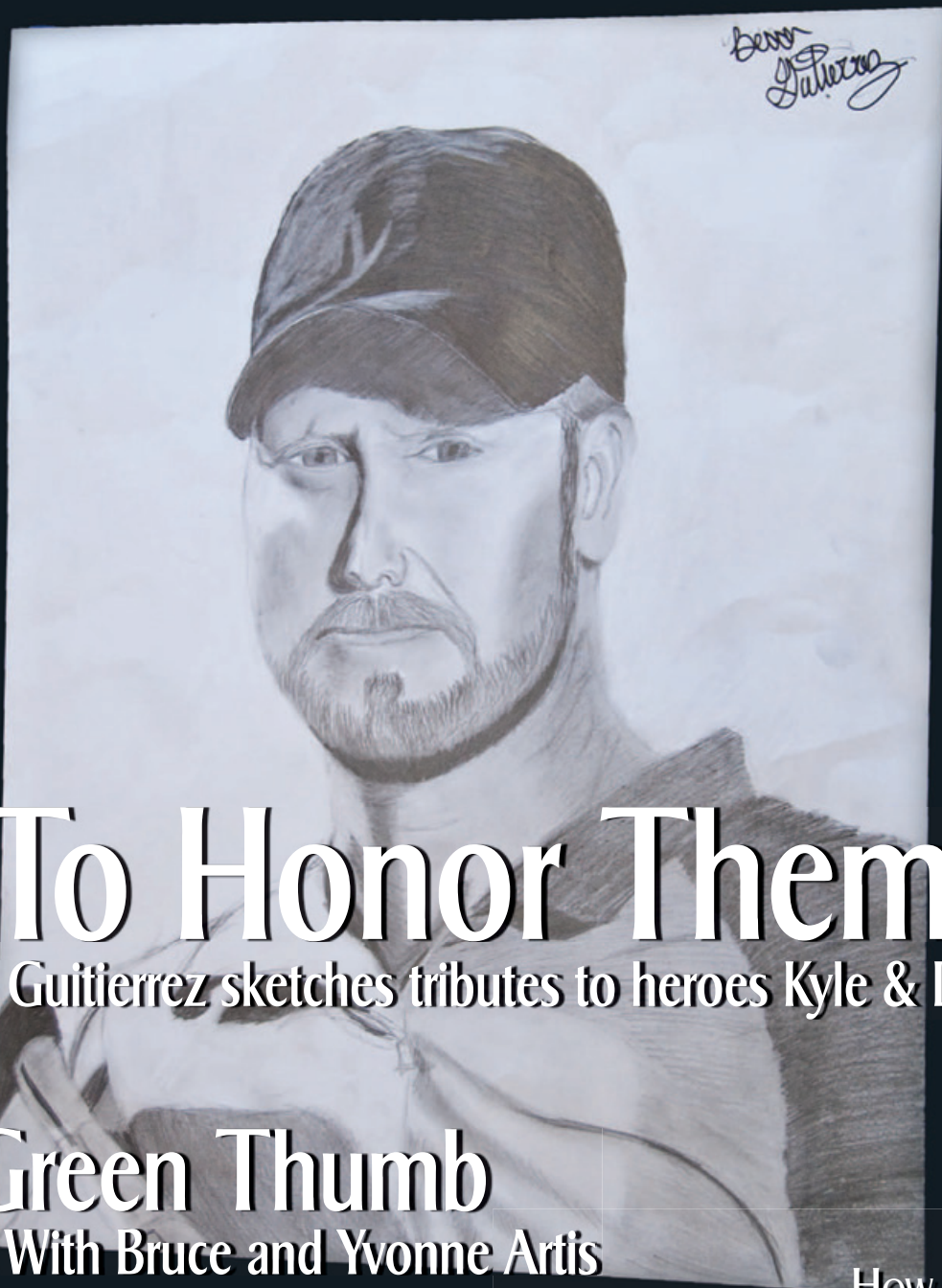


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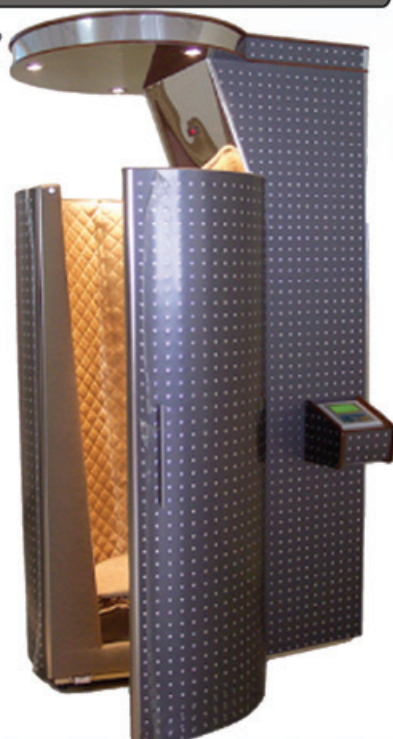
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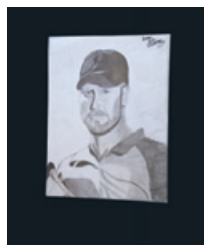
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ON THE COVER



Rebecca Gutierrez's sketch honors Chris Kyle.

Photo by Opaque Visuals.

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Editor's Note

Hello, Midlothian!

In this turbulent world of extreme possibilities, there can be a tendency within oneself to question or doubt your own potential. To overcome this and excel requires a special brand of courage and perseverance. As this year's students graduate, the next big step toward success awaits. Along the way will be many failures as well as triumphs. The key is to never give up. Winston Churchill said, "Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts." With faith and perseverance, I know you will reach your goal!

On April 17, 2013, the lives and community of West, Texas, was forever changed. We at NOW Magazines would like to offer our thoughts and prayers for the injured and the families who lost loved ones. Our most heartfelt gratitude is extended toward the families of the first responders who lost their lives. May God bless as you heal individually and as a community.

Betty

Betty Tryon
MidlothianNOW Editor
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TO HONOR THEM

By Betty Tryon

"It shouldn't have happened. I don't think people should be killed like this," said 16-year-old Rebecca Guitierrez, as she struggled to make sense of an event that was indefensible and heartbreaking. Two remarkable Midlothian residents, Chris Kyle and Chad Littlefield, were struck down February 2, 2013. Kyle was a decorated United States Navy Seal. He became famous for being the most lethal sniper in American military history. His book, American Sniper, became a New York Times bestselling autobiography. He was also an advocate for veterans suffering with post-traumatic stress disorder. Chad Littlefield was helping his friend, Chris, work with a troubled veteran on the day they were killed. Although Littlefield was not in the military, the Patriot Guard Riders honored him at his funeral because of his work with veterans. He will be remembered because of his efforts to help and because of his character.

As the Midlothian community mourned their loss, Rebecca wanted to do something to show she cared and respected their lives. The method she chose is the one she does the best — sketching. When one sees Rebecca's charcoal sketches of Kyle and Littlefield, striking and realistic are two words that come to mind. As early as age 3, Rebecca's talent in art was evident. "I would draw a lot at day care," she remembered. "I would bring it home, and my family would hang it up. I did that every day. As I got older and better at it, that's when I knew I liked to draw. My mom always made a big deal out of what I drew. When I was 3, I drew her boss a picture, and he hung it in his office and has kept it up since then. It was a picture of a doctor, or rather, what I *thought* a doctor would look like."

In second grade, Rebecca, with the help of her teacher, submitted a picture of a horse to the Ellis County Art Show, where she received an Honorable Mention. Feeling somewhat nonplussed at what it all meant, she waited until her teacher explained it to her before getting very excited at being recognized by the judges at the art show. Rebecca continued to draw throughout childhood with various art teachers in elementary school. "I feel that the first art teacher I had helping me one on one was in junior high school," she said.

As a sophomore at Midlothian High School, Rebecca currently is taking a pre-AP art class. "The art teacher I have now says he thinks I'll go far with my art," she stated. "He



"I aspire to his legacy. So, when I heard he had passed away, I wanted to do a tribute about Chris Kyle the hero."

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has taught me how to do shadow, mix colors, how to shade and how to show the light of the color. I'm good at sketches but like to try new things and find what I'm good at. I've used different materials like pastels, colored pencils and mixed media."

Rebecca's first attempt at painting was done in acrylic. She used a palette of red and pink colors blending into each other as the background. The moon was in the shape of a heart, and to complete the picture, she drew shadowy trees at the base. "I painted it because I like the colors," she explained. "The moon is the sign for love, and I painted the trees because I love nature and wanted to include it."

Another rare painting from Rebecca was for a school project about her great-grandparents. Using different pictures from her grandpa's collection, she combined all of them into one picture. She positioned the couple in the front part of the landscape, and behind them, Rebecca painted a cotton patch, a barn and a farmhouse. Although she enjoyed her few excursions into painting, sketching with charcoal remained her favorite.

One of her more unusual sketches is of a handgun firing. However, instead of bullets exploding out of the barrel, she drew musical notes. "I play the clarinet in the school band," she noted. "I like music, and with everything going on with the shootings, I thought of doing something different that wouldn't



represent bad but something good with guns. So I drew it with music coming out of it.”

Another sketching that is near to her heart is the one she drew of Tristen Fort, a Midlothian teenager who passed away last year in a car accident. “We were good friends,” Rebecca shared, “and I did the sketch in memory of her. She was such a happy person and smiled all the time. She made me laugh, so I wanted to show people her smile.”

A more carefree sketch Rebecca drew was of Louis Tomlinson, a member of singing group, One Direction. She is a fan of his. Unlike her other charcoal sketches that are strictly black and white, she used a blue pencil to shade in color in his clothing.

Rebecca is familiar with the challenge of capturing a person’s image on paper

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or canvas. To bring the face alive, an intrinsic quality of who that person is must be brought forth. "I look for things people notice," Rebecca explained. "When I see something, I like to show people what it is I see in my drawing." Rebecca sought to share that in her sketches of Kyle and Littlefield.

"I heard about Chris Kyle and his legacy when he came and spoke to the schools," she said. "I didn't get a chance to meet him, so I wanted to read his book to know what he went through in the war. There is a lot of description in the book about what heroes go through. I aspire to his legacy. So, when I heard he had passed away, I wanted to do a tribute about Chris Kyle the hero. I've thought about doing a piece on American heroes for a while. They made this country what it is. If it wasn't for them, we wouldn't have the things we have now."

Rebecca wanted to honor Littlefield also. She shared, "I didn't know much about Chad Littlefield until I heard he had died. I heard things about him that were very good, such as, he volunteered to help with the veterans. He had a big role. They both should be recognized and not just the one. This was my way to honor them."

It is difficult to describe the wounded heart of a community, even as the grief was shared by millions across the country. With their tragic deaths, a community held hands and mourned. Even with the darkest night, a tiny flicker of candlelight can banish the darkness and light and hope can live again. Rebecca sought to be one of the symbolic candles of light and hope with her pictures. **NOW**

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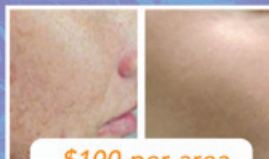
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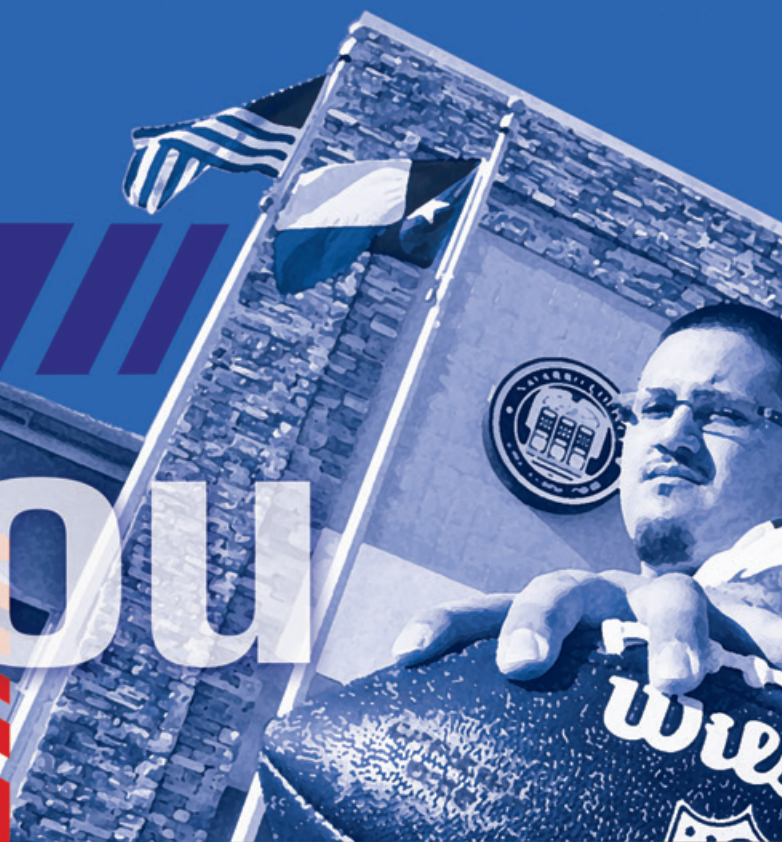
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**“My prosthetic
has never
held me back,
and I’ve
never used
it as an
excuse.”**

By Betty Tryon

Throughout his life, Adrian has had four surgeries on his knee. He healed quickly after each one. “It has never taken me more than one-and-a-half months to start walking after my surgeries,” he said. “I had my last surgery during my senior year, and I started walking in three weeks. I pushed it, because I had a goal. I had never been to homecoming throughout my high school years, and I told myself, ‘I am not going to homecoming on a cane or with crutches. I’m going to walk and dance.’”

Now 18, Adrian looked back on his childhood and mused about how normal

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it all seemed. It was after all, his normal. However, even though he thought there was nothing out of the ordinary about his amputated leg, some of the children he encountered sought to remind him. "There is always the scrutiny of kids when you're growing up. Every kid gets picked on because of some disability or



if they have something odd. I dealt with that and never let it bother me, because I was always active playing sports. I liked swimming, and I was big on soccer. My dad got me in soccer and boxing, and I boxed for two years."

Adrian remembers encountering resistance from football coaches when he tried out for football at Thomas C. Marsh Middle School in Dallas. "I was really young, and I remember the coach looking at me in a weird way, as if wondering whether or not I could do it. When I started middle school and got into football, I went to all the practices and started getting some playing time. In the seventh grade, I didn't get to play football, because the coaches thought I couldn't do it. I learned fundamentals and the game of football that year. I had two-a-days, summer workouts and went to every single practice, and the coaches noticed."

They didn't just notice. They apologized to Adrian for doubting his ability to handle the strenuous training. So, beginning in the eighth grade and through his junior year in high school, Adrian played as a starter on the football team. The only reason he did not play

varsity football during his senior year is he moved in with his mom who lived in another school district. District rules prevented him from participating.

When asked how hard it is to play on one leg, Adrian cannot answer that because, in his personal experience, he has nothing to compare it with. However,

he has a strong conviction about where he wants to go and what he wants to accomplish. "I've never had a single problem playing sports, ever," he declared. "My prosthetic has never held me back, and I've never used it as an excuse. I gave it my best and hoped for the best."

His determination to continue even in the face of extreme pain won accolades from one of his

coaches at Thomas C. Marsh Middle School. "One day in practice, there was a moment Coach Campbell still talks about to this day," he shared. "My knee had been giving me problems for a while, and I was wondering what was wrong with it. We had been doing our running drills, and all of a sudden, I felt a sharp pain in



my knee. I took off my prosthetic and noticed that I had busted open my knee, and the skin had peeled open. He asked me why I wouldn't ever sit down and take it easy. I said, 'If you love a sport so much then you bleed for it, and that's what I'm doing.' To this day he tells all of his



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athletes my story. I learned from my dad to not quit — never give up on *anything*."

In addition to football, Adrian had a passion for service and was enrolled in the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) at the middle school. It was there where he won his national championship for ROTC. When he graduated to become a freshman at the high school, he continued doing the Corps program, along with football. Only now football was a little more intense. "I started playing for 5A. It was my first time playing high school football, and I loved it. School was going great, but I started having problems at home. I talked to my ROTC teacher who gave me good advice," he shared.

When Adrian's father moved out of the family home, Adrian joined him and switched his enrollment to Moisés Molina High School in Dallas for his junior year and continued to play football. This was the year he received another honor that showcased his growing skills on a not-quite-level playing field. "When I was playing for the Molina Jaguars, I got on ESPN," he stated. "I received the annual Monday Night Chalk Talk Award. They go state to state every year and choose outstanding athletes. One of my coaches nominated me, because I was doing wrestling and football and also had good grades. The award is for being a good student in the classroom and being a great athlete. They acknowledged that I was doing on one leg what everyone else was doing on two."

After graduation, Adrian was accepted by Navarro College in Midlothian. Rebecca Britt, a Midlothian resident and retired teacher, generously offered to let him stay with her while he attended college. "I've known her my whole life," he said. "She also taught my dad."

Adrian wants to make sports history by being the first walk-on amputee in football at Texas A&M University. "It all comes down to how you look at yourself and how your peers look at you," he acknowledged. "You have the satisfaction of knowing you achieved something you wanted to do, and you also have the satisfaction of knowing you're helping others by what you're doing. I have a strong mindset. Nobody is going to remember you for what you *tried*. They'll remember you for what you've *done* and for what you *finished*." **NOW**

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Her Green Thumb

By Zachary R. Urquhart

AT HOME WITH *Bruce & Yvonne Artis*

Some houses tell you their story before you even make it down the driveway. With hints of decor peeking from the back or side yard, they give a sense of what awaits inside and beyond the house itself. Bruce and Yvonne Artis have one of those houses, tucked neatly in the Ashmore neighborhood heading toward Ovilla from Midlothian. With fun landscaping in the front and a small glimpse of the art and decoration spread throughout the backyard, Bruce and Yvonne have created their own little Garden of Eden.





Bruce and Yvonne met in the late 1990s through a friend. She, laughingly, recalled, "After we first met, he had a party at his place, and I was invited. I think after that, I never really left." They started dating and found out they lived mere miles from each other. They had taken different paths to end up within an ear's shot of one another, though his address was Kennedale, and hers was Arlington. "I guess we did leave his place, because he didn't have dishes or pots and



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pans or anything,” she smiled. “He had a bigger, nicer house, but I was the one that had all the stuff. We called his place the *Miami Vice* home.”

Yvonne had been a local girl for years, but Bruce had a less-typical story. He was selling cars in Kentucky in the 1980s, and he decided to move south. “I had been in the business, and there was more opportunity to make money in Texas,” he explained, “so I came all the way



here.” He is now a general manager for AutoNation Honda in Lewisville. After his move, Bruce and Yvonne ended up meeting and marrying and built quite a home for themselves.

The house boasts of a large, welcoming entryway, from which you can head upstairs or into the living areas. The living room is large, and the kitchen has a great open feel. To the side of the foyer, Bruce has his office full of sports memorabilia, including several signed football jerseys. “We bought the Gale

Sayers jersey and wanted him to sign it, but all I had was the receipt,” Yvonne said. “So we have a jersey and signed receipt from Gale Sayers.”

Moving upstairs, several things stand out. The stairwell is decorated half in cowboy and western and half in nostalgia. Yvonne has put frames with old photographs along the wall going up the stairs. Though it first seems to be a history of the family, Yvonne corrected that misconception. “Other than two, all of those are just pictures

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I got at estate and garage sales over the years,” she explained. For many years, she made a living from selling antiques that she found at garage and estate sales. “My friends always said I had an eye for treasures. Also, I buy guitars and things like that and embellish them with old jewelry,” she added.

Upstairs, Yvonne uses some of the pieces she has created to decorate what she describes as most people’s favorite room. “My antique room is one I really have spent a lot of time with,” she confessed. “All of those years buying and selling antiques, I have found things I wanted to put in this room. A lot of people, especially women, comment on this room in particular.” Yvonne’s sense for decorating does not stop inside, though. The real beauty of the home is what lies outside the walls.

The back porch, which is one of several seating areas, has an island bar feel, with a drink serving area, rustic bar stools and a large-screen television, perfect for relaxing and watching a game. There is a modest swimming pool, which is one of the few things Bruce and Yvonne did not add after they moved in. “When we moved here in 1999, the backyard was mainly just briars from the creek all the way to a drop off just beyond the pool,” Yvonne stated. They built on to their patio and included several wood and stone walkways throughout the landscape. All of that work has taken time and the help of some friends. “When we moved here, we were lucky to have some great neighbors,” Yvonne remembered. “Jim and Debra Morris, who live next door, are great. A lot of the work we have done



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has actually been because of Jim. And then every Sunday, they walk on over, and we hang out by the pool, at the bar or just sit inside and relax.”

Throughout the yard, interspersed in the gazebos and trees, Bruce and Yvonne have decorated with dozens of pieces of lawn art. “Really, she does it all,” Bruce explained. “I provide the money, and she does the buying and decorating.” There are metal sculptures ranging from rusted to brightly painted and from abstract designs to playful animals. Even though Yvonne gets help from Bruce and her friends, she probably spends eight or more hours a day on upkeep most of the year.

Yvonne has spent over a decade purchasing her sculptures, mainly from one place. “I tell people, if you know what The Greenery in Waxahachie looks like, you know what my house looks like. I buy so much stuff there. They definitely know me pretty well.” Yvonne even remembered her first purchase. “My mariachi trio was one of the first ones, but the musician frog was the first,” she said. “After I bought that one, I pretty much never stopped.”

A greenhouse and a large tool shed provide the space Yvonne needs to maintain her outdoor paradise. The shed is decorated with vintage signs, but the interior is a different story. “No one can go in there,” Yvonne laughed. “I decorated the outside, but the inside is a mess.” The greenhouse is an essential part of what Yvonne does, as she uses it to keep plants thriving all year long.

The crowning piece of her work, however, is definitely the large pond she finished this past winter. “I had a small, little pond, but I decided I needed more,” she said. “I figured out what I wanted, and we started building.” The result is a beautiful, large rock waterfall that trickles into the first of a series of koi ponds. In the spring, large elephant ears sit opposite the pump-handle water spigot that feeds into the secondary pond. Seeing the final product, it’s clear all the hard work has paid off, and now Bruce and Yvonne can sit back, relax and enjoy the fruits of her green thumb. **NOW**

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The Silver Lining

— By Dianne Reaux

Kindergarteners at Midlothian are gathered in art class. The room is full of excitement, as royalty will be visiting the class. Suddenly, the door opens, and in waltzes the main attraction. Dressed a bit like royalty and carrying her scepter, Ms. Queen Ballard brightly says, "Hello boys and girls!" Little eyes light up and the children are fascinated by what they see and hear. This is how learning begins in Amy Ballard's art class.

Amy has an effervescent personality that bubbles with enthusiasm, and her warmth and charm are infectious. Life has thrown her its share of curves, but she's been resilient, because she's armed with a bright disposition that constantly searches for the good in all things. It's an



outlook she's had since birth. "I'm adopted," she shared. "My parents went through Methodist Mission Home in San Antonio, and they knew they were getting me before I was born. I was born on a Thursday, but at the time adoptions were only finalized on Wednesdays. So, I had to spend almost a full week in the nursery before my parents could take me home. I like to say that I was at a sleepover in the nursery while I waited for my parents to pick me up and take me home!" Amy's search for the silver lining is constant, and it has served her well.

Amy grew up north of Dallas in the Carrollton/Farmers Branch area. After graduating from high school, she attended Texas Tech University, where she majored in elementary education and minored in art. Texas Tech is also where she met Steve Ballard, a fellow Red Raider and her future husband. The couple recently celebrated their 23rd wedding anniversary.

Three years after graduating, Amy started her teaching career in Midlothian Independent School District as a third grade classroom teacher. After teaching a variety of subjects, primarily English and Language Arts, the position for an art teacher at Vitovsky was posted. "At first, I was a little

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Kyle Ballard



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hesitant, but then I thought to myself, *Well, I do have my certification in art.* I decided to give it a try," she smiled. "And I loved it — I absolutely loved it!"

Amy taught core subjects for 14 years, but her objective as an art teacher is completely different. "It's been to help

"It drives me batty when people say, 'I can't draw,' or 'I can't be creative.' Everyone is creative!"

people realize they have the ability to create," she stated. "It drives me batty when people say, 'I can't draw,' or 'I can't be creative.' Everyone is creative! Some people are creative getting out of situations. Some are creative with their finances. Others are visually, musically or physically creative with expressive forms of movement. I believe that everyone can create."

As a visual arts teacher, Amy's job is to inspire creativity. "It's my job to help my students see things in new ways. It's something I call artist eyes." According to Amy, artist eyes are, "eyes that see things that regular, everyday eyes don't see." A perfect example of Amy's artist eyes is when she spied an old chair sitting outside a thrift store. "Everyone else saw an abandoned, winged-back chair with outdated red, velveteen upholstery," Amy explained. Amy saw something entirely different. "That chair still had life," she remembered. She purchased the chair, cleaned the fabric and painted the legs an elegant, gilded gold. Now the chair has a new dignity, as it sits proudly in the





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middle of her classroom's "sharing" area where the children pay rapt attention when Ms. Queen Ballard is perched on her throne.

"Art is a vital part of the academic curriculum," Amy shared. "When we send our children off to school, the majority of their day is filled with problem-solving to come up with the correct answer. They have to follow a specific set of steps to get from point A to point B. But art is the one area where they have the liberty to express themselves creatively and not worry that the outcome may be wrong. For my students, art is creative freedom."



When Amy began her teaching career 23 years ago, she had also recently become a new wife, and soon after, a new mother to son, Brad. "It was a difficult time for me. As a wife and new mother, I developed a very unhealthy relationship with food," she confessed. "Trying to juggle a career with the responsibilities of being a wife and a mother — at times it was overwhelming. Fast food wasn't healthy, but it was convenient, and I would often eat because I was sad or lonely, and I wasn't active."

Eventually, the bad habits took a toll on Amy's health. "When I turned 40, everything started going downhill. I developed Type II diabetes, high blood pressure, and I had to have knee surgery twice," she shared. "I was 40, but I felt 80." Amy decided enough was enough. After consulting with her physician, Amy decided to have gastric bypass surgery, and now, two years later, she has lost over 130 pounds. But Amy is quick to point

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out that the surgery was just one of the tools she has used to lose and maintain a healthy weight. “I am a food addict,” she admitted, “and every day is a challenge. I have to be careful each and every day not to fall back into the habits that sabotaged my health in the first place.”

Amy laughed as she added, “My weight loss has had its comical moments. Every once in a while when we are out together, someone will see us. They’ll recognize Steve and smile, but because they don’t recognize me, they’ll give me dirty looks, because they think he’s out with someone else!” To help maintain her weight loss, Amy started exercising and became a certified Jazzercise instructor on her 46th birthday. “It’s amazing to think I’ve gone from sucking wind in class to actually teaching the class.”

Amy and Steve are diehard Texas Rangers fans. She watches the games from home, while Steve, as an employee for the Rangers organization, works on the field. Brad is now a graduate of the University of North Texas-Denton, and everyone is looking forward to his upcoming nuptials this fall. “His fiancée is a doll, and we just love her,” Amy beamed.

As for Amy, she is constantly viewing life through an artist’s eyes. And though it began as an artistic concept, it can also be thought of as a philosophy for life. Because whether you’re rummaging through a thrift store or facing a tough moment, you can try to see a new perspective by visualizing something better. It’s a golden outlook for life. Through the eyes of an artist, there is always a silver lining. **NOW**

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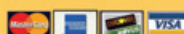
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I have firsthand knowledge of how a food allergy can change your life in the kitchen. My nephew, Reid, started out life with allergies to eggs, milk and peanuts. Going to the grocery store before Reid came to my house was a chore!! I had to read ingredients of every product before serving them to Reid. My sister and her husband had to use recipes that were altered by replacing milk and cheese products with a different product or leave it out all together. Reid has had a few allergic reaction episodes. Most memorable for me: a serving utensil was used in a bowl of vegetables that contained butter. The same spoon was also used to scoop vegetables, from a small bowl with no butter, to serve Reid. He reacted and had all of us in a panic!! He then suffered a severe allergic reaction. He had a wheezing type of cough, broke out in rash, starting around his mouth, and then began to itch all over. Over the last couple of years, his allergy specialist has had him do an egg challenge and milk challenge, which involves introducing these foods (in a medical setting) a little bit at a time. I'm happy to say, Reid can eat milk and cheese products that have been cooked using certain methods... peanuts are still on the No-No list. Reid wears a bracelet to alert teachers, adults and friends he has a food allergy. Always ask about food allergies if having guests or children over at your house and are serving food items. Your adult guest, with food allergies, will enjoy your menu prepared with them in mind. The parents of children, with food allergies, will be most appreciative that you acknowledge a medical condition their children live with daily and you were willing to accommodate their particular situation.



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UP FOR **THE COUNT**

By Zachary R. Urquhart

Maka Foster and David Bostwick
teach kids how to handle adversity,
both on and off the mat.



Growing up in Oklahoma, David Bostwick had wrestling in his blood. He is from the small town of Morris, near Tulsa, and his school did not actually have a team. Instead of wrestling, David was involved with amateur boxing while growing up, so he was used to competition and fighting. Now, several decades later, he is at the helm of Midlothian Youth Wrestling, rolling out a mat for anyone who wants to go a few rounds.

David moved to Texas in the mid-1980s and ended up going to school at Tarrant County Junior College. In 1992, he was working in Duncanville and looking for a new place to live. "I had a co-worker who had a place to rent in Midlothian," he shared. "I came, and I've been here ever since." David has three adult sons: Kevin, Eric and Brian. He and his wife, Angie, also have three school-age children. Brandon, 12, loves to play sports. Faith, 10, and Gracie, 7, both play soccer and cheer for the local youth organizations.

Though David did not have the chance to wrestle during his own childhood, Brian developed an interest, so David and his son spent many days going to and from practice and meets. Some people are not aware of the local organization, but Midlothian has had youth wrestling for about 15 years. David accounted, "Jim Berman, who was with the Parks and Recreation Department, had wrestled back East and thought we should have a program here. In the late '90s, he got the team going with his kids and a few others. Brian joined a few years later, when he was in eighth grade." Brian ended up wrestling for the youth program for a year and found immediate success. "He got third in state his first year, and then he wrestled off and on throughout high school," David recalled.



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"But watching him wrestle, I fell in love with it."

Years later, David's youngest son developed an interest as well, and at a much younger age. "Brandon loves sports. He plays football, but when he was 5, he decided to start wrestling," David explained. "He ended up getting second in state, and he has wrestled ever since." Brandon's participation and success have fostered David's interest and involvement in the sport and the league. With a few coaching changes several years ago, his level of involvement would soon increase greatly.

After Jim, David Stewart took over the program for a few years, which is when Brandon joined. Then Jim came back for a while. David clarified, "A few years ago, Jim was moving to Glenn Heights, so he wasn't going to continue coaching. He came to me and asked if I would take over so that the youth program wouldn't die." David got certified to coach wrestling and has been in charge of the program since then.

Though he is always one of the coaches, David makes it a point to find other skilled people to help with the instruction part of his role. "I'd been familiar with it, so Jim knew I could handle it," David conveyed. "But a lot of what I've done is to find the best coaches I can to teach the kids the fundamentals." David always finds great people, and he is grateful for the help and support from coaches and parents alike. "I had one guy come from Michigan, and he had moved here partly because he knew of our

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Brandon's participation and success have fostered David's interest and involvement in the sport and the league.



program," David said. "Last year, Shane Roller, who is known in the mixed martial arts circle, came and was one of our coaches. This year, Maka Foster showed up just before the season started."

One of David's most important tasks is recruiting and bringing people into the program. Since many residents are not aware of the organization, just getting information broadly disseminated is part of his focus. "There is a mixture of me recruiting others and people finding me. One of the first things I did was to start an Internet site," he said. "We are also on the city of Midlothian Web site."

From year to year, there are usually about 30 kids, but that number fluctuates during the October through February season. "We aren't going to tell a kid it's too late, even if he just wants to come





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start learning for the last month of practice or so,” David admitted. “But kids even quit after the first week sometimes. It’s so tough that a lot of kids don’t want to stick with it. The majority of our kids each season are rookies. Only a few stay with it more than a year or so.” In the tournaments, wrestlers are broken down by age, weight and experience. Rookies are followed by novices. Everyone wrestling in their third year or more wrestles in an open division.

Along with recruiting kids and finding coaches, David does a lot of the prepping and coaching himself. The team has practiced at T.E. Baxter for years, and David is usually the first one there getting the mats ready every day for practice. “We don’t have keys, but they open it up for us a few nights a week,” he stated. “I unroll the mats and get the room ready, and then we have to get everything put up before we leave.” David does all he can to be a good coach, as well, and he knows that teaching the kids as much as possible is key to the overall success of the program.

David is realistic about the goals for the program and the individual kids involved. “There aren’t many scholarships, especially in Texas, but we can teach them fundamentals,” he said. “If you get a kid that sticks with it for several years, by the time he gets to high school, he will be pretty good.” Once he had the youth program going, Jim Berman worked until he convinced Midlothian Independent School District (MISD) to start a team at the high school. Though many kids enter as freshmen having never wrestled, the high school coaches appreciate the work David and the youth program put in to getting kids more ready for high school competition. And the team has had a good deal of success throughout its tenure. “Pretty much every year we have kids that win state in their divisions,” David emphasized.

Winning is not the only goal, of course. “When I meet a new potential coach, I always want to know what their priorities are. We want kids to know how to wrestle, but we also want to teach some life lessons.” For several years now, David has been using wrestling to show kids how to grapple, how to face adversity and, mostly, how to carry themselves, on and off the mat. **NOW**



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— By Betty Tryon

Choice is good, and Dennis Tucker of Best Texas Insurance wants to give his customers a great one. After 31 years in the insurance business, he found a way of better serving his customers by becoming an independent agent and opening his own company, where he could offer multiple lines of services to his customers. “I got to a point in my career where I felt I needed more choices for my customers,” he stated. “I saw other opportunities, so in 2011, I made a career change. It was a hard decision to make. I feel better about my business today than I have in years. Things are going well. I love every minute of it.”

Before opening his own business, Dennis worked as an agent, a district manager and in a corporate office. “During my time at the corporate office, I earned two professional degrees in life

insurance,” he shared. “One of which is CLU which stands for Charter Life Underwriter and Life Underwriter Training Council Fellowship. It’s called LUTCF. Those degrees are equivalent to getting a college degree in life insurance and are done through the life insurance industry.”

Dennis was previously located in Cedar Hill but with the start of the new business, he relocated to Midlothian. It was only natural since he and his family have lived here since 1999. Dennis sells all types of insurance as a multiline agent, with the help of his customer service representative, Barbara, and his assistant, Lindsey. “By being a multiline agent with multiple companies, those companies know you have a choice whether to place business with them or not,” he stated.

Looking at other options helps when you need the best product at the best price for policies such as small businesses, automobiles, houses, rental houses and rental properties. Dennis also sells liability insurance. "Liability insurance is your first line of defense when it comes to protecting your assets." It covers costs

"We are committed to stay in Midlothian. Come by anytime; have a cup of coffee; bring in your policies; and let's compare."

in case something goes wrong.

Dennis is particularly interested in selling life insurance. Although his primary job is being a multiline property casualty agent for auto, home, life, etc., he believes life insurance is an important part of everyone's daily life. "Life insurance is a topic that a lot of people are uncomfortable talking about," he said.

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Dennis and his wife, Brenda, are very active with the Methodist church and are also involved in many charitable events, such as scholarship programs and fundraising projects. "We are committed to stay in Midlothian. Come by anytime; have a cup of coffee; bring in your policies; and let's compare." **NOW**



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May 1 — 4

Midlothian Early Voting City Council Election for Place 3 and Place 4: 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center, 1 Community Circle. (972) 775-7101.

May 3

American Cancer Society Relay for Life: 7:00 p.m., Frank Seale Middle School Track. Contact Kyle Shelton, kyle.shelton@cancer.org, (817) 570-0620, www.RelayForLife.org/MidlothianTx, Facebook.com/RFLMidlothian.

May 4

Midlothian High School Prom: 8:00 p.m., Southfork Ranch.

May 6, 7, 11

Midlothian Early Voting City Council Election for Place 3 and Place 4: 7:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center, 1 Community Circle. (972) 775-7101.

May 6 — 10

Midlothian ISD Teacher Appreciation Week.

May 6, 20

Indian Trail Chapter of the Texas Master

Naturalist Program Wildflower and Bird Walk: 10:00 a.m., Mockingbird Nature Park, Hike is half-mile. Will identify the wildflowers and birds. Public is invited. Free event. Participants should bring drinking water and binoculars for bird watching. Visit: <http://txmn.org/indiantrail/>, Email: Information@itmnc.com.

May 10, 11

MHS Almost Broadway Concert: 6:30 p.m., MHS Auditorium.

May 11

Movies in the Park: dusk, Hawkins Spring Park. Visit the Disney Pixar *Brave* Web site to watch the trailer, play games and other fun activities.

May 14

2nd Annual Midlothian ISD Citizens Academy: 8:30-11:30 a.m. Contact Jana Hathorne at (972) 775-8296, ext. 1037 or e-mail info@midlothian-isd.net.

May 18

Heroes of Midlothian Benefit 5K Run: 8:30 a.m., MISD Multi-Purpose Stadium, 1800 S. 14th St., Midlothian. Event honors the families of Chris Kyle and Chad Littlefield

and the Heroes of Midlothian Foundation. Sponsorships are available. For more information, call (214) 395-0143 or visit www.heroesofmidlothian.org.

May 23

Awaken: An Evening With Priscilla Shirer: 7:00 p.m., The Oaks, 777 N. I-35 Service Rd., Red Oak. The event is free. Must register at <http://awakenmay2013.eventbrite.com/>.

June 1

Annual Pancake Breakfast Fly-in: 8:00-11:00 a.m., Mid-Way Regional Airport, Midlothian. Event includes classic airplanes and fighters; helicopter, open cockpit bi-plane and DC-3 rides; full motion simulator instructional flights; skydivers; fly-overs; Midlothian Classic Wheels; Gold Wing Road Riders; live music and activities for the children. Breakfast tickets: 8 and over \$7, 7 and under \$3. Parking is free. For more information, call (972) 923-0080 or visit www.mid-wayregional.com.

Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your event details to Betty.tryon@nowmagazines.com.



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In The Kitchen With the McElheney's

— *By Betty Tryon*

During the early years of Billy and Renee McElheney's marriage, her culinary expertise extended to simple dishes, such as wieners and tomato sauce, with occasional onion slices to spiff it up. Now, cooking at the McElheney's home is a family affair with Billy as the head chef. Krystal and Christopher have their dad's flair for cooking, and the family loves trying to recreate recipes from new dishes they have tasted during their travels.

Billy has a special Brussels sprouts recipe that Renee loves. "Billy makes it hard to duplicate his recipes, because he never really cooks the same thing, the same way twice. He is always tweaking and improving and creating new variations," Renee said with a smile. "It's job security." **NOW**

Billy's Brussels Sprout Pasta

2 servings pasta of your choice
Base salt stock (1 Tbsp. per quart of water)
1/4 cup olive oil
3 cups Brussels sprouts, sliced
1 medium onion, sliced
1 cup mushrooms, sliced
1/2 cup toasted pine nuts

1. Cook pasta in base salt stock. Do not discard stock.
2. In olive oil, sauté vegetables over medium heat in heavy pan.
3. Add pasta to sautéed mix using 4 to 6 oz. of pasta stock. Mix in pine nuts and serve.

Christopher's Pecan-crusted Dijon Salmon

5 Tbsp. butter, melted
4 Tbsp. stone-ground Dijon mustard
2 Tbsp. honey
1 cup bread crumbs
1/2 cup pecan pieces, chopped
1/4 cup fresh parsley, optional and to taste
1 lb. skin-on salmon filets cut into 2-inch wide strips
Salt and pepper, to taste
Lemon wedges for garnish

1. Preheat oven to 400 F.
2. In a small bowl, stir together butter,

- mustard and honey. Set aside.
3. In another bowl, mix together bread crumbs, pecans and parsley.
4. Brush each salmon fillet lightly with honey mustard mixture and sprinkle the tops of the fillets with the bread crumb mixture.
5. Bake salmon 12 to 15 minutes in the preheated oven or until it flakes easily with a fork.
6. Season with salt and pepper. Garnish with a wedge of lemon.

Renee's Ice Cream Brownie Pie

1 cup sugar
1/2 cup flour
1 stick butter
2 eggs
4 heaping Tbsp. cocoa
1 tsp. vanilla
1/4 tsp. salt
1/2 cup chopped pecans
Chocolate or butterscotch sauce, fresh mint, strawberries or raspberries for toppings

1. Combine all ingredients, except nuts and toppings; beat for 5 minutes.
2. Stir in nuts; pour batter into a buttered 8-inch pie pan.
3. Bake at 350 F for 25 minutes. Allow to cool.
4. Serve with a scoop of ice cream. Add chocolate or butterscotch sauce, fresh mint, strawberries or raspberries as desired.

Krystal's Chicken and Wild Rice Soup

1 qt. veggie stock
1 qt. water
1 cup wild rice
10 oz. chicken
1 Tbsp. rosemary
1 tsp. sage
2 slices onions, chopped
1/2 lemon, juiced
Salt and pepper, to taste

1. Bring stock and water to a boil.
2. Add rice, chicken and herbs; reduce heat and cook for 30 minutes.
3. Take chicken out and shred. Put back in soup; add onion and lemon juice.
4. Cook for additional 10 to 15 minutes. Salt and pepper to taste.

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