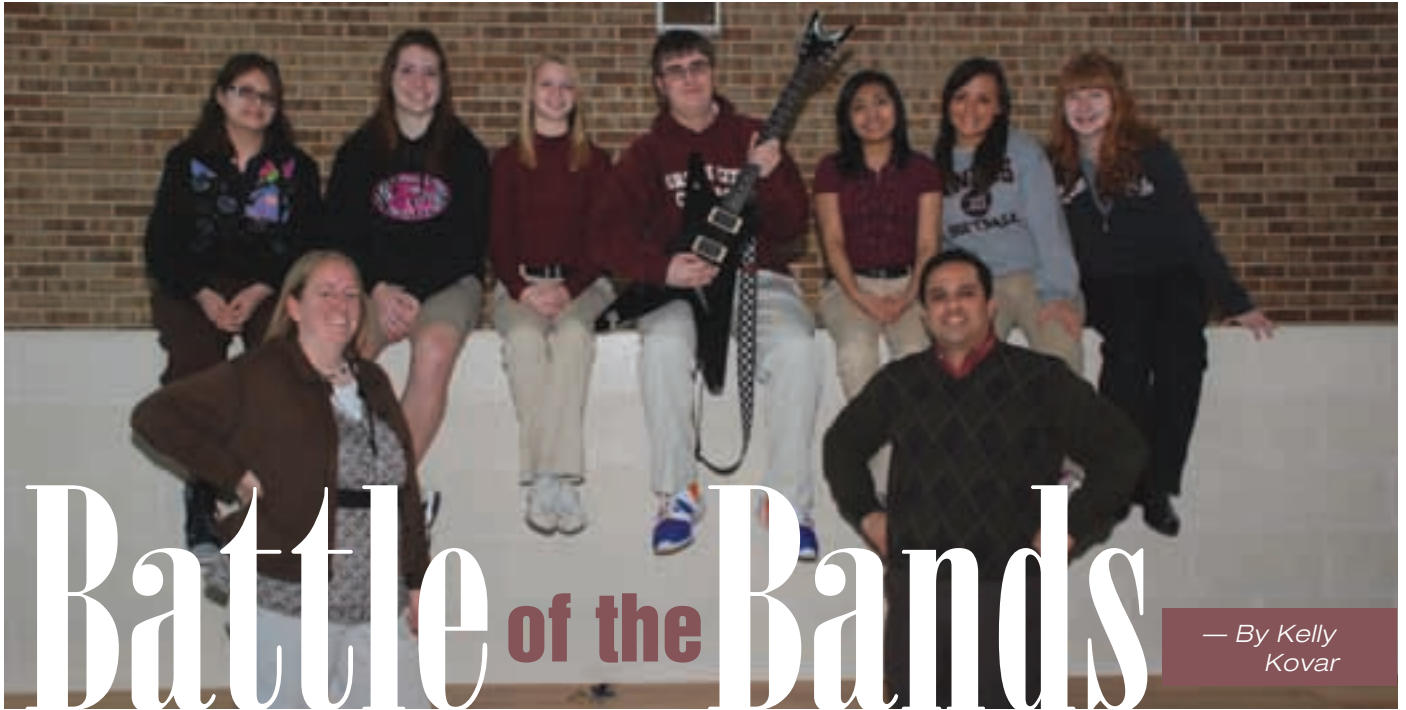
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Heather Fira discovered early in life her love for music, animals and her high school sweetheart, Ronnie. After graduating from Ennis High School (EHS) in 1991, she left Ennis for Arizona State University (ASU) and got an agri-business degree. “When I was growing up, I played bass clarinet in high school, and then I taught myself tenor sax, which I played at ASU. I played in the marching band, the concert band, the basketball pep band, and I got to travel with the bands, which was fun,” she said. Although Heather considered pursuing a veterinary career, she eventually decided to go back to college at the University of Texas at Arlington for a chemistry degree.

Heather and Ronnie Fira married and have enjoyed rearing 5-year-old Cyprian and 3-year-old Julian. “They are crazy, and I love them to death; they are so fun,” Heather expressed.

Ronnie works in sales for IC Building Materials. After a career in the chemical industry, Heather decided that a teaching career would work best while rearing her two children. “I wanted to be in a

career that would make a difference,” Heather said. “My sister-in-law had gone through the Region X certification program. You take a certain amount of classes, take part of your certification test, and then you do a year-long teaching internship, which is a regular teaching job with emergency certification. I did my internship at Faith Family Academy in Waxahachie. The Region X program takes less time than going back to college to get your teaching certificate. It is really nice for people that have children and want to change careers. It is so much easier being a teacher, because I am not leaving the children at 6:00 in the morning to go to work in Dallas and then picking them up at 5:30 at night.”

At Faith Family Academy, Heather taught fifth grade science through high school chemistry. “That was great because I ended up getting my science certification in fourth through eighth and in eighth through 12th, so I can teach anything now.” After her internship, she was looking online and found a science opening at EHS. “I knew I eventually wanted to get back to Ennis, but I didn’t know it was going to be this quick,”

she mentioned.

Heather is just finishing her first year of teaching at EHS. “I really do like teaching here,” she said. She also likes teaching the children of friends with whom she went to EHS. “There are teachers here that taught when I was in high school; I had Jack Cooper for physics and chemistry, and it is fun working with him in the same department. I am running into people in the community now that I haven’t seen since I was in high school or junior high.”

This year, Heather taught five classes of integrated physics and chemistry (IPC) and two classes of biology. “I have really enjoyed it, and I am glad I am teaching freshmen and sophomores. I have had a blast with my IPC kids. My kids have learned a lot this year.”

In addition to teaching freshman science, Heather has jumped right into life at EHS as co-sponsor of the Class of 2012. She shares the sponsorship with Tim Lawrence, who teaches 11th and 12th grade content mastery and coaches softball. “Battle of the Bands is technically the freshman class fundraiser, but this year it is a joint-effort fundraiser



of the freshman and sophomore classes. We are going to split the profits."

Sophomore sponsors are David Lizarraga, who teaches Spanish, and Chris Pitts, who teaches social studies and coaches cross country.

"I've met with the freshman and sophomore class officers and we are planning the event for May 16 at the new EHS auditorium at 4:00 p.m. One of the class officers is working on the design for the concert T-shirt. One of the kids is working on designing the tickets and we are designing a program." Concessions will be sold and tickets are available at the door.

"We have eight bands signed up, hopefully including a new faculty band. Last year, Michael Self, social studies teacher; Jacob Perry, vice principal; David Averett, the principal; and Steve

## **"They are crazy and I love them to death; they are so fun."**

Schoop, director of the jazz band, played. They were a big hit and actually came in second. The seven other bands are all kids; most of them in school here, and several of the bands have members who are homeschooled. The kids that are performing are all good kids. All the bands seem to be taking it pretty seriously. They really want to win." The bands will have a rehearsal at noon the morning of the concert.

Each band will perform three songs, and during the 10-minute breaks for equipment changes between bands, the EHS jazz band will play from the orchestra pit. A panel of judges will be made up of teachers and students. "The Battle of the Bands may be bigger than last year because we have some bands that have a following. It may be more of a public event this year. I am looking forward to seeing a lot of the talent that we have," Heather enthused. **NOW**



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Derek and Megan Martinek, with son Aiden Fisher, top left, leave their wedding in John Deere style. Michelle James, Rebecca Johnson and Sheryl Sullivan, top right, posed for a picture after appreciating a great dinner at the Big Band Bash. Nancy Lane and Lindsey Haley, bottom left, were all hugs. Rickey Crenshaw, Delinda Ruffino and Caryn Spaniel, bottom center, were glowing with enthusiasm for the EPT's upcoming production of *Damn Yankees*. Sarah Cox, Ennis Junior High student, and Ciarra Jones, Ennis High School sophomore, enjoy a visit. Vivian Gibson and Judy Delancy, bottom right, were hostesses at a recent Inspiration, Inc. event.

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Tara learned to love cooking from her mother, who taught her how to cook from scratch. As a teenager, she worked in restaurants and learned much from their cooks. Now she cooks to please her husband, Allan, and their three children, Rhiya, GraceAnne and Violet. “We make it a point to always sit down as a family for dinner,” said Tara, who has a passion for families eating together.

Tara loves to read, draw and teach her children to cook. “I always loved baking with my mom, so my sincere hope is that I’m creating those memories in my own children,” she expressed. “I get a lot of joy from knowing that they’ll hold on to that memory into adulthood.” **ANDY**

To view more of your neighbors' recipes, visit our archives at [www.nowmagazines.com](http://www.nowmagazines.com).

## IN THE KITCHEN WITH TARA MAYNARD-DOYLE

### MARIE'S ENTOMATADAS

1 1/2 lbs. ground beef  
1 medium onion, chopped  
salt, pepper, garlic powder and onion powder, to taste  
3 Tbsp. ground cumin, divided use  
1 small wheel queso fresco  
6 tomatoes  
3 tomatillos  
2 serrano peppers, stems removed  
3 garlic cloves  
corn tortillas  
oil for frying

Fry ground beef with onion, salt, pepper, garlic powder, onion powder and 1 Tbsp. cumin; set aside. While beef is frying, crumble queso fresco. In a blender, puree tomatoes, tomatillos, peppers, garlic cloves, salt, pepper and remaining cumin. In a saucepan, heat 1 Tbsp. oil on medium heat. Add sauce and cook until sauce is no longer frothy; reduce heat to low.

Heat enough oil to fry tortillas in a skillet. Fry tortillas, one at a time, until they are crispy; add them to sauce until they soften. Add meat and cheese to tortilla; roll up, add more sauce if desired. Serve piping hot with Spanish rice and beans of your choice!

### SPAGHETTI CARBONARA

1 lb. angel hair pasta  
2 Tbsp. olive oil, divided  
12 slices bacon, diced  
1 onion, finely chopped  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1/4 cup white wine  
1/4 cup heavy cream  
4 egg yolks  
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese, plus 2 Tbsp.  
fresh ground pepper, to taste  
2 Tbsp. chopped fresh parsley

Boil pasta according to directions on box. Toss

with 1 Tbsp. olive oil; set aside. Cut raw bacon into 1-inch chunks; fry in large skillet. Remove bacon to paper towels when crisp. Add remaining olive oil to skillet; fry onion until translucent. Add garlic and cook 1 minute more. Add wine and cream; cook for another minute. Return cooked bacon to skillet. Add cooked pasta; toss to coat. Make sure mixture is hot. Add beaten egg yolks; toss constantly until eggs are slightly set. Quickly add Parmesan cheese and pepper, tossing until cheese is melted. Garnish with parsley. Serve immediately with additional Parmesan cheese and pepper.

### LEMON PEPPER CHICKEN

4 bone-in, skin-on chicken breasts  
3 lemons  
fresh ground pepper, to taste  
2 Tbsp. lemon pepper seasoning

Wash and pat chicken dry. Place on baking stone. Slice 1 lemon into thin slices; place 2 slices under

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the skin of each breast. Squeeze juice of remaining lemons over top of chicken. Grind pepper and sprinkle seasoning over top of chicken. Bake in a hot oven, about 425 F for approximately 30 minutes, or until cooked through and browned. Serve with your favorite vegetable. We prefer steamed broccoli.

## QUICK FAMILY PANCAKES

2 cups Bisquick mix  
1 1/2 cups milk  
2 eggs  
1 Tbsp. vanilla  
1 Tbsp. cinnamon  
blueberries, halved  
bananas, thinly sliced  
Reese's Pieces  
4 Tbsp. butter  
100 percent maple syrup

Stir first 5 ingredients until blended. Pour batter onto hot griddle in sizes according to family member. (Dad likes big pancakes, so 1/4 cup batter; daughters like "munchkins," so 1 Tbsp. batter.) Add ingredient of choice. Flip cakes when edges are dry. Cook until golden. Serve hot with butter and syrup.

## CHICKEN BROCCOLI AND TOMATO RISOTTO

5 1/2 cups chicken broth  
1 Tbsp. olive oil  
1 medium onion, finely chopped  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1 lb. mushrooms, sliced  
1 1/2 cups Arborio rice  
1/2 cup white wine  
1 bag frozen broccoli florets, steamed  
2 chicken breasts, boneless, skinless, cooked and thinly sliced  
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese  
4 Tbsp. butter  
fresh ground black pepper, to taste

Heat broth in saucepan; keep on low heat. Heat oil in a large skillet; sauté onion until translucent. Add garlic and mushrooms; cook 1 minute longer. Add rice; sauté until golden and fragrant. Pour wine into rice mixture; stir until liquid is absorbed. Add warm broth 1/2 cup at a time, stirring constantly, adding more only when all liquid has been absorbed. When 3 cups of liquid have been added and absorbed, add broccoli. Continue adding liquid until all liquid has been added and absorbed. Add chicken and Parmesan cheese. Stir until cheese is melted. Scoop risotto into bowls; top each with 1/2 Tbsp. butter, 1/2 Tbsp. Parmesan cheese and fresh ground pepper to taste. Serve hot. Tastes even better the second day!



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# Your Tax Refund: Invest Today for Tomorrow's Goals

— By Angie Wingo-Juenemann

The tax-filing deadline has just past. Will you be getting a refund? If so, take the time to consider how best to use it — because, when used wisely, your tax refund can give you a few added steps on the road toward achieving your financial goals.

Of course, if you filed your taxes weeks ago, you might have already received a refund. But given the current economic environment, you might have kept the money in a “holding place” while you waited for an uptick in the financial markets. At any rate, if you have access to a refund this year, you now have the opportunity to put that money to good use.

## How? Here are a few ideas:

- Help fund your IRA. In 2008, the average federal tax refund was \$2,429, according to the Internal Revenue Service. If you were to receive that amount, it would cover almost half of your IRA contribution for this year, as the annual limit is \$5,000. (You can put in \$6,000 if you're 50 or older). A traditional IRA grows tax deferred, while a Roth IRA grows tax free, provided

you have held your account for at least five years and don't take withdrawals until you reach age 59 1/2. Your IRA may have taken a hit last year, but if you fund it with quality investments and avoid making withdrawals until retirement, you can take important steps to help rebuild your portfolio.

- Help build an emergency fund. You could use part of your refund for an IRA and part to help build an emergency fund. Ideally, you should have six to 12 months' worth of living expenses in a liquid account to help pay for unexpected costs, such as a major car repair, a new furnace or a costly medical bill. Without such an emergency fund, you might be forced to dip into your long-term investments to pay for these costs — and that can hurt your progress toward your financial objectives.

- Help rebalance your portfolio. Based on your risk tolerance, time horizon and long-term goals, you may have decided to put a certain percentage of your assets in “growth” vehicles and a certain percentage in income-oriented

investments. At that point, your portfolio was in equilibrium. But during the long bear market, your portfolio may have sustained enough losses to become “unbalanced.” In other words, some of your investments may have lost so much value that they no longer make up the percentage of your holdings that you had originally intended. Of course, you could wait for these investments to bounce back — and they may, given enough time — but if you wanted to speed up the rebalancing process, you could use your tax refund to add the right types of new investments to your mix.

Ironic as it may seem, there may not be a better year in which to invest your refund. You can find many quality investments at reasonable prices today, so your refund can help you add extra shares to your accounts — and the more shares you own, the better off you may be when the market turns around. So put your refund to work soon. **NOW**

*Angie Wingo-Juenemann is an Edward Jones representative based in Ennis.*

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# Think Fast!

— By Betty Tryon, R.N.

The month of May is designated for stroke awareness. It is a great time to focus on another aspect of your health. Throughout the month, various agencies, groups and medical personnel will endeavor to influence your awareness of the danger of having a stroke and inform you on how to recognize if you or someone else is having a stroke. Information will be available about how to become involved in your community and pass the word on to others.

There exist ample reasons why increased knowledge about strokes is important. As the third-leading cause of death and the number one reason for disability, the numbers are disturbing enough to warrant concern. A brief look at the breakdown of the numbers is even more alarming. More women die from stroke than breast cancer. African-Americans have double the risk of having a stroke than do Caucasians. Also, compared with Caucasians, the strokes suffered by African-Americans tend to be far more disabling.

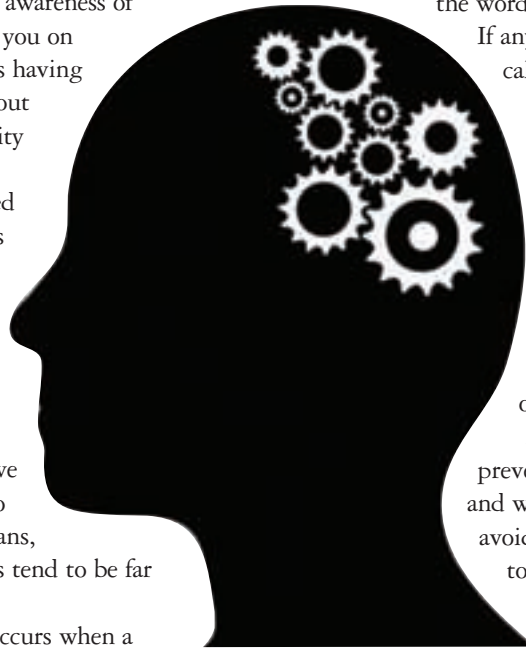
Strokes are so dangerous due to what occurs when a stroke takes place. When a blood vessel to the brain becomes damaged for any reason, and blood flow is disrupted, cells in

that area of the brain start to die and brain damage results. Whatever area of the brain is affected, those abilities will be severely compromised or lost. The earlier treatment is received for a stroke, the better. If medication is received within a three-hour window, you can diminish damage to those areas of the brain affected and improve chances for survival. One of the slogans used by the National Stroke Association to help educate the public is Act F.A.S.T., which stands for face, arms, speech and time. If a stroke is suspected, take a close look and determine if one side of the face is drooping. Determine if there is any weakness in the arms. Is speech difficult; is there any slurring of the words? Time is crucial.

If any of these symptoms are present, call 9-1-1.

Because the effects of having a stroke are so debilitating, and an option is available for diminishing many of those effects, it is critical for the public to have the correct information, hence, the reason for May being Stroke Awareness Month. You might notice bulletin boards in schools and health care facilities all raising the awareness of strokes.

Eighty percent of all strokes are preventable. Watching your diet, cholesterol and weight are a few steps you can take to avoid a stroke. Take advantage of this month to increase your knowledge and your chances of surviving a stroke. **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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# May 2009

## Community Calendar

### All Month

Navarro College Small Business Development Center seminars. May 12: Starting a Small Business. May 14: How to get Government Contracts. May 21: Writing a Winning Business Plan. To register, call the Navarro College SBDC at (972) 937-2174 or e-mail sbdc@navarrocollege.edu.

### May 1-2, 8-9

Ennis Public Theatre presents *Damn Yankees*: 8:00 p.m., 2705 N. Kaufman. For reservations, call (972) 878-PLAY. Special matinee: May 10 at 2:30 p.m.

### May 2 and June 6

*Mujeres de Proposito* (Women of Purpose) Spanish language women's Bible study and refreshments: 6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m., 200 Doge at N. Kaufman. For more information, contact Mary Moseley at (972) 965-2075.

### May 7

Moms Connected: 9:30-11:30 a.m., Tabernacle Baptist Church sixth grade room, 1200 Country Club Rd. Bring a matte finish black-and-white photo and turn it into a family treasure. ennismoms@sbcglobal.net.

### May 15-16

Inspiration, Inc. presents the musical *Crowns*, by Regina Taylor. Time: 8:00 p.m. on Friday, 2:30 p.m. and 8:00

p.m. on Saturday. Location: Learning Center of the Ennis Public Library. Tickets available at the door. For reservations e-mail fanderson@inspirationinc.org. For more information see [www.inspirationinc.org](http://www.inspirationinc.org).

### May 15-17

Super Chevy Show at the Texas Motorplex. [www.texasmotorplex.com](http://www.texasmotorplex.com).

### May 22-24

National Polka Festival. Dancing, music and authentic Czech cuisine downtown and at the halls. (972) 878-4748. [www.nationalpolkafestival.com](http://www.nationalpolkafestival.com).

### May 23

"WOW" Women of Worship, a nondenominational women's fellowship: 10:00 a.m.-noon, 200 Dodge at N. Kaufman. Lunch to follow at Wildflower Café. For more information, contact Mary Moseley at (972) 878-6164.

Bristol Opry Country Music Show: 7:00 p.m., Old Bristol Schoolhouse, 100 Church Street, Bristol. Free admission. Donations accepted. For more information, contact Jim Gatlin at (972) 846-2211.

### May 27

Ellis County Christian Women's Connection luncheon: Waxahachie Country Club, 1920 W. Hwy. 287 at I-35 East,

Exit 401B, Waxahachie. \$13. Nursery available. Walk-ins are welcome. For reservations, contact Kay at (972) 937-2807 or Mary at (972) 937-9984 or [windchime423@yahoo.com](mailto:windchime423@yahoo.com).

### June 6

Mid-Way Regional Airport Annual Pancake Breakfast and Fly-In: 8:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. Breakfast tickets \$6; one child under 8 free with paid adult ticket. Event and parking are free. Classic planes and fighters, plane rides, remote-controlled model flyers, The Classic Swing Band. For more information, contact Tammy at (972) 923-0080.

### June 19-21

DFW Summer Balloon Classic: Mid-Way Regional Airport, Midlothian/Waxahachie. Free admission. Parking \$10. Featuring hot air balloons, mass ascensions, competitions, "Lite the Nite" sunset balloon display on Saturday, airplanes, helicopters, military aircraft, gliders, skydivers, powered parachutes, RC aircraft, exhibits, food, arts and crafts. Some flights available to public. [www.summerballoonclassic.com](http://www.summerballoonclassic.com).

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