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May 2009

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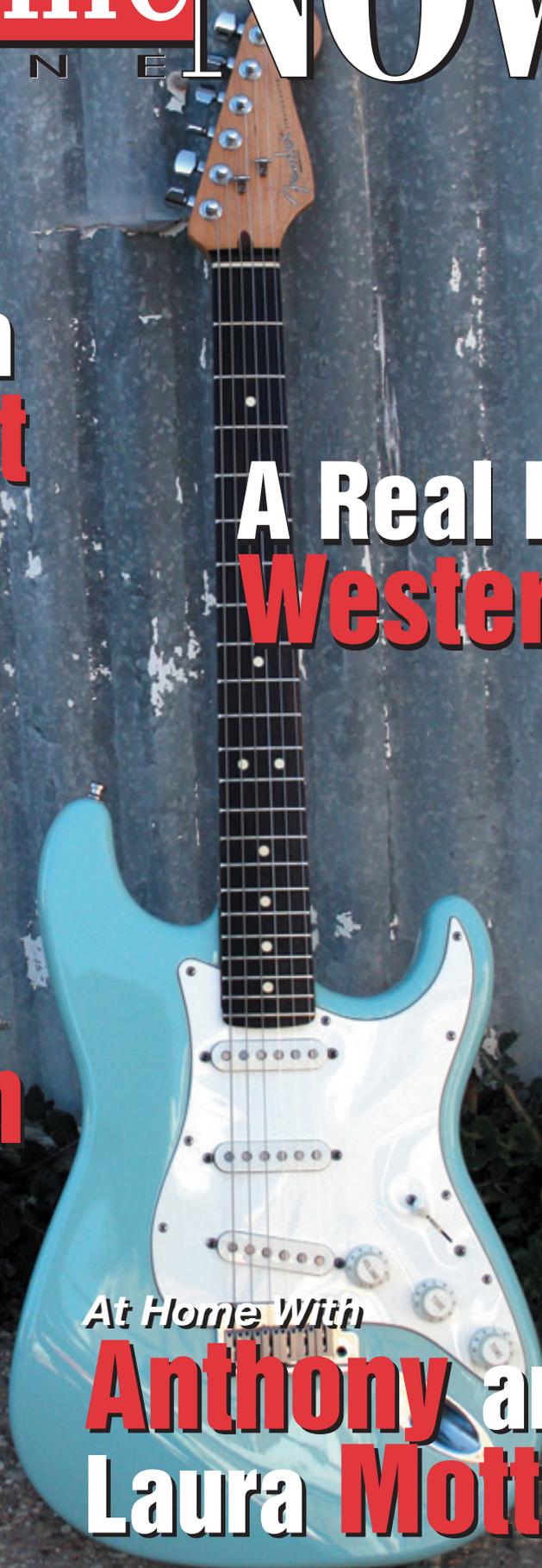
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Office Manager, Lauren De Los Santos

Waxahachie Editor, Sandra McIntosh
Contributing Writers, Faith Browning
Nancy Fenton • Danielle Parker • Adam Rope
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Photography, Natalie Busch • Ivey Photography
Terri Ozymy
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Waxahachie
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MAGAZINE

Editor's Note

Hello, Waxahachie!

May is an exciting month for a multitude of reasons. The temperatures begin to heat up for those of you who have a dislike for the colder weather. The crape myrtles, which Waxahachie is well-noted for, are in full bloom. Senior high school students are looking forward to graduation, while families are putting the final touches on summer vacation plans.

It is also the time when area businesses are gearing up for the annual Waxahachie Lions Club Mini Grand Prix. This year's racing action will take place from 5:00-8:00 p.m. both Friday and Saturday, May 15 and 16, on the streets in historic downtown Waxahachie. For those businesses who would like to "rev up their engines" but have yet to register, please contact race director Rich Hobart at (972) 937-6227. Who knows, you might be the one to take the checkered flag!

Sandra McIntosh
WaxahachieNOW Editor



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An Education in Pride

— By Jaime Ruark

The people of Waxahachie take great pride in their community and neighborhoods. From the hauntings and ghost stories to the beautiful, historical homes and buildings, which have survived or been restored throughout many generations, this town is made up of people for whom the past is just as present as the future. One such person is Paul Stevens who has incorporated both a respect for our town's history and a vision for its future into his position with the city.

Paul has worked for the city of Waxahachie for nine years and currently serves as city manager. Along with Amy Hollywood, community relations manager, Paul is making sure community pride is manifested in our neighborhoods, houses and streets. With the institution of the project, Pride In Neighborhoods (PIN), city officials are cleaning up the town, educating the public on important issues and encouraging everyone to take an active part in helping to keep Waxahachie beautiful.

"Project PIN was started back in May of 2008," Paul said. "What PIN really does is try to address the issues of code enforcement. Code enforcement sounds pretty cold and

impersonal, especially when you think of the word 'enforcement.' Essentially, that is what this project is about — trying to enforce the codes of the city, but what we wanted to do is try to take a different angle. Of course, we want to help people get their yard or properties cleaned up, but what we really wanted to focus on was fostering some pride when

they're doing clean up in the neighborhoods, and to have people work together."

Some people might find it surprising something as basic as enforcing town cleanliness is an issue for such a historically beautiful city, but as Paul explained, "Code enforcement is always a problem and one every city has to address. I think that's just typical of a growing city."

Because it is a common and possibly unpleasant problem, Paul, Amy and other city officials are determined to turn the negatives into positives. "We thought Project PIN would be



Sonny Wilson, director of environmental health, presented the PIN Award to Bertha Wilkerson last summer. She was one of the first recipients of the award.



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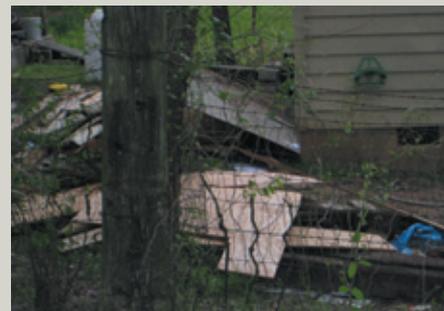


left to right: Brad Ownes, Alecia Bland, Mary Alice Warrington, Russell Phillips




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a good way to foster some pride and help people realize that enforcement is a good thing; it's good for their property and for the entire neighborhood," he added.

Paul was quick to point out that many times, code violations are not purposeful, and are the result of a lack of education regarding the rules or an inability to take care of the problem either physically or financially. "There are so many examples of violations that people may not really think about: people who are outgrowing their home and don't have any room to store things so they end up outside; an old tire or wheelbarrow in a yard that has standing water inside of it; a broken-down car that just sits in a driveway," he said. "Sometimes, people just don't know how to correct the situation or the avenues they have available to them. For instance, with junk vehicles, we want to make people aware of what they can do so they may not even have to pay a penalty — such as donating it or even having it hauled off as a trade in and making some money off of it."

With the approach of hot summer months, different issues arise; tall grass and standing water become a problem. "If somebody has a pool that is not operating properly, you have stagnant water, which is a breeding ground for

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mosquitoes, and that can be a real health issue," Amy pointed out. "Even something as small as an old tire with a little standing water in it can be a problem. It's amazing how little water it takes to breed mosquitoes." Often little things people do not even think about make a big difference. That is the focus of Project PIN. "A lot of these issues aren't just unsightly; there are health and safety issues that go along with them," Amy added. "The junk vehicles invite crime because people will break into them or kids can get into them and injure themselves. Tall grass, trash and debris can become a home for rodents, and there are all kinds of issues that can arise with that."

Sometimes, creating awareness of these issues is not the only difficulty. "One of the biggest problems that we have is with our elderly citizens who just can't physically fix these problems, especially in the summertime. They just can't get out in the heat and mow their lawns and take care of that tall grass," Paul mentioned, explaining that the city does not always have the means to fix every situation. "That's when we really appreciate the help of volunteer groups like Southwestern Assemblies of God University or even individuals, who have just taken it upon themselves to help their neighbors."

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and enforcement; it is also about rewarding those who do their part. “We’ve tried to create an award system for those who are doing an excellent job of maintaining their property, those who are setting an example for the rest of their neighborhood. We’ve come up with a monthly award, called the ‘Neat as a PIN’ award, and we have a yard sign that we give every month,” Amy shared, explaining the monthly winners are nominated by city code enforcers, the Chamber of Commerce or fellow citizens.

There is much pride in the community, and the officials of Project PIN are



working hard to keep it that way. “We have people who come to Waxahachie to look at the old historical homes. They may drive down Main Street and see all the beautiful buildings and then turn down another street and see a very different kind of neighborhood. That’s going to be the last impression they have, so it’s important to keep our city clean for the tourist aspect,” Paul said. “You also have to think about economic development, as well. When someone is looking to relocate their business here, they will drive around to view the city. Of course, the people who live here want a nice, clean place to call home, as well.”

Paul believes that Project PIN has just begun to scratch the surface of possibilities and positive ways to help people become actively involved in keeping their neighborhoods beautiful. “We had a high school reunion class organize a neighborhood cleanup day on the east side of town,” he noted. “We think we’ve had success with the project so far and we hope we can continue to build on that success.” **NOW**

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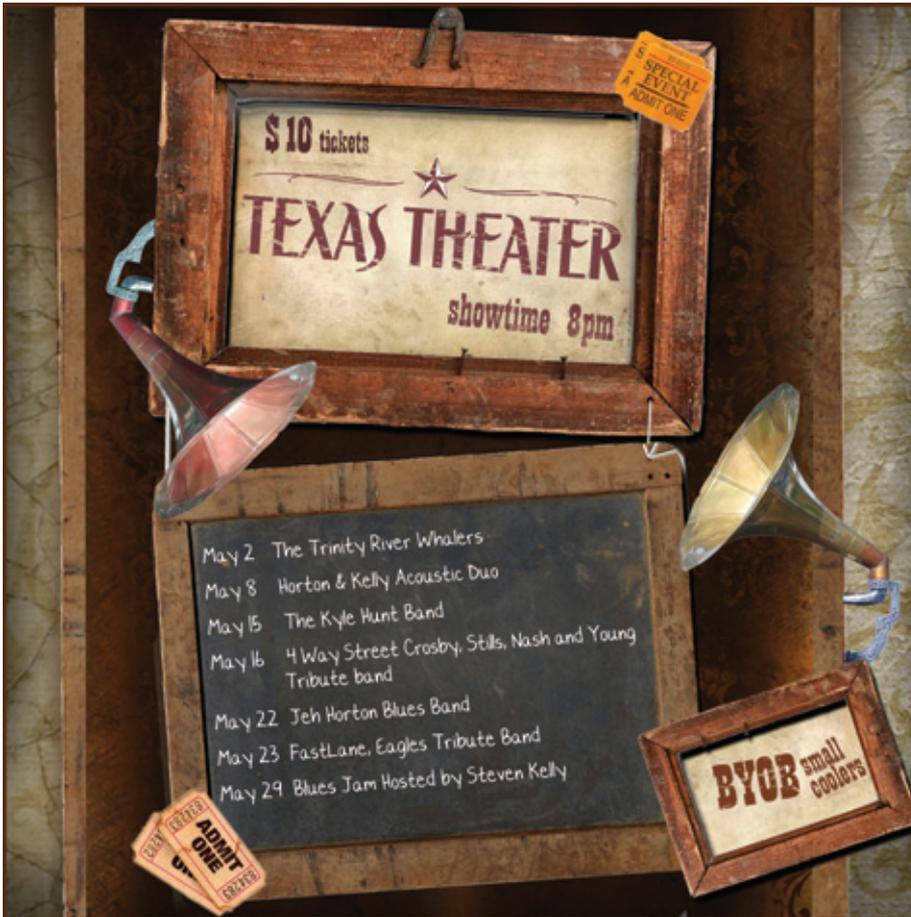
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At Home With
**Anthony and
Laura Mottla**

Organically Grown

— By Sandra McIntosh

Looking back on their move to Waxahachie in 1994, Anthony and Laura Mottla have no regrets. “We always knew we wanted to have a family,” Laura said, referring to the couple’s three children — Mica, Miller and Major — who range in age from 12 to 8, and who all attend St. Joseph Catholic School. “Living in Dallas was fine for the two of us, but we wanted our kids to grow up in a town that was slower paced.” After many weekend road trips, the couple agreed the four-bedroom,



five-bath prairie-style home built in 1911, was exactly what they were looking for.

The couple closed on the home in June, but did not move in until August. "We spent two full months on the renovation process," Anthony explained. "We removed one wall to create a large family room. We added two additional bathrooms and converted the semi-attic space into an oversized



bedroom the boys share today." They also updated the paint colors throughout the home.

The two-story home with two working fireplaces has definitely been a continual work in progress, but for Anthony and Laura it has truly been a labor of love. "We started with very few things and little by little the house became a home. It sort of grew organically," Anthony said, when asked about the home's unique furnishings and decor. "It was all done piece by piece. We did without certain things until we found or inherited exactly what we needed and what we were



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looking for." From a materialistic point of view, the couple said they do not need anything else for the cozy home they have created.

"However, because it's an older home, it will always be a work in progress," Laura admitted. "It will always need tender loving care."

The home is a history lesson in and of itself. The musket displayed in Anthony's home office belonged to his



great-great-great-grandfather and was carried by him during the Civil War. The telescope over the fireplace mantle

in the formal living room was passed down from Anthony's great-great-grandfather, a port official in the late 1800s. "It was his job to scan for ships,"



Anthony said. "I guess I inherited his love of the sea." The 19th century print of a clipper ship rounding the Cape of Good Hope during a storm hangs above the telescope, a memory from Anthony's childhood home.

There are also many heirloom items from Laura's side of the family. The bedroom suite in Mica's room upstairs once belonged to her paternal grandmother, as did the dining table in the breakfast room. "My dad was one

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he stated, pointing to the framed copy in the entryway that he was given by the curator. “The other copy stayed with the museum.”

Anthony has always loved history, and his children are now following in his footsteps. “Dinner talk is usually always about history and how it can tie into current events,” Laura said. “Anthony often relates history in story form, instead of just shooting out facts.” Anthony added, “We try to instill into our kids that old saying, that those who don’t know their history are condemned to repeat it.” As parents, they try to have this same mentality with all subjects. “We try to make it all relevant,” Laura explained. “We keep it positive.”

Anthony and Laura met in a class registration line at the University of Texas in Austin. He was studying architecture, and she was an interior design major. “For me, it was love at first sight,” Anthony said, smiling at his wife. “She was a bit more reserved.” Actually, Laura had only decided the



of nine children,” Laura said. “These pieces are just as functional today as they were when my father was a child. Everything in the home is meant to be used.”

When Anthony was 12, he worked in his hometown’s local historical society. He was in charge of cleanup and clean-out, always happy to do the work for free. One day, he uncovered a front page from *The New York Herald* announcing the death of President Abraham Lincoln on April 15, 1865. “I found two copies buried in a chest,”

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day before to take a summer class. "I wasn't supposed to be in line that day," she said. "We registered for class and then went out for an ice cream." Anthony's persistence paid off a week later when he was able to secure a phone number. Their first dinner date was the beginning to a very happy union.

Memories of their married life can be found along the windowsill in the aesthetically updated kitchen. "I collect sand from every country and beach we've ever visited," she informed, pointing to a row of small bottles along the sill's ledge. "Each one is marked on the bottom." Seasoned travelers, the couple donned backpacks and took a four-month trip before starting their family. "We traveled from Portugal to Israel," Anthony said. "It was quite the experience."

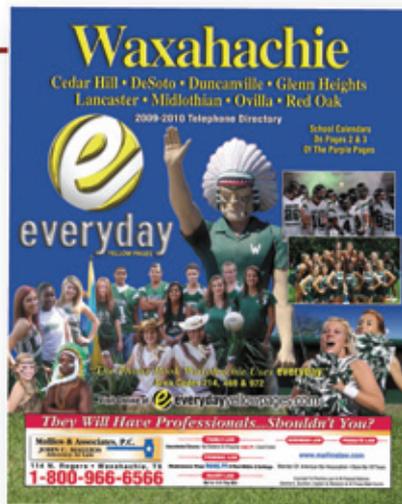
Unique pieces found throughout the home are a reflection of the talent found in this family. The one-of-a-kind copper artwork hanging in the formal living room is just one of Laura's designs. The five candles, when lit, add ambience to an already comfortable room. Handprints from each child are framed and hung over the doors leading to the spacious backyard that offers room for the children to practice sports, as well as a swimming pool. A console table along one wall was Anthony's creation. "I used discarded items from the Rogers Hotel renovation for which I was the architect," he explained. "The sides are radiators and the top is a solid

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piece of marble.” Because of its weight, the table is secured safely to the wall. “We didn’t want Miller pulling it down on himself when he was learning to walk,” Laura explained.

Laura said Anthony’s home office was a wonderful trade-off. “His office is



actually the formal dining room,” she explained. “Since he works from home, he’s here every day when the kids come home.” As Anthony works at his desk, the children can be found drawing alongside their father.

When Laura comes home from work, they make it a point to eat dinner together. “Dinnertime is the only time we can all get together as a family,” Laura said. “It’s the only time we can talk and share our day with one another.” It is this sharing that makes them such a close-knit, organically grown family. **XXXX**



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Music *With a* Golden Twist

— By Danielle Parker



“the baddest *conjunto* band in the land.”

A card of gold or “*baraja de oro*” seems a rare thing to find. However, within the city limits, this treasure can be found in “the baddest *conjunto* band in the land.” The musical sound and flavor of Baraja de Oro is centered around the timeless tradition of *conjunto*. “*Conjunto* is another word for band,” band member Johnny Martinez said. “The two main ingredients are the accordion and the bajo sexto, a 10-12 string guitar.”

Growing up around this distinctive genre, Waxahachie native and founder of Baraja de Oro, Mario Barajas, has always known he had the music deep down inside himself. “I come from a family of lots of musicians,” Mario said. “Every Friday and Saturday night, our family would put on dances in the backyard. Being around that was a good feeling, and that’s the same feeling I wanted to bring through my music.”

With little more than passion and ambition, Mario birthed Baraja de Oro in hopes of creating that same *conjunto* sound he grew up hearing. “When we first started out, we didn’t have microphones and Johnny had the wrong kind of guitar,” Mario said. “We would perform anytime and everywhere we could to promote ourselves.”

Despite the band’s humble beginnings, a local competition gave Baraja de Oro the door of opportunity they needed. “The band really came together about three years ago at a battle of the bands in Grand Prairie,” drummer Chris Riviera said. “We competed against about 150 other bands and made the top 10. We then performed in the battle



and tied for first place. We won eight hours of studio time out of that first competition. We recorded our first song, and after hearing our music, the producer said we could record all the songs we wanted.” From there, Baraja de Oro’s fame spread across the Texas Latino music community. “We were nominated for the Tejano Music Awards’ *conjunto* album of the year, when the album was less than four months old,” Mario said. “Betty, my wife who sings with the band, was also nominated entertainer of the year, the only female out of 12 nominees.”

This month, Baraja de Oro will be highlighted in its hometown, as the

“This concert shows that the city of Waxahachie is reaching out to the Latino community.”

group headlines Waxahachie’s first ever Cinco de Mayo concert. “This concert shows that the city of Waxahachie is reaching out to the Latino community,” Betty said. “It is making history in its own way.” With local fan support, the band is confident in its pursuit in the music industry. “We are stepping in the right direction, right out of our own backyard,” she said.

The members of the band all agree that what makes Baraja de Oro different from any other *conjunto* is its ability to fuse the old with the new. “We have the main ingredients and keep the tradition of *conjunto*, but we play it with a modern twist,” Mario said. “Music is progress. Everything changes, and we do songs that change as well. We incorporate our own style, and that keeps people interested.”

Because of that unique style, the band has attracted fans of all ages. “We

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have a young look and yet the older generation follows us,” Betty said. “We can grasp both older and younger audiences since we play older songs made by legends in a very high energy way.”

With the motto, “Music is addictive,” Baraja de Oro can tell from the stage that their fans are not only listening to the music they play, but feeling it as well. “You know people are enjoying it when they are nodding their heads,” Chris said. “It’s danceable and people really enjoy it. Our music is high energy and the fans get into it.”

Along with performing two to four gigs each weekend, the band also does the driving, the setting up and tearing down, and by Sunday night the wear and tear of performing can take its toll. “Our dream is to make this full time,” Mario said. “It’s a heavy load sometimes. Weekends you are a celebrity, but you come back and Monday morning it’s back to the 9 to 5.” Working with what Mario and Betty call “the hardest working band in the land” takes the stress from even the most demanding aspect of performing. “It’s like a family,” Chris said. “There is something that’s here. It’s all the right ingredients. It doesn’t feel like work. Every weekend we’re out, it’s exciting and I love it.”

It is that passion that gives the band its original essence, according to Johnny. “Our band is a collaborative effort,” he said. “It’s very versatile; we can do any sound. We are in sync with the perfect combo of talent. We have very talented people in this group. Whenever you are honestly in love with music, you can just flow together.”

Fans, no matter their background, ethnicity or musical preference, can sense the heart behind the music, and that is what keeps them wanting more. “I feel honored to share the passion I have with this group,” Mario said. “To be able to play and know they feel as strongly as I do for this is amazing. That’s why they come back.” **ARTS NOW**



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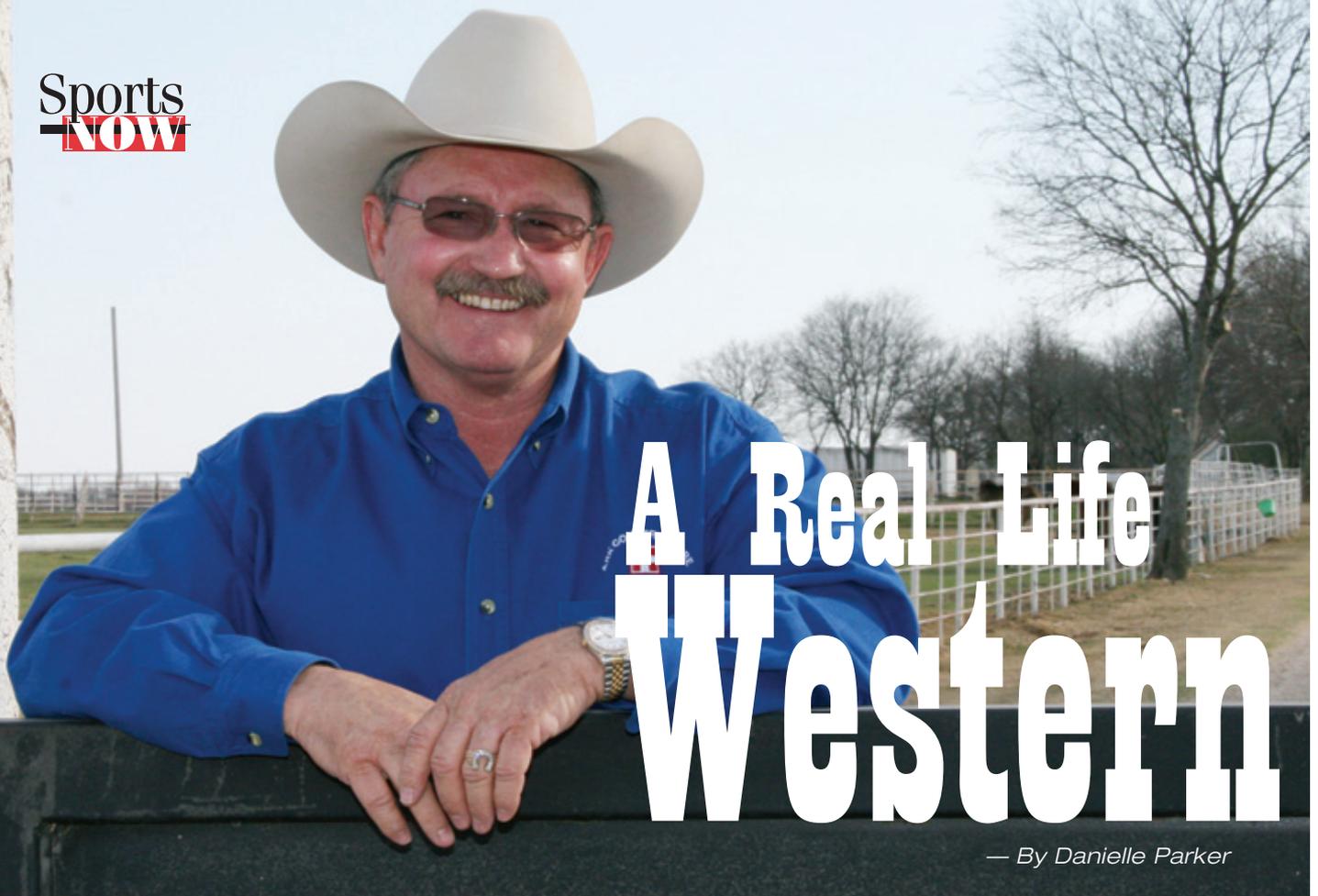
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A Real Life Western

— By Danielle Parker



When people think of the life of a cowboy, they often visualize “the Wild West,” with saloons, stagecoaches and bad guys. For Reggie Underwood of Waxahachie, a modern-day cowboy, his perspective has included herding cattle, riding trails, rearing a family and discovering much about himself. Before he could even walk, Reggie was sitting high on a horse. “When I was about 8-9 months old, one of my older sisters set me up on her favorite horse,” Reggie said. “There I was, just a baby sitting on a full-grown quarter horse. I believe that moment set the tone for my life.”

From a young age, Reggie learned the ins and outs of the cowboy tradition. “I grew up on a ranch, gathering cattle, breaking horses, competing in rodeos and training to ride and rope,” he shared. His love for the cowboy lifestyle continued as a young adult. Reggie received a rodeo scholarship to attend Tarleton State University in Stephenville, where he competed on a collegiate level and majored in agriculture. “I traveled across the Southwest area riding bareback,

breaking bucking horses and saddle bronc riding,” he said.

The skills and agility acquired in college made way for Reggie to ride professionally. “Once you get started, you want to keep on doing it,” he admitted. “I rode in the Mid-States Rodeo Association (M-SRA) and was the bareback champion two years in a row. I had the opportunity to travel from California to New York to Florida.”

While rodeoing in the Midwest, Reggie met Pam, a tried-and-true cowgirl, for whom he confesses to have fallen head over heels in love. “We were introduced through mutual friends. I didn’t have to carry my own horses to compete, so I would ride with her from state to state,” he explained. “We soon married and traveled together six of those eight years I spent in the M-SRA. I loved competing with her; those were some of the most fun years of my life.”

Yet even after he settled down, Reggie’s thrill for rodeo and riding did not. “I loved the competition,” he said. “I started a full-time career in my area of study.

Sunday through Thursday I worked, but I would still ride on the weekends.”

The couple began rearing a family while living in Nebraska and Illinois. About 15 years ago, Reggie moved back to Texas and found a place to begin a new chapter of his story in Waxahachie. “We saw the lifestyle and opportunity we wanted here,” Reggie said. “We could have lived anywhere, but once we plugged into the community with people who were interested in riding, we knew this was our new home. It felt good to live near people who were down-home and quick to help you.”

“I’m hoping to leave a legacy of an appreciation for what God has given us.”

Upon nesting in Waxahachie, Reggie established “RU Happy Ranch,” a small piece of heaven for his family to call home. “I’m hoping to leave a legacy of an appreciation for what God has given us,” he said. “Through RU Happy Ranch, my children can enjoy the openness I enjoyed growing up — a passion and love for animals that I’ve been able to enjoy.”

While getting connected within his community, Reggie stumbled across the Cowboy Church. “A friend of mine from college asked for someone to help make announcements, what they call a tailholder,” he said, “to get things straight at the start of the church. Since then, I have served as a lay pastor and an elder at the church. It’s been the greatest thing that’s ever happened in my life.”

For Reggie, the Cowboy Church has been a milestone in this chapter of his life, as he has seen himself become a better father, husband and man of God. “The church has been really good to me,” he added. “I had a wild background in college. Being here, I have been able to put all that in the past. A few years

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back, we had a crisis in our family and instead of shunning us, our church family rallied around us. I had the opportunity to pray with folks, and now I can relate to those going through that kind of crisis. It has been a real blessing being there.”

It may not consist of saloons, gunfights or bad guys, but Reggie sees his story as one he can look back on and tip his hat to. “I went from growing up on a ranch to riding in the rodeo,” Reggie said. “As the cowboy lifestyle came along, I was able to travel and ride with that thrill of adventure. Then later in life, I have been able to serve for something greater than just myself. My cowboy lifestyle is kind of unique, but I have discovered how to be more humble and thankful.”



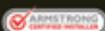
Although his western lifestyle no longer includes the wild rides and sport of rodeo, Reggie continues to ride down his trail of life as a cowboy. “It all goes back to the very beginning, growing up on the ranch and being outdoors,” he said. “Saddling up in the morning and riding off into the sunset like those western movies — that’s what makes being a cowboy all worth it.” **NOW**

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A Whole *New* Light

— By Sandra McIntosh

In July, Dr. Jason Brown will celebrate his seventh year in private practice in Waxahachie and his 11th year in the field of medicine, counting his residency. When speaking with him, one might think he came from a long line of physicians, but that is not the case. “I’m the first doctor in the family,” he smiled. “It [the profession] chose me, and I’m comfortable in these shoes.”

In the beginning, he thought general surgery might be his calling. “I ended up caring for the elderly,” he explained. “There was a lot of death involved.” Wanting a career that brought more joy than pain, he decided the field of obstetrics and gynecology was the one for him. “It’s an upbeat and happy practice,” he added.

Jason trained at Parkland Hospital

in Dallas, Texas. Overall, they average 14,000 births per year. “During four years as a resident, I probably delivered 2,000 newborns,” he stated. “Here in Waxahachie, I average about 250 births per year.” Delivering babies is not just a job to Jason. “Birth never ceases to amaze me — how something so perfect can come out of such an imperfect world. Every birth renews my hope in mankind,” he shared. Jason felt these same feelings when his own two children, Ethan and Ella, were born. In fact, talking about them brings a tear to his eyes.

As if delivering babies did not keep Jason busy enough, he and his wife, Heidi, decided to add Waxahachie Med Spa to their practice. In fact, this month marks their one-year anniversary.

Waxahachie Med Spa offers a full range of therapeutic treatments, from removal of unwanted hair and spider veins to superficial wrinkles and age spots. These treatments, administered only by Jason and Heidi, are done using two technologically advanced laser machines. The Yag laser can be used with all skin types. Unlike other lasers, it is not limited to one type or another. “Simply put, this laser can see light- and dark-skinned clients alike,” Jason said, explaining that other lasers in use today are skin-color specific. Another laser, the Alexandrite, uses different wave lengths to get the results clients desire. “This machine is strictly used for permanent hair removal and the removal of age spots,” Jason stated. “We’ve done more permanent hair

removal than anything else.”

When planning this expansion to his practice, Jason wanted to offer the most effective treatments. He also had a strong desire to keep the treatments less invasive. “The laser uses one frequency of light,” he noted. “The laser has been proven in study after study to be safer. It’s more controlled and precise.”

When asked why he added Waxahachie Med Spa to an already flourishing OB/GYN practice, Jason’s

“The laser has been proven in study after study to be safer. It’s more controlled and precise.”

answer came without a great deal of thought. “We wanted to treat the whole woman,” he said. “We wanted to offer comprehensive health treatment that extends far beyond pregnancy and birth. The client’s well-being and how they see themselves is all part of the comprehensive health treatments we offer at Waxahachie Med Spa.”

Jason and Heidi have quickly realized something important when it comes to their clientele. “It’s not how others see you that matters,” Jason said. “It’s how you see yourself that makes the biggest difference.” Waxahachie Med Spa allows women to see themselves in a whole new light.

Waxahachie Med Spa is located at 1505 West Jefferson St., Suite 120. Hours of service are Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. The office is closed during the lunch hour from 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. For more detailed information or to schedule an appointment, please call the office at (972) 938-3493. **NOW**

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Following Family Footsteps

— By Sandra McIntosh

When the final school bell rings at the end of the month marking the beginning of summer vacation, Dana James will have completed her 12th year as an educator within the Waxahachie Independent School District. “I spent my first year at Marvin Elementary,” she remembered. “Then I came to Northside Elementary and taught third-graders for nine years before moving to the second grade level of teaching.”

At the encouragement of Linda Edmiston, the principal at that time, Dana made the decision to go down a grade level. She has not looked back since. “I love working with this age group,” she expressed. “The students are like sponges, always eager and excited to learn something new.”

Dana has been familiar with the school system her entire life. In fact, her career path follows several sets of footprints, and she feels she has some mighty big shoes to fill. “Both my parents, Don and Ann Williams, were teachers. My grandparents on my father’s side were teachers. My great-uncle taught. My sister teaches,” she explained. “I come from a long line of educators.” When her father was promoted to the administrative level, he became her principal while she was in first and second grades. “I always followed the rules,” she laughed. “I didn’t have a choice.” She continued, “I grew up in schools. I saw what my parents did, and that inspired me to do the same.”

After graduating from Stephen F. Austin University with a degree in elementary education, Dana’s gift of teaching immediately came alive in the classroom. Her goal as an educator

has always been to teach in a manner where the entire class can comprehend what is being taught. “The kids today still have such a passion for learning, but they’re all at different levels,” she stated. “I’m always modifying to meet their needs. There are times I use Tony Romo or Miley Cyrus in a lesson plan to get the point across.”

For Dana, teaching at Northside was like coming home again. “I was born and reared here in Waxahachie. I was a Northside student myself,” she said, smiling at all the good memories that quickly came to mind. “I graduated from Waxahachie High School in 1993.” While growing up, Dana earned a great deal of experience with children long before she stepped into a classroom of her own. “I worked with daycare children while I was in high school and college,” she said. “I also worked at the YMCA. I’ve just always been around children.” In fact, the YMCA is where she first met Mark, her husband of nearly 11 years.

The same group of students remains in the classroom with Dana every day. She teaches math, reading, science and social studies, but feels that out of the four subjects, reading is by far the most important. “Reading also encompasses language arts, writing and spelling,” she said. “Reading is something they will do the rest of their lives. It also helps prepare them for the TAKS [Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills] test, which is my main priority.”

Dana’s students often bring laughter to her classroom. “Kids are honest to a fault sometimes,” she smiled. “They always tell

me what I already know, like when I'm having a bad hair day for instance."

Dana teaches for one specific reason — because the students are the future. "I want to leave a mark that will help them later on in life," she shared. "I want to be remembered as a teacher who impacted the lives of her students by teaching them, as well as knowing them."

So many years of teaching mean many stories to tell. When asked to pick one, Dana quickly talked about a homebound student she had early on in

"I come from a long line of educators."

her career. "She was a little girl with a brain tumor," Dana said. "I had to get lessons together for her to work on at home, but she'd come to school for parties and special occasions. I helped with a fundraising event for her called Kortnie's Day. The school bonded together to make this event successful."

Sometimes, teachers are unaware of the impact they have on their students, until perhaps, a letter comes unexpectedly in the campus mail as it did for Dana one day. "It [the letter] was from Kortnie," she said with tears in her eyes. "She thanked me for always making her feel as if she were part of the class."

Dana grew up knowing love and the importance of time spent with her parents, even if it was time spent at school. She wants to give this same time back to her own children, Madelynn, who is 8, and her 1-year-old twins, Emma and Addison. "My job as a teacher allows me to be home with them during holidays, on spring break and during the weeks of summer," she explained. "Spending quality time with my family is more important than material items." Dana knows that, more than likely, it will be the time spent with family that her children will remember most when they become adults. Someday, she may very well be their inspiration, too. **NOW**

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Dunaway Elementary, top left, performed their first musical — *The Jungle Book*. Cody Cox, WHS scholarship winner, top right, posed with Tina Bohlman during the Ellis County Youth Art Exhibit. Caleb Workman, bottom left, balanced his Easter eggs at the hunt held Easter Sunday at the Ellis County Cowboy Church. Kindergarten student Seth Martin, bottom center, won the prize for the most eggs collected. He collected a grand total of 217 eggs. Jayden Phillips, second row center, was mesmerized by the Lego art on display at the Ellis County Youth Art Exhibit. Teri Moore, second row right, celebrated her birthday by attending an evening concert by David Allen, Elvis impersonator. Tim, Tommy and Melanie Burt, bottom right, came all the way from Denton to see David Allen as he performed at the Chautauqua Auditorium.



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1 pkg. breakfast sausage
18-oz. bar cream cheese
12 medium-sized jalapeños
1 pkg. lean bacon
Brown sausage; drain. Add cream cheese, mixing well, breaking up larger pieces of sausage as much as possible. Halve jalapeños and remove seeds. (The more seeds left, the spicier they will be. Be careful to wash hands after handling jalapeños, and do not touch your face!) Spoon sausage mixture into jalapeño halves and wrap with 1/2 slice bacon; secure with toothpick. Bake at 350 F for 20 minutes, and then broil for about 10 to 20 minutes, depending on desired crispiness of bacon. Serve warm with a cold beverage.

LINGUINE WITH SPICY CLAM SAUCE

1 medium red onion
2 Tbsp. butter
2 Tbsp. olive oil
4 cloves garlic, crushed
2 Tbsp. flour
1 cup chicken broth
1/2 to 1 tsp. red pepper flakes
1/4 tsp. black pepper
1/4 tsp. salt
1/2 lb. linguine
1 can chopped or minced clams, drained
1/3 cup grated Parmigiano cheese

garlic bread

Bring water to boil in large pot. Meanwhile, thinly slice onion. In large skillet, melt butter and oil; add garlic and onion. Sauté about 5 minutes. Add flour; cook, stirring, until flour is no longer visible (about a minute). Add broth, red pepper flakes, black pepper and salt; stir until creamy. Reduce heat to low; cover and simmer for 5 minutes. Boil linguine until *al dente*; drain pasta. Add chopped clams to skillet; add drained pasta and toss. Serve with Parmigiano cheese and garlic bread.

SWEET CHILI

2 Tbsp. vegetable oil
1 large onion, chopped
4 cloves garlic, chopped
2 lbs. ground beef
1/2 tsp. cayenne pepper
2 tsp. salt
1 tsp. cumin
1 tsp. oregano
1 28-oz. can diced tomatoes
1 22-oz. can kidney beans, 1/2 drained
1/2 cup molasses
1 Tbsp. tomato paste
3 Tbsp. chili powder
In large pot, heat oil and add onions and garlic; sauté until transparent. Add meat and brown; drain fat. Add remaining ingredients and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer partially covered for 45 minutes. Serve topped with grated

cheddar cheese and sour cream if desired.

ITALIAN WEDDING SOUP

2 Tbsp. olive oil
2 carrots peeled, chopped
2 celery stalks, chopped
1 medium onion, chopped
2 bay leaves
salt and pepper, to taste
1/2 lb. ground beef
1/2 lb. ground pork
1 egg, beaten
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1/2 cup bread crumbs
1/2 cup grated Parmigiano cheese
1/2 tsp. ground nutmeg
6 cups chicken broth or stock
2 cups water
1 1/2 cups dried pasta
1 lb. fresh spinach, washed, chopped
In large pot over medium heat, add oil, carrots, celery, onion, bay leaves, salt and pepper; cover and sauté 5 minutes. Meanwhile, combine meat, egg, garlic, bread crumbs, grated cheese, salt, pepper and nutmeg. Add broth and water to pot of veggies. Increase heat to high and bring to low boil. Meanwhile, roll meatballs into small balls; drop into pot. Next, stir pasta into soup; cover and simmer about 10 minutes. Right before pasta is done, add spinach to soup, cooking just until it wilts.

Five years ago, Sandra Johanson and her husband, Artie, relocated their daughters, Juliana and Lexi, from Florida to Waxahachie, to be near her sister who moved from Florida three years before. “I missed my sister and her family terribly and just couldn’t imagine a life apart from them,” Sandra recalled. “Now we live very close and the children all go to school together!”

Sandra has a rewarding career as a physical therapist. She enjoys scrapbooking, decorating and volunteering at St. Joseph Catholic School where her daughters attend. “My love for cooking has been acquired over the years, but wasn’t inherited, as it was for my sister,” she explained. “I’m Italian and my mother cooked every night for the family. She made recipes that I often don’t have time to cook, but I always make time to cook Italian sauce.”

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Embrace Life, No Matter What

— By Adam Rope

Have you ever heard, “If I had only had more time”? As people grow older, some may have regrets about all the things they did not do. Not taking an exotic trip or missing visits to family members might top the list. Your list might even include “not running a marathon.” One of the biggest regrets may be not telling a loved one how much you care.

One thing is for sure: The more you enjoy life and prepare for the unexpected, the fewer regrets you may have. While no one can possibly do everything on a lifetime to-do list, there are plenty of ways to show people you care. One way is to make sure your family has the financial means to continue living their current lifestyle if you are no longer around.

Life insurance is one way to do just that. A strong economic foundation includes adequate life insurance coverage; enough to cover a mortgage, college tuition or outstanding debts. There are many online sites that provide calculators to determine your life insurance needs. A qualified insurance professional can help you choose a policy to meet your needs and fit in your budget. Once a policy is in place, you can revisit it, especially during different life events, to make certain the coverage is still appropriate.

Knowing you have provided for your loved ones will give you peace of mind so you can enjoy doing the things you’ve always wanted to do. It may not mean training for a marathon — but, then again, it might. **NOW**

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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.

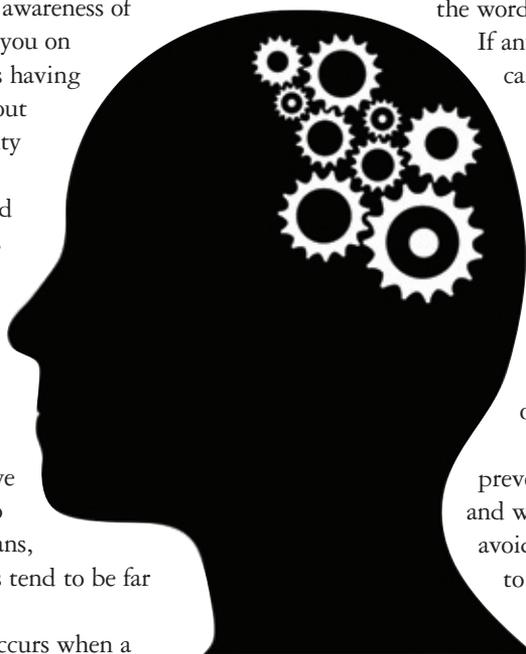
Strokes are so dangerous due to what occurs when a stroke takes place. When a blood vessel to the brain becomes damaged for any reason, and blood flow is disrupted, cells in

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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Friend or Foe?

— By Nancy Fenton

Sometimes it is hard to know if the creepy crawlers in the soil and on our plants are good guys or bad guys. The ladybugs and earthworms we all know about, but what about those little bitty worms called nematodes in the soil? The ones that grow in lumps on the roots of tomatoes are definitely harmful, hence the reason we move the planting place for tomatoes every year to a different site in the garden to reduce the risk of infecting the new plants! There are some beneficial nematodes, though, that crunch down on insect larva for food, reducing or eliminating that particular insect problem. I am trying one called *Steinernema carpocapsae* (S.C.) this year to put a dent in my flea population! There are several kinds of nematodes that like fleas of all sizes. Nematodes are a bit

small with thousands of them in one tablespoon of soil.

The S.C. nematodes are not limited to any climate or soil type. As long as the soil is moist enough to grow grass, they will eat the flea in the pre-adult, pupa and larval stages. (That is about 95 percent of the flea population!) They sneak up on the fleas, jump them and release bacteria that kill the fleas within 48 hours — even the dormant ones. It is extremely important to get a quick kill because each lady flea that grows to maturity has the potential of bearing up to 60 plus eggs a day! The nematodes are safe to have around people and animals and have been recognized as a biological control for many years. Of course, they can only be used outside and are a bit hard to find, but a flea free outside is good!

May is the time for our other good insects, the tricogramma wasps, to be released. These little wasps love to destroy bugs on our pecan trees and are not aggressive toward us! Most nurseries and feed stores have them in funny looking little black strips that hatch right on your tree! The timing has to be right: now in May and again in July. Try it. You may never go back to the chemical poisons again! **NOW**

Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener.

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RODNEY JOE BELL, Agent/Owner

May 2009 Community Calendar

First and Third Mondays (excluding holidays)

Women in the Waxahachie area are invited to "Reconciled to Pray," a gathering of Christian women praying in unity regarding specific topics that impact our lives and community. Meetings are held at the Bent Tree Townhomes Clubhouse, located at I-35 northbound Service Road at Exit 1446, from 6:00-8:00 p.m. For more information, visit www.reconciledtopray.com or call Laurie Whitlock at (214) 796-9602.

May 2

First ever downtown Waxahachie Cinco de Mayo Fiesta will be held from 11:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m. at Singleton Plaza. The daylong event will include food, vendors and music featuring Baraja De Oro, The Tequila Boyz and more. Kids Corner will offer bounce houses, face painting and lots of fun. Admission is free. For vendor information, contact Andrew Sanchez at (214) 336-5314 or visit www.waxahachie5de5.com.

May 15-16

Waxahachie Lions Club Mini Grand Prix Race: 5:00-8:00 p.m. in downtown Waxahachie.

May 23

Midlothian's annual 8th Street Dance: 7:00-11:00 p.m., featuring musician Joshua Atilano and Ira Bradford and the Bustin' Loose Band.

May 27

Ellis County Christian Women's Connection, affiliated with Stonecroft Ministries, will be having their monthly luncheon at the Waxahachie Country Club, 1920 W. Hwy. 287 at I-35 East, Exit 401B. All women are welcome to attend for a lovely and relaxing luncheon, a special feature and positive and uplifting speaker. \$13. Nursery vouchers available. Walk-ins welcome. To make reservations, please contact either Kay at (972) 937-2807 or Mary at (972) 937-9984, or e-mail Kay at windchime423@yahoo.com by May 12.

May 29-June 7

Fourth Annual Paint Historic Waxahachie will begin each morning at 9:00 a.m. and come to a close each afternoon at 4:00 p.m. Watch artists while they paint on location throughout the historic districts of Waxahachie.

May 30

Quick Draw event will be held from 9:30-11:00 a.m. on the courthouse square. Artists will create masterpieces in 90 minutes and then the Quick Draw Auction will take place.

Downtown Farmers Market: 7:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

June 6

Annual Pancake Breakfast Fly-In will be held from 8:00-11:00 a.m. at the Mid-Way Regional Airport. Breakfast tickets are \$6. One child under the age of 8 eats free with a paid adult ticket. Event and parking are free to the public. Classic airplanes and fighters, plane rides, remote control model flyers, The Classic Swing Band and more will be on hand for your enjoyment. For more information, contact Tammy Bowen at (972) 923-0080.

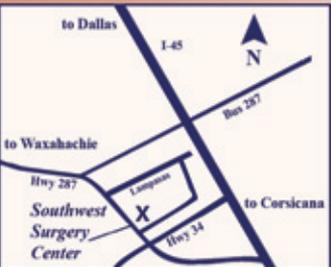
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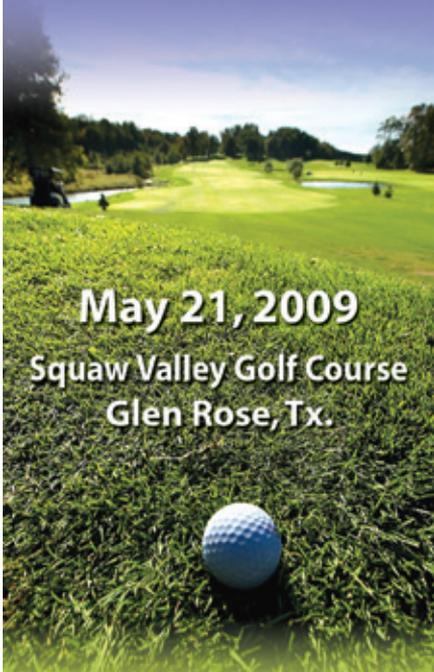
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Golf Tournament



May 21, 2009

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Schedule of Events

7:30 Registration &
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8:30 Shotgun Start

Lunch Served

- Awards Ceremony
- Announce Winning Teams
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