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May 2010

**A Special
DESTINY**

**History in
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**Relaying
THE
MESSAGE**

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On The Cover



Crystal-cut glass and point-tipped chandelier lighting adds to the elegance in the foyer of Jules and Lorena Ferrante's home.

Photo by Shana Woods.

Editor's Note

Happy Mother's Day, Midlothian!

What is the perfect way to say thank you to your mother? Cards and gifts are wonderful, but can they really sum up the gratitude you feel for her? Mothering is a work of the heart. A sense of duty cannot make the heart want to burst with anger at the child who misses curfew, and yet that same heart weeps when they walk in the door unharmed. Gratitude expressed for an expensive gift cannot match the joy of receiving a toddler's handful of flowered weeds accompanied with, "I love you, Mommy." Perhaps the thank you moms want is for you to be the person she reared you to be and live a life of honor, productiveness and kindness.

Congratulations graduates! Our best wishes go with you as you enter the next phase of your life. Make us all proud!

Betty Tryon
MidlothianNOW Editor



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MISD

Welcome Dr. Jerome Stewart



The Midlothian ISD Board of Trustees unanimously voted to name Dr. Jerome Stewart as the lone finalist for the Midlothian ISD Superintendent of Schools in a special called meeting at 6:30 p.m. on April 10.

Dr. Stewart is currently employed as Superintendent for the Canton ISD. He has served in this role since 2005 and has 23 years experience as an educator. Stewart began his educational career in 1987 as a teacher/coach in Amarillo ISD. From 1990-1992, he

served as assistant principal at Amarillo High School. He later served as principal in Pampa ISD, Waco ISD and Lago Vista ISD. Stewart was superintendent for Yorktown ISD from 2001-2005.

He earned a Master of Special Education from Drake University in Iowa and a Doctor of Educational Administration from Baylor University. He received his mid-management and superintendent certifications from West Texas A&M University.

"We look forward to working with Dr. Stewart as our next Superintendent," said Phil Seay, MISD school board president. "His characteristics reflect those indicated by our community, staff and board as top qualities for our superintendent. He clearly demonstrates ethical and moral leadership, strong communication skills and a passion for the community and its students."

Dr. Stewart and his wife, Raquel, have four children. Elliott is an army veteran and plans to earn a doctorate in medicine. Gabriel is currently a Texas National Guard soldier and a math major at UT Austin. Eric recently concluded his second tour overseas as an Army Ranger. Jennifer is a senior at Canton High School.

Dr. Stewart said, "I am blessed to be the MISD superintendent lone finalist in such a great district and wonderful community."

Robin Bullock has served as Interim Superintendent in the district since January 1, when Dr. Kennedy resigned to become the superintendent for McKinney ISD.

The state requires a 21-day waiting period before an agreement can be finalized and a contract can be negotiated. The official targeted start date is June 1, 2010.

Horn, Smith, Wood & Preston, conducted the superintendent search for the MISD Board.

Watch an interview with Dr. Stewart and MHS senior Taylor Hampton on Panther TV. Go to www.pantherstv.net.

Summer Sports Camps

June 7-10

Baseball

Ages 7-10, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Ages 11-14, 2:00-5:00 p.m.

Soccer

Girls/Boys grades K-5, 8:30-11:00 a.m.
Girls grades 6-9, 1:00-3:30 p.m.

Girls Basketball

Grades 7-9, 9:00-11:30 a.m.
Grades 3-6, 1:00-3:30 p.m.

June 14-17

Boys Basketball

Grades 3-5, 8:30-11:30 a.m.
Grades 6-9, 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Soccer

Boys/Girls grades K-5, 8:30-11:00 a.m.
Boys grades 6-9, 1:00-3:30 p.m.

Softball

Grades 3-6, 9:00-11:30 a.m.
Grades 7-9, 1:00-3:30 p.m.

July 26-29

Football

Grades 2-6, 8:00-10:30 a.m.
Grades 7-9, 11:30-2:00 p.m.

Volleyball

Grades 3-8, 8:30-11:30 a.m.
Grade 9, 12:30-3:30 p.m.

Registration information is available online at www.midlothian-isd.net/athletics/camps.html.

Athletic Physicals

Athletic physicals for students in grades 6-12 for the 2010-2011 school year will be held on Thursday, May 27, at the MHS cafeteria from 4:30-7:30 p.m. The cost is \$20 per physical. For any questions, contact Head Athletic Trainer Greg Goerig at 972-775-8174 or visit the MISD Athletic Web site.

Become a MISD Fan

Know what is going on in your school district. Visit the MISD homepage and join the MISD E-News, District and Campus Facebook pages, and Twitter.

Calendar of Events

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| May 3 | Educational Showcase, K-12 student work, 6-8 p.m. at MHS |
| May 4 | School make up day |
| May 31 | No school/Memorial Day Holiday |
| June 3 & 4 | Early release at all schools |
| June 4 | Last day of school, MHS Graduation at Multipurpose Stadium: 8 p.m. |

Relaying the Message

— By Betty Tryon



Relay also raises awareness in communities, celebrates survivors and remembers those who lost their lives to cancer.



It will be a long night. Participants will walk around and around the track until they accomplish their mission. Donna Collins, county chairman for Relay for Life and member of the Midlothian Relay for Life committee knows the drill. For five years, she has accepted the challenge to help others afflicted with cancer. She explains how it all started, 'I was working in a bank in Waxahachie when I was first approached about Relay for Life, and at the time, I knew nothing about it. However, cancer had hit my family so when they approached my assistant manager and me, we got on a team. We walked and raised about \$3,000 between the two of us. I have been walking ever since. This is my second year to walk for Midlothian and my second year to be on the committee.'



Donna remembers the first time she participated in the organization, "That first year, you just walk and walk and when you sit down, another team member will get up and walk. The main reason I walked was in memory of my dad. He died of colorectal cancer when I was 20. So, I walk every year in remembrance of him and to fight back. We need to be proactive and get out there and have our tests done. It's not the most fun thing to go in for these tests and they can be scary, too; but if my dad had gone in and taken care of himself instead of being fearful of what they may find, he might still be alive today."

Part of Donna's passion for Relay for Life stems from her personal pain in watching her father die. She recalled, "To watch someone who was a healthy man go from almost 200 pounds to 120 pounds was devastating. He was no longer the man he wanted to be. I also have many other family members who suffer with cancer. My two sisters-in-law have had brain tumors. My aunt had

The incidence of cancer is so prevalent in our society that the odds are if you do not have cancer, you will know someone who does.

breast cancer, and I have cousins who have brain cancers. You can't run from it.

"I get real passionate about things I do, and don't understand why people don't take cancer more seriously. Until we find a cure, at least we can educate people to get out there, go to the doctor and have the tests, more so if it's in your family. I've had cervical cancer, and it was a wake-up call and a blessing for me — to have that wake-up call without going through all the disastrous and dignity stealing treatments. Just be proactive. Make sure you are educating other people to be tested. If you see signs that something in your body isn't right, go to the doctor. Statistics say that one out of every three people in the world will be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime."

Donna continued, "Early detection saves lives. We want to catch everything early so people don't have to endure

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those treatments because they are pretty tough.” The incidence of cancer is so prevalent in our society that the odds are if you do not have cancer, you will know someone who does. The goal of Relay for Life is to fund research and assist cancer patients. Relay also raises awareness in communities, celebrates survivors and remembers those who lost their lives to cancer. Only three percent of the funds raised goes to management.



Left to right front:
Donna Collins - Accounting Chair
Kristi Smith - Event Chair
Kim Vyers - Registration Chair
Back row: Aaron Ingersoll - Entertainment Committee, Felest Ingersoll - Luminaria Chair
Pam Phipps - Survivor Chair

The majority of the money is used in research. Their next highest expenditures are in detection, prevention and patient services.

Under its umbrella of services, The American Cancer Society (ACS) sponsors Relay for Life events. One of the messages Relay for Life would like citizens to understand is that their assistance is for all cancers, not one particular type. Donna said, “We really need volunteers to help with the Relay. We only have six people on the committee in Midlothian. I don’t think it’s due to a lack of people being unconcerned about the issue. I think they don’t know about the Relay. Everybody knows about Komen (Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure). That is a huge fundraising event for women with breast cancer. There are so many others, so many different types of cancer — I just think this is a worthy cause.”

This year’s Relay will take place at Don Floyd Stadium, starting May 14 at 7:00 p.m. and ending May 15 at 7:00 a.m. People will congregate on the football field with their canopy tents and camping tents to relax between their walking

The bright side of dreams.

One night, Laurie Reynolds was awakened by a bad dream. Not all that uncommon, except she dreamed she had breast cancer. Understandably startled, Reynolds immediately performed a self exam, and what she thought was a figment of her imagination turned out to be an eye-opening reality. "There in my bed, in the middle of the night, I found the lump," she says.

Test results later revealed that Reynolds had an aggressive type of breast cancer. Given that her mom and sister were both diagnosed with cancer, she was all too familiar with the situation in which she now found herself.

Reynolds' physician search led her to the healing hands of the doctors at Methodist Mansfield Medical Center. "The doctors made me feel comfortable. They were compassionate and thoroughly explained everything," Reynolds confidently recalls. Being a carrier of the BRCA1 gene (which increases the risk of getting both breast and ovarian cancers), Reynolds chose to follow her physicians' advice and have a double mastectomy, reconstructive surgery, and a hysterectomy — all at the same time.

"I chose to do a double mastectomy and hysterectomy because of the link between breast and ovarian cancer and the fact that my family is at very high risk for these."

"My experience with my doctors and Methodist was extraordinary."

"Choosing this option reduced my risk of recurrence by about 80 percent," explains Reynolds. The nine-hour operation involved three different surgeons and took place at Methodist Mansfield.

"They helped me coordinate all of my procedures," she says, referring to the OB/GYN and plastic surgeon — also on staff at Methodist Mansfield. "I feel I've been blessed with fantastic surgeons," says Reynolds. "And thanks to my doctors at Methodist Mansfield, I can honestly say that I've had a really good experience with cancer."

The most common cancer in women today, breast cancer, affects millions every day. The good news is that when discovered in the early stages, most cancer can be treated. Having regular screenings and being educated about your health is the best preventive medicine. To find an independently practicing physician on the Methodist Mansfield medical staff, call 877-637-4297.



—Laurie Reynolds
Breast cancer survivor and Methodist
Mansfield Medical Center patient.



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laps. "There are usually no more than 15 on a team," Donna explained. "Each individual pays a \$10.00 registration fee. It is requested that each team member fundraise at least \$100.00. Most people go up and beyond the cost of the \$100.00." There will be many other activities at the Relay other than the main event, which is walking around the field. Donna added, "We decorate our tents and have a contest for the best tent. We have a 'Mr. Relay' where the guys dress



up like women and walk [around the track] while everyone puts money in their purses. Whoever collects the most money is the winner. We put people in jail, and you have to pay to get them out. There are kid-friendly activities, a stage and deejay all night long."

Putting on an event such as this requires much cooperation from the community in order to keep costs down. "We try to get everything donated," Donna stated. "The school donates the stadium and the city donates the stage. Allied Waste offers their services for recyclables and trash cans. We have restaurants that offer food. Our concession stand is always a fundraiser. We all work together to put this on for a nominal fee."

All of that effort brings big rewards. Last year, the Midlothian teams raised a gross of \$116,000. Donna said, "Everyone has a competitive spirit, but because of the economic time, [many have] pulled back the drawstrings. We are hoping to meet at least what we did last year. We need the community's help, that's for sure."

For more information on Relay for Life, visit relayforlife.org and join them as they put this year's theme into action — Creating a World With More Birthdays. **NOW**

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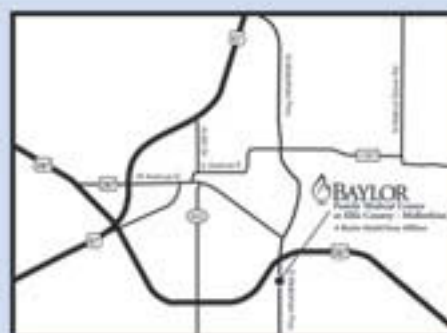
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At Home With
Jules and Lorena
Ferrante

A Taste of BROOKLYN *Bling in* Texas

— By Katrina D. McNair

In the midst of Midlothian, it may be hard to find a seamless mesh of Italian and Hispanic cultures, along with a dash of Texas bling. But in the house of Giuliano (Jules) and Lorena Ferrante, these styles come together in a perfect blend that has made for a beautiful home.

The couple met when Jules, who was attending Northwood University, received a haircut from Lorena, who has now been a hairstylist for 18 years and owns two salons, Ferrante Hair Studio 1 and Ferrante Hair Studio 2. “It was love at first cut, pretty much for her,” he said, laughing. It may have taken a year for them to go on their first date, but the couple has been married now since 1997. They have two children, Anthony and Bella.

Jules is originally from New York City and Lorena is a native Texan. Choosing Midlothian to make their family home was an



easy one for the couple. "I had to be close to my mom," Lorena said. "My mom helps me a lot with the kids and with the salons being here, it made sense to be a little closer to work as well."

The home is approximately 4,600 square feet, and the couple was very hands-on in choosing its fixtures and layout. Jules' skills as a project manager no doubt were essential, as were two of Lorena's clients, who assisted her with the interior and exterior decorations.



A preview of what awaits on the inside of the Ferrante home is first given when one views the outside. An arched doorway, with two glass-fronted doors and intricate scrollwork of black iron, ushers visitors inside the open foyer. The Ferrantes love open spaces and from the foyer, a formal dining room, the living room, the home office and a hallway leading to the master suite are all visible.

The entryway is one of Lorena's





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favorite areas of the home, as is the huge chandelier that hangs above it. Pewter in color, it is adorned with crystal-cut glass and classic point-tipped chandelier lighting. Off the entryway in the couple's office are the first glimpses of the New York memories Jules brought with him. Several pictures of the New York skyline and images of Brooklyn hang over the desk. Hand-scraped wood floors give the room a warm feeling.

The wood floors extend into the living room; a wide and open space that leads into the kitchen and an eat-in area. Faith is very important to the family, who attend Holy Spirit Catholic Church. As a testament to this, there are crosses throughout the home made of many different materials including some bejeweled with crystals. Over the fireplace, an intricate cross inlaid with smooth stones hangs above wood letters that spell out the couple's last name.

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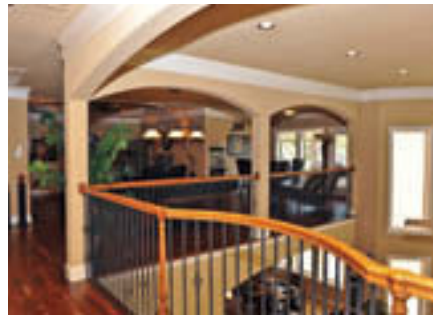
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The kitchen is truly a cook's dream. Granite countertops gleam, a marked contrast to the matte stainless steel appliances the couple installed. Dark stained cabinetry, fronted by glass with a "crackled" look, gives the kitchen a modern, yet Old World feel. The kitchen, like most of the house, has its own charming touches, including a pot-filler on the stove, a backsplash depicting a bottle of wine and bright fruit, and a cross made of black and gold wood. "This is my mother-in-law's kitchen," Lorena laughed. "She uses it when she comes to town. We get the best of both Mexican and Italian. All the good food," she said, referring to both cultural backgrounds represented in the family.

Across from the kitchen is one of four bedrooms in the home. Used as a guest room, the queen-size bed has hosted many a visit from Jules' parents, who visit two to three times a year. The guest bath does not have a traditional sink, but rather a bowl style, that looks to be made of small pieces of glass in a beautiful swarm of teal, brown, beige and purple.

In the couple's master suite, large



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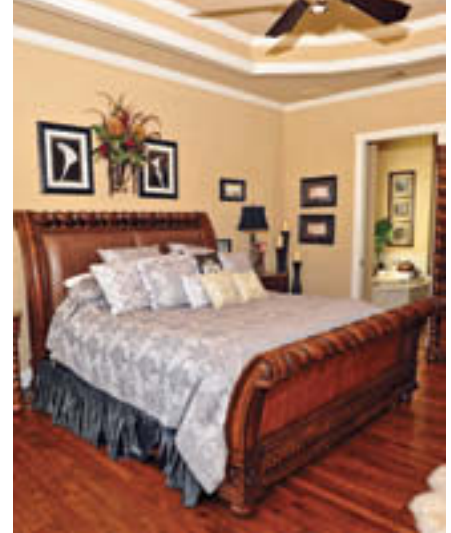


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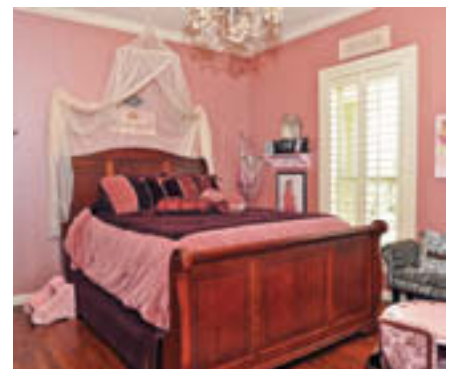
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photographs of both children are displayed on the walls, in full color across from the king-size bed. The bed's linens blend silver, blue and white in a bright palette, strikingly accented by the small touches of "bling" in the room — on a pillow, bordering a picture frame and on a small cross that rests on the dresser.

"I love bling," Lorena giggled. "I've always got something on that's blingy." Lorena's love of bling is also seen in the couple's bathroom with her displayed collection of shimmery necklaces. The large walk-in closet is dominated by Lorena's extensive shoe collection, complete with vintage cowboy boots. Jules has been allotted a small space in which to hang his clothing and display his baseball hats, important to him, as he came to Texas on a baseball scholarship.

The Brooklyn bling and family theme is extended upstairs where both Anthony and Bella have their own rooms with attached bathrooms. Bella's room is a little girl's dream; the walls are a soft shade of rose pink and her headboard rests under a gauzy white canopy. The room features a miniature chandelier made of crystal-cut glass. Trophies from Bella's competitive cheerleading competitions adorn her dresser. Anthony is an accomplished athlete; 42 trophies and countless medals





are prominently displayed in his room. Black and white vintage photos of Yankee Stadium hang on the Yankee-blue walls. The children's rooms are separated by a short walkway that extends over the foyer entrance.

The centerpiece of the upstairs area is the family's open media room. "The floor plan called for this to be closed-in, but we really wanted to leave it open," Lorena explained. "We just like to have the space



and we can see what the kids are up to at the same time." Facing the television screen is a row of black leather reclining chairs for movie watching. However, the family is more likely to gather for Wii games than to watch movies.

A granite-topped bar makes the area perfect for entertaining with a balcony overlooking the backyard, where the family plans to install a pool in the near future. Much like their home, the backyard is an open space, uncluttered by fencing and opening up to a wooded area.

After putting so much work into the home, the couple cannot think of living anywhere else — for now. "This is it," Lorena said, with a calm sense of finality. "We wanted the kids to have a place to grow up in, and this is home." **NOW**

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Third-graders at Longbranch Elementary learn to dye Easter eggs before writing a paper on "How To Dye Easter Eggs."



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Amanda Young surfs at the Lighthouse coffee shop.



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A Winning Profile

— By Betty Tryon

I wanted to paint a girl on a rainbow, but it changed to a cat on a rainbow."



In the area of art and creativity, many must wait until adulthood for recognition and appreciation of their talent from others. Spirited 8-year-old Hannah Lemke did not have to wait that long. In November 2009, she entered the Thanksgiving Square Fifth Annual Expressions Art Competition in Dallas, Texas. The contest theme was Abraham Lincoln's impact on celebrating Thanksgiving as a national holiday. The students were to

draw their interpretation of the theme. Over 300 students, grades kindergarten through 12, competed for the honor of placing first in the national competition. Hannah was awarded the blue ribbon for her art submission in the kindergarten through third-grade category. She was the only winner for Midlothian Independent School District or Ellis County.

When Hannah entered the contest and ultimately won, her mother, Jeanette, had

no idea what a big deal it was. Jeanette stated, "I knew Hannah had entered the contest, but I thought it was just through her school, LaRue Miller Elementary. I found out that it was all the schools in the Metroplex. I was contacted by Hannah's art teacher saying I had to go to Dallas to pick up the award, and there would be a ceremony. The superintendent of Dallas schools, Mr. Hinojosa, was there to speak to the students."

Hannah's winning entry was a profile drawing of Abraham Lincoln with a turkey drawn as the background. Jeanette, who is an artist also, stated, "Her teacher said because she drew Lincoln's profile, it separated her work from the others, and she had so much detail in the picture."

Hannah giggled remembering the moment she discovered she had won the award. "I kind of knew something was going on because Coach Rogers

came up to me and said, 'Have you heard anything?' and I said, 'No.' When I went to class, my teacher [Scott Fiorenza] said, 'Hannah, I have to talk to you. You won first place!' I just about fell through the floor when he said that." The entire school learned of her accomplishment when it was publicized during the morning school announcements. Hannah remembers jumping on her chair to pump her fist into the air and celebrating.

In addition to the honor of winning, Hannah received \$50 and \$250 went to her teacher to purchase school supplies for the classroom. Hannah's memory understandably is a little fuzzy about everything Mr. Fiorenza purchased with the money, but she does remember some new erasers and pencils making an appearance in the classroom shortly after he received the prize. Mr. Fiorenza set the record straight, "I was able to purchase two boxes of Color Sticks each containing 120 sticks. The color sticks are a new product from Crayola; they are a lot like colored pencils, only they do not have wood around them so there is no need to sharpen them. I also



purchased some decorative craft items, beads and jewels, for a folk art project we will be doing at some point next year," — all worthy purchases for an art teacher of third-graders. Hannah was much more definite about how she spent her own \$50 in prize money. "I bought two Webkinz, a scooter and some Oreo cookies," she recalled. Jeanette added that Hannah also purchased some Christmas presents with her money.

Hannah's skill and creativity with art



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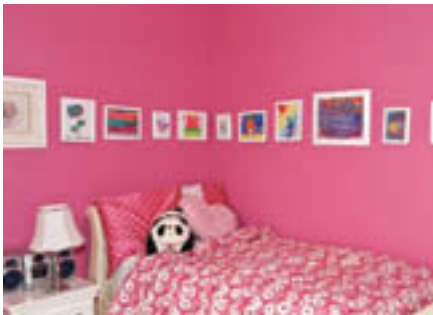
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seems to have come naturally to her. Jeanette said, "I paint and enjoy the art. As soon as Hannah could hold a marker, she took to it right away. If I wanted to paint, I had to let the kids do it, too. I wasn't scared of making a mess, and there were messes. We just confined it to the table." Hannah's brother, Ben, also has an artistic bent. Creating and painting were ways the family could spend quality time together. Hannah painted and colored just "because it was fun," she explained. "On the bus ride home from school I think of things I can do, and then go home and do it. Sometimes, I



Hannah painted and colored just "because it was fun."

start to paint one thing and end up doing something else. I wanted to paint a girl on a rainbow, but it changed to a cat on a rainbow."

Before Hannah won the Thanks-Giving Square award, she had an indication that her art was something others could appreciate. She stated, "I won a drawing contest at Walmart and at Brookshire's." Her classmates can now appreciate Hannah's talent. The price of fame can be overwhelming at times. "They all want me to draw pictures of them. They ask can you draw my circle? Can you draw my lips? Can you draw my hair?" She sighed and shook her head.

Thinking into the future, the 8-year-old knows what she wants to be — a cake decorator. In this field, the way a cake can be designed and decorated has endless possibilities. If that is what she wants, there is no doubt Hannah has the skill and personality to make her cake decorating a great success. **NOW**

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A Special Destiny

— By Betty Tryon

The Special Olympics basketball game was in full play. Two of the players, however, seemed captivated by the cheerleaders, so off they went, away from basketball to poms-poms, flips and cheers. Destiny Wells, one of the escapees, was unshakeable in her desire to cheer. Her mom, Crystal Wells remembers trying to get Destiny back in the game. “We kept trying to get them back and telling them to go play basketball with the rest of their team!” she laughed. “They were flipping and cheering and that’s when I realized that is what she wants to do. Now that we are doing it, she absolutely loves it. She’s like that. She knows what she wants to

do and just goes right to it. One of the reasons I love Special Olympics is they don’t say, ‘No.’”

Destiny started in Special Olympics (SO) in the first grade through her Community Based Instruction (CBI) class at school. Bowling and basketball were the first sports she played. Since then, she has joined the school-sponsored track and field and bowling teams. After school, Destiny participates in soccer, swimming in the summer, gymnastics, and of course, cheerleading.

All of these sports keep Crystal very busy seeing that Destiny stays active. “Destiny has Down syndrome and very low muscle tone,” Crystal explained.

“She can’t burn calories the same way others do. That is why we are involved in so many activities. It is a fun way for her to get exercise and receive physical benefits.” Destiny has a physical therapist, occupational therapist and speech therapist. The physical therapist saw an increase in Destiny’s strength and agility after she started SO.

Physical gains are not the only benefits received from SO. When a goal is set and achieved, self-esteem and confidence is raised. That is another incredible benefit participants find in any sport, perhaps even more so in SO. Crystal elaborated, “Destiny and I have learned that she can achieve things we never thought she could. I was completely amazed the first time I saw her dribble. I didn’t know she could do that, so my expectation level for her definitely rose. In gymnastics, she was afraid to flip over the bar, but we kept encouraging her until she was able to do it. I want her to face things she is fearful of. I believe in her and can see her becoming more independent. She learned that she could set a goal, go and compete. It is definitely a confidence booster.”

Destiny’s confidence gets a huge boost every time she enters their playroom. Covering the windowsill are rows of trophies collected by Destiny with a few sprinkled in from her sister, Angelina. Hung over the window are medals Destiny has earned — so many they could be used as a creative valance. Crystal agrees that Destiny is a confident young lady. “She is quite a ham and loves the attention. There are not a whole lot of opportunities available to people with disabilities, and it is great that she is able to participate in team sports. She likes to perform and is not shy at all. I think that can be attributed to her involvement in SO. She has that boldness. Sometimes, it can be scary to try new things, but she has a lot of courage.”

Destiny’s participation in SO carries over into her day at school. She not only has the opportunity to play SO sports during designated school times, but in her physical education class, she joins with the other students in the activity of the day. “She can’t always understand the rules or do everything the other kids do,” Crystal explained. “There is a lot

of grace there. The main idea is for her to participate as much as she can. My expectation is for her to learn the rules of the game. Her confidence and self-esteem drives her to participate in school. She just keeps on going and that comes from being involved in sports."



"After school, Destiny participates in soccer, swimming in the summer, gymnastics, and of course, cheerleading."

A side benefit from participating in sports is lifelong friendships. "SO is a good social skills builder. As her mom and dad, we want to teach her how to be independent as best she can." Destiny's sports give her that opportunity. She really appreciates the friends she has gained during her cheerleading. The cheerleading is not a SO event, but Liberty Cheer has a special needs team that Destiny joined. Within that environment, the members of the special needs team are paired with cheer peers. These are girls without disabilities. Destiny and others on the team get the opportunity to build friendships with these girls. Crystal said, "It is always

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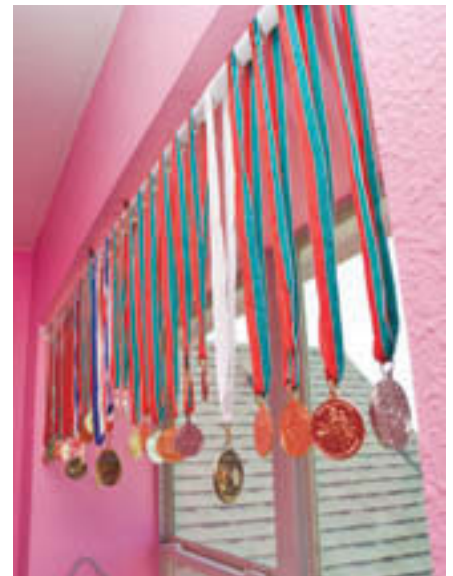
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important to be involved in things with nondisabled people.”

When asked about her favorite part of being involved in Special Olympics, Destiny quickly stated that it is her friends. Is that not one of the favorite aspects of team sports for us all? Special Olympics gives her that gift. **NOW**

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Helping Others HEAR BETTER

Michelle Gillentine fulfills her goal in life by helping people hear better.

— By Betty Tryon

Deaf at birth, the 20-day-old baby snuggled in his mother's arms. Michelle Gillentine, audiologist and owner of Allen Hearing Clinic in Midlothian, had just fitted the babe with a hearing device. Before she turned it on, she motioned to the mother to speak. The mom quietly spoke to her baby, and the miracle was complete. For the first time in his life, the baby could hear. Hearing his mother's voice for the first time, he immediately turned, wide eyed in amazement, toward the sound.

It was an extremely emotional moment that underscored why Michelle chose her profession. As an audiologist, she can relate to hearing loss. "I have profound congenital hearing loss in my right ear and always went to see an audiologist every year," she stated. "I thought I would be

able to understand patients better because I have experienced that."

After deciding her career path, Michelle enrolled in The University of Oklahoma-Oklahoma City where she earned her Bachelor of Science in communication disorders and her Master of Science in audiology. After completing her education in Oklahoma, Michelle enrolled in San Antonio at University Hospital for a year of clinical fellowship. Soon afterward, she moved to Dallas and eventually started her own private practice in December 1999. In time, she earned her doctorate through The University of Arizona in 2004 in their distance-learning program.

Six years later, Michelle owns two practices, one in Allen, Texas, and the other in Midlothian, with plans for more



From left:

Michelle Gillentine, A.U.D. and Barbara Nichols are ready to assist you with your hearing needs.

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on the way. "One of my goals 15 years ago was to have multiple practices. It wasn't about making more money; the more offices we can have, the more people I can help. My goal is to always help people hear better, so they will not miss the things I missed," she stated.

In her practice, Michelle treats pediatric through geriatric. She added, "The youngest baby I ever fit with a hearing device was 20 days old. It is important to know the hearing capabilities of newborns for their speech, language and other milestones. Fortunately, in the state of Texas we have mandated hearing screening when they are born so we are detecting potential issues much sooner."

Texas also does some in-school hearing testing. Michelle stated, "School testing does not test for low pitch because of room noise." She recalled the story of a young man's life changing because he could now hear. "He came to us in the ninth grade and was struggling in school making C's and D's. We tested him and fitted him with amplification before school started." He ended up being an honor-roll student, eventually went to college and now teaches. "Parents should look at language and speech delay, recurrent ear infections and fluid in the ear," Michelle stated as possible areas for concern.

Allen Hearing Clinic offers many services to its patients. "We fit amplification if needed, and offer assistive listening devices," Michelle noted. "We have Bluetooth devices that work in conjunction with hearing aids. We have hearing devices in several sizes — from those that are tiny enough to go down in the ear canal to ones that are placed behind the ear. We do wax removal, hearing aid repairs and adjustments, and discuss hearing protection."

Michelle is honored to have been accepted into the prestigious Audigy Group, a distinction which is seen in only the top three-to-five percent of private audiology providers in the United States. She was the first audiologist inducted in Texas. There are now only two others in Texas who have been invited and inducted into the group. You may never know what you are missing until you get your hearing tested. The staff at Allen Hearing Clinic is waiting for your call. **NOW**

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History in Midlothian

— By *Adam Walker*



Lupe Mendoza is a first-year bilingual social studies teacher at J.A. Vitovsky Elementary, but he is no stranger to the community. Midlothian is his hometown; his family moved here when he was 4 years old. He and his sisters graduated from Midlothian High School. Still, when he went away to college at Central Christian College in Kansas, he never dreamed he would be returning to teach in the same schools where he had been a

student. "This is something I had no idea I was being called to do," Lupe said.

No, when he left he was going to study health and play sports — especially baseball. He wanted to coach, but discovered that coaching is a lot like teaching and decided he could make a bigger difference in children's lives in the classroom. "I never knew I would love doing this, but I do. I get to make an impact on kids' lives. Kids need examples, guidance and discipline." And that is what Lupe works hard to provide.

Last year he started working at Vitovsky as a bilingual aid. Then when the social studies position opened he jumped at it. "I'm a history buff," he confessed. "I'm intrigued by the past — how it brought us to today. I'm interested in the wars, what they were about and their results. History is kind of my thing; it's always engaged me."

Lupe's students are in good hands when it comes to creative ways to present the material. They start each class with This Week in History, a warm-up exercise in which the students pretend to be television correspondents reporting on historical events that happened during that week long ago. Each week, Lupe has information posted on his bulletin board about such things as Elvis being drafted. The children choose from the events and give their reports to their classmates. And that is just the first few minutes of class.

Then there is the class project. They are leaning about Jamestown and the other early colonies, so Lupe has his students building their own colonies. They have to earn "M-bucks" (Mendoza bucks) for their good behavior, good grades and other achievements. With these M-bucks they buy the raw materials to build their communities. They buy wood in the form of tongue depressors and Popsicle sticks to build their houses, blacksmith sheds and churches; and they buy gravel to pave their streets, which teaches them budgeting and resource management. They learn community planning as they decide what skills their colonies need and what buildings are needed to complete their towns. "We could have a couple of future architects in this class," Lupe noted. The students also explore the geographic settings for

Education **NOW**

their colonies and the resources available to their settlers. They have to keep records of what they have spent and what they have achieved in planning their colonies.

Being a first-year teacher is challenging; adding the extra load of teaching in a bilingual classroom makes it that much more so, but Lupe is up for the challenge. "Bilingual teaching adds a lot to my plate, and it can be overwhelming at times; but I just have to keep my wits about me and keep moving forward." Much of the extra load is in the form of added preparation work. Teaching bilingually means he has to be prepared to teach every lesson twice — once in English and again in Spanish. "Some of my students speak nothing but Spanish at first. It can be lonely for them in a class full of English speakers, and it is a little challenging to keep them up with the rest of the class. I have to stay really organized and be sure I communicate all the content in both languages," Lupe explained.

Lupe sees all teachers as a role model for their students, but with the rarity of male teachers in elementary schools, he sees himself as having an extra responsibility to present a positive male role model. "It's not every day you get a male teacher in elementary school. So I have to set an example, especially for the boys. Many of them have it rough at home. I have to set a proper example — to push myself to be a good role model, to teach the proper things, to teach good behavior. And the kids notice what I do because I am different."

Many students go away to college; not all return — especially not to teach in the same town where they grew up. "I'm working with some of the same teachers who taught me. I think it shows the kind of program we have here that teachers stay this long. I was their student 20 years ago." Now he is their co-worker, and he has found the teachers at Vitovsky very welcoming and helpful in finding his way through his first year teaching full time.

Midlothian has a native son to be proud of. If he has accomplished this much in his first year in the classroom, imagine what the children of the community have in store in coming years. **NOW**

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In The Kitchen With Karen Birtchet

— By Faith Browning

Like most women, Karen Birtchet can remember her cooking beginnings as a child making cookies. When she married Bud, her husband of over 50 years, she had to learn the rest of her skills from an old *Betty Crocker Easy Cook Book*. "I always had to be frugal feeding six children, and I have cooked many casseroles," she said. "One of my sisters said I taught her how to cook hamburger 50 different ways."

When her four oldest daughters left home in the '80s, she hand printed a recipe book of her favorite recipes for each one titled *Recipes From Mom's Kitchen*. "One of our daughters told me recently the difference between my cooking and most people's is the 'love' that I put into it," she said. "I thought that was the best compliment I could ever receive." **NOW**



OVERNIGHT COFFEE CAKE

1 pkg. frozen cloverleaf roll dough (about 25 rolls)
1 pkg. (4 serving size) vanilla pudding mix, not instant
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup pecans, chopped
1 stick butter, melted

1. Separate frozen dough into pieces (Each cloverleaf makes 3 pieces.)
2. Combine dry pudding mix with brown sugar and pecans.
3. Place pieces of dough in a well-buttered Bundt or angel food cake pan.
4. Pour butter over frozen dough; sprinkle with pudding mixture.
5. Leave cake pan out overnight, covered with a towel. The dough rises beautifully by morning.
6. Bake at 350 F for 30 minutes. Invert on a serving plate and serve.

GREEN POTATOES

6 to 8 lg. potatoes, peeled and boiled
3/4 cup light cream, heated (can substitute evaporated milk)
1 tsp. sugar
1/2 cup butter
2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper
2 Tbsp. chives, chopped
2 1/2 Tbsp. fresh dill or 1/2 tsp. dried dill
1 pkg. chopped frozen spinach

1. Drain and mash potatoes.
2. Add cream, sugar, butter, salt and pepper; beat until light and fluffy.
3. Add chives and dill.
4. Cook spinach; drain well.
5. Add to potatoes; mix until well-blended. Add more seasoning if needed.
6. Place in a greased 1 1/2-quart casserole dish. Bake in a 400 F oven for 20 minutes or until thoroughly heated. If there are leftovers, make patties out of cold potatoes the next morning. Heat in a skillet; turning once. Top with cheese and a fried egg. This makes a great breakfast or a last-minute dinner. Yields 8 servings.

TEXAS SPAGHETTI

2 lbs. ground beef
1 onion, chopped

2 12-oz. cans tomato soup
1 green pepper, chopped
12-oz. pkg. ripple-edged noodles
Salt and pepper, to taste
12-oz. cheddar cheese, grated
2 12-oz. cans cream of mushroom soup
1 1/2 cups green salad olives, chopped
Parmesan cheese, grated

1. Brown beef and onion; drain well.
2. Add tomato soup, green pepper, noodles, salt and pepper; mix well.
3. Simmer 10 minutes.
4. Place half of meat mixture in a 12 x 9-inch pan; cover with half the cheddar cheese. Spread on one can of mushroom soup. Sprinkle with half the olives and Parmesan cheese. Repeat layers.
5. Bake at 350 F for 30 minutes. May be frozen prior to baking. If frozen, bake at 400 for 45 minutes. *VARIATION: I often combine cheddar cheese with Monterey Jack and black olives with salad olives.*

EASY TATER DISH

1 lb. hamburger
1 12-oz. can cream of mushroom soup
Salt and pepper, to taste
Small pkg. tater tots

1. Brown hamburger; drain off grease.
2. Add undiluted soup, salt and pepper.
3. Put in a greased 8 x 8-inch pan; place one layer of tater tots on top.
4. Bake at 375 F until tater tots are done.

PISTACHIO DESSERT

CRUST:
1 cup flour
1 cup pecans, chopped
1/2 cup margarine
FIRST LAYER:
1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese
1 cup confectioners' sugar
1 cup Cool Whip topping
SECOND LAYER:
1 sm. pkg. instant pistachio pudding
1 sm. pkg. instant vanilla pudding
3 cups milk
TOPPING:
2 cups Cool Whip topping
1/2 cup pecans, chopped

1. Mix and pack crust ingredients along a 9 x 12-inch pan. Bake at 325 F for 20-25 minutes.
2. For first layer, blend cream cheese and sugar. Add Cool Whip; place in crust.
3. For second layer, beat together all ingredients until thickened. Spread on top of first layer.
4. Top second layer with Cool Whip and pecans; refrigerate before serving. *VARIATION: You can substitute chocolate pudding for pistachio and top with shaved chocolate instead of pecans.*

DOUBLE TREAT COOKIES

1 cup shortening
1 cup white sugar
1 cup brown sugar
2 eggs, slightly beaten
1 cup crunchy peanut butter
2 1/2 cups flour
2 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. salt
1 tsp. vanilla
1 12-oz. pkg. chocolate chips

1. Cream shortening, sugars, eggs and peanut butter until creamy.
2. Mix in flour, soda and salt. Add vanilla and chocolate chips; stir until mixed.
3. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto an ungreased baking sheet.
4. Bake at 350 F until light brown, about 18 minutes. Yields 8 dozen cookies. *NOTE: The consistency of the cookie is much better if hand-mixed.*

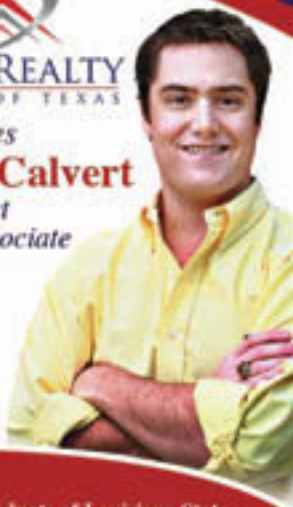
RASPBERRY DELIGHT

1 pkg. (6 oz.) raspberry Jell-O
1 1/2 cups boiling water
1 can blueberries and juice (Oregon brand)
15-oz. can crushed pineapple and juice
8-oz. sour cream
8-oz. cream cheese
1/2 cup sugar
1 tsp. vanilla

1. Dissolve Jell-O in water; add blueberries and pineapple with juices.
2. Place in a 9 x 13-inch dish; chill until set.
3. Blend together sour cream and cream cheese. Add sugar and vanilla.
4. Spread on top of Jell-O mixture; refrigerate. *This can be used as a holiday salad or dessert.*



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Are Your Records Organized for an Emergency?

— By *Tim Tobey*

If you were incapacitated, would anyone be able to find your important records and take care of your family's financial or business matters? Having important papers organized and accessible in advance can be very important in an emergency or crisis situation. Consider the following for organizing your important records.

Location:

Options for storage might include a home safe, fire-security box or off-site location such as a safety deposit box. The storage container should be securable and fire resistant. Shoe boxes or cardboard boxes in the closet or under the bed are not appropriate.

Who knows?

Does someone in addition to your spouse know where these papers are kept? Consider making a list of such papers and records, and on the list state where these documents can be found. Then advise a trusted third party — an attorney, CPA, relative, or family friend — where this list is kept. The general idea is that someone not living in your residence knows about this list and how to access it. This decision requires a certain comfort level, and you alone are able to make that determination.



Which papers?

Regardless of who knows what, organized records are always a plus. The following items might be part of your "important documents" list:

- Safety deposit box key
- Life insurance policies
- Deeds, contracts, leases, titles, mortgage(s), loan notes
- Banking, savings, investment and retirement account(s) records
- Will
- Burial arrangements

- All other insurance policies (health, auto, home, etc.)
- Birth certificates

Beyond however you decide to store your personal records, and whatever you decide to include, one fact is clear. If important legal, business and personal documents are organized and accessible, the handling of a crisis situation is made much easier. **NOW**

Tim Tobey is a State Farm agent based in Midlothian.

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HELP, I have poison ivy!

— By *Dave Gambel, RPh*

Spring is officially here, and summer will arrive soon after. With sunny, warm and then hot weather, our families will be outside more and more, enjoying the usual outdoor activities, which can bring us into contact with some not-so-friendly plants — poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac.

Of all the “poison” plants, poison oak is most prevalent in our area, but all three can be found here. All of the plants can cause the same reaction, because they all carry the same oil (urushiol). This oil is present in all parts of the plants. Contact with the plant releases the oil, and causes an allergic reaction on the skin. Some people can be super-sensitive to the oil, and even get a reaction from the oil in the air. This occurs sometimes when burning the plants, or simply being in the vicinity of the plant. A reaction can even occur from indirect contact such as from animal’s fur, clothing, lawn and garden tools that have made contact with the plant, or even an old pile of brush/leaves.

The reaction can vary in severity from person to person. You may recognize the reaction within only a few hours, or it may

not appear for several days. A “poison” plant reaction can itch, and cause raised wheals or even streaks. The wheals may have fluid filled bumps that can weep. This rash is not contagious and does not spread. It appears only where the oil has contacted the skin. The reaction typically lasts for 10 days to 6 weeks, depending on severity.

There are several ways to treat a poison plant reaction. First, thoroughly wash all areas that may have come in contact with the plant. Some commercial products are available that are intended to “draw out” the oils from the skin, therefore preventing a reaction or reducing the effects of a reaction. These can be purchased over-the-counter. Antihistamine creams, oral antihistamines and topical lotions can reduce or help soothe the reaction. Many of the favorite lotions have topical anesthetic for the itching. Sometimes, a simple cool, wet compress or a cool bath will give some relief.

If the reaction is severe, or the common over-the-counter remedies fail, a trip to your local doctor may be necessary. The doctor will most likely treat the reaction with either an oral, topical or injectable cortisone type product.

These reactions are preventable by being aware of what the different plants look like, wearing long clothing, protective creams and washing after possible contact with the plants. Some compounding pharmacies also prepare oral desensitization products to help your body create immunity to the oils. Keep your eyes peeled and your skin protected, and enjoy your time outdoors! **NOW**

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School Board Meeting: 6:30 p.m.

Third Monday

Ellis County Aggie Moms meeting: 7:00 p.m., Waxahachie First United Methodist Church, 505 W. Marvin. For more information, see our Web site: www.elliscountyaggie moms.org.

Fourth Monday

Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis County meeting: 6:30 p.m.-8:00 p.m., Waxahachie Bible Church, 621 Grand Ave. May 24th Guest Speaker: Raggiu Marino, "Airplanes."

Every Tuesday

Midlothian Rotary Club meeting: noon, Midlothian Civic Center, 224 South 11th St. Call (972) 775-7118 for information.

GED Class: 6:00 p.m., Meadows Library, located at Midlothian High School.

Second and Fourth Tuesdays

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

Third Wednesday

The Ellis County Christian Women's Connection monthly luncheon: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Waxahachie Country Club, 1920 W. Hwy. 287 at I-35 East (Exit 401B), Waxahachie. All women are welcome. Cost: \$13.00, inclusive. Nursery vouchers are available. Reservations are preferred, however, walk-ins are welcome. To make reservations, please contact Kay at (972) 937-2807 or windchime423@yahoo.com or Mary at (972) 937-9984, no later than Friday, May 14.

First Thursday

Midlothian Area Historical Society meeting: 7:00 p.m., Meadows Library, located at the Midlothian High School. Contact Kathy Robinson at (972) 723-2755 for more information.

ABWA — Empowering Women Express Network monthly meeting: 6:00 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center, 1 Community Circle. For more information, please RSVP at www.abwa-empoweringwomen.org.

First and Third Thursday

Midlothian Lions Club meeting: 7:00 p.m., Midlothian Civic Center, 224 S. 11th Street. For more information, call (972) 775-7118 or to RSVP call (972) 723-0017 or e-mail julia_mainplace@sbcglobal.net.

May 6

The Navarro College Small Business

Summer Fun in Waxahachie



Chamber of Commerce & Convention and Visitors Bureau



Cinco de Mayo - May 1
Lions Grand Prix - May 14-15
Gingerbread Trail Historic Home Tour & Arts & Crafts Show - June 5-6
Balloon Festival - June 11-13
Cow Creek Country Classic Bike Rally - June 26

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Happening **NOW**

Development Center (SBDC) will sponsor a free seminar, "How to Start a Small Business" from 10:00 a.m.-noon, at the Citizens National Bank Community Room, 310 N. 9th Street, Midlothian. Seminar is free but pre-registration is required. To register, call the Navarro College SBDC at (972) 923-6425 or e-mail sbdc@navarrocollege.edu.

May 7

Ellis A&M Club 6th Annual Golf Tournament: Lunch starts at 11:30 a.m. and the shotgun start is at 1:00 p.m. This is a scholarship fundraiser; entry fee is \$100. Everyone is invited. For more information, visit www.ellisaggies.com or e-mail Bob Garrett at bgarrett7740@sbcglobal.net.

May 14

Relay for Life: Starting May 14 at 7:00 p.m. and ending May 15 at 7:00 a.m., Don Floyd Stadium. For more information, contact www.relayforlife.org or call Donna at (469) 449-7293.

May 20

Navarro College Small Business Development Center (SBDC) will sponsor "Writing a Winning Business Plan" at the Citizens National Bank Community Room, 310 N. 9th Street, Midlothian: 10:00 a.m.-noon. Cost of the workshop is \$20; pre-registration is required. To register, call the Navarro College SBDC at (972) 923-6425 or e-mail sbdc@navarrocollege.edu.

June 5

Annual Pancake Breakfast Fly-in: 8:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m., Mid-Way Regional Airport. The public is invited. Event and parking are free. Breakfast tickets for ages 8 and above: \$6; ages 3-7: \$3; 2 and under are free. Classic airplanes/fighters, The Classic Swing Band, helicopter rides, Midlothian Classic Wheels and other attractions. Call Tammy for more information at (972) 923-0080.

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