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*On the Cover:
The many statues at Uptown Village
in Cedar Hill bring fond memories
of childhood to mind.*

Photo by Terri Ozymy.

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Editor's Note

Greetings Southwest Friends,

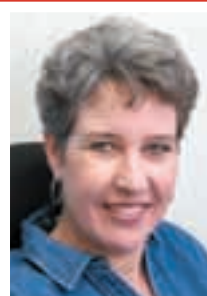
June's sunny summer days present the perfect opportunity to relax and enjoy the new layout of our *SouthwestNOW* magazine. Inside you will find each of our three communities have their own main features. Cedar Hill NOW explains the benefits of massage, a great way to enhance summer relaxation. DeSoto NOW reveals planned community unity through Dining and Dialogue, an innovative approach to crossing and erasing racial barriers. Duncanville NOW tells the encouraging and challenging story of Duncanville's own Biggest Loser, Glenn Carter.

Read how Aaron and Ceci Massa epitomize Dallas' Tex-Mex culture in our home feature. Summer would not be summer without storytelling, something Traphene Hickman and Mel Davenport have certainly cultivated into a true art form; read their story in our art feature.

Cynde Franke shares some of her favorite recipes so we can cook up a summer treat to celebrate all our fathers on Father's Day.


Sincerely,
Beverly Shay
SouthwestNOW Editor

PS: Send me your story ideas at bshay.nowmag@sbcglobal.net.



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Cedar Hill
NOW

No Longer a Mystery

— By Sandra McIntosh

To say it is all in his hands would be a great fallacy. For Vancarlus Tennison, the art of massage therapy includes 300 hours of vocational school prior to certification, 12 continuing education hours every two years and an attitude that is positive and upbeat. "Currently, students going into the field of massage therapy need 500 hours before taking their state board exam," Vancarlus said, referring to the changes that have taken place within the last 10 years. "The field has grown to encompass more restrictions and state-mandated requirements." His main purpose in taking time out of a busy schedule to expound on the benefits of massage therapy was not to put any emphasis on himself. "It's not about me. It's about the growing interest in the career field I've chosen," he explained. "Educating people on the overall benefits of wellness is what's most important."

For Vancarlus, the road to becoming a massage therapist started when a lady in a chiropractic office owned by two brothers needed some time off. His job as a medical assistant made him the most likely choice when it came to filling in during her absence. "I watched the brothers massage and manipulate necks so patients would feel better," he remembered. "The patients looked at the brothers as if they were gods. They were very appreciative of what the hands were able to accomplish." Vancarlus quickly realized he wanted his hands to work

miracles, too, so he petitioned the two brothers to send him to school to learn the intricacies of massage therapy. "Their answer was, 'No,'" Vancarlus laughingly said. Later on, another company saw his passion. "I was able to work a full-time job and go to school two nights a week," he said, proud of what he accomplished. "I was able to pay for school while going to school, so no debt was owed when I received my certification."

He took and passed his state boards in Austin, Texas. He had to undergo an extensive written exam, while also having a video tape made of his own hands as he demonstrated the proper draping techniques used during a massage. "It had to be as close to perfect as possible," he said, referring to the video tape. "The goal is to make those getting the massage as comfortable as possible during their session." Vancarlus also explained that when a person gets a massage, the only area exposed is the area being worked on at the time. "Your arm may be out," he said, "but the rest of the body is covered under the drape. That's why learning and incorporating the proper draping methods were so important to me." Even today, Vancarlus believes in the



importance of continuing his education. "It's important to always be up on the new techniques," he added. "It keeps me fresh."

Most individuals get a massage for the following reasons: healthy skin and improved melatonin, relaxation, preventative maintenance, improved circulation, recovery from a sports-related activity, to relieve tension headaches and help with insomnia. Many others suffer from rheumatoid arthritis, muscle pains caused by fibromyalgia and bodies that have begun to show their age after years of normal wear and tear. In many cases, the complaint is tight muscles, which are giving the person a great deal of discomfort and pain. "Spasms are the body's natural defense mechanism," he said. "The spasms are there to protect

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you.” Muscles contract for several reasons. “Stress, body mechanics, work areas that are not ergonomically designed and the lack of physical fitness can all be causes for muscle spasms,” Vancarlus explained. “What I do is all outcome-based therapy. My



goal during the massage is to reduce stress and tension, while increasing blood flow. It's about making people feel better.”

Once Vancarlus gets the results he is looking for, he encourages those same individuals to continue massage therapy as a form of preventative medicine. Benefits of massage therapy also include: well-nourished skin, decreased muscle tension and overall stress levels, an improved immune system, enhancing tissue elasticity and joint flexibility and greatly reduced anxiety. Most people, Vancarlus noted, want to feel good. Individuals getting a massage need to believe in them. “They need to realize they are beneficial to the entire body,” he added. “They also need to be active participants.” That means if something hurts during the massage treatment, the client needs to speak up without fear of reproach. “Be honest with your therapist and don't be afraid to ask questions,” he said. “Be specific about problem areas and make all your wishes known.”

Massage therapists are not allowed to perform manipulations of any kind. “If a pop is heard, it's something natural with the body,” Vancarlus said. “It's unintentional on the part of the therapist. We don't try to reset the joints of the

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Cedar Hill **NOW**

spine." Vancarlus has to know his limitations as a massage therapist. He fully understands what he does with his hands is just another way to enhance other means of medicine, such as chiropractic, medical and physical therapy.

When speaking about massage, Vancarlus also talks about its metaphysical affects, both on the therapist and the person getting the massage. "The transference of vibes and thoughts are equal between the two," he explained further. "Believe me, emotional pains can transfer. To hear about problems means there's a chance I will take some of that emotional baggage home with me." To remain healthy to massage another day, Vancarlus not only drinks plenty of water, he also keeps himself positively grounded by spending time in meditation on a daily basis. "I also need to look out for myself," he said, explaining the importance of being ever-mindful of his own body. "I must hold my wrists, elbows and hands in such a manner that my own body is protected from injury or misuse."

Vancarlus said the art of massage has been around for centuries. To confirm his statement, he used bumping your elbow as the prime example. "What does a person do when they bump their elbow," he asked. "They automatically begin rubbing it. It's an instinctive reaction to massage the area that hurts." The practice of massage therapy is no longer considered a mysterious art, but a scientifically proven and effective treatment prescribed by many physicians. Research has shown that nursing home patients who have received frequent massages have shown fewer signs of senility. In fact, the therapeutic benefits have been so duly noted that massage has moved into the world of premature infants, as well as the equine sector. "It's simple," Vancarlus said. "It's all about feeling better." **NOW**

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DeSoto
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The Art of Communication

— By Alex Allred

There is an exciting new trend in DeSoto that involves high school students, war veterans, housewives, business executives, schoolteachers and retired seniors. The movement is bringing about a better understanding of our neighbors and reshaping the way we think. The idea is quite simply dinner with the promise of a specific dialogue to be orchestrated by a host and facilitator. Lorraine Mantei said, "I thought it was such a cool idea, I wanted to go when I heard about it."

In 2003, then-Mayor Michael Hurtt, had been working with the city council to form better relationships among individuals within the community. "As part of our work plan," Michael said, "we wanted to embrace our cultural diversity." About that time, he saw an article in a local paper regarding an annual dinner hosted by the city of Dallas, a prelude to Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. "Myself, the city manager and the assistant city manager asked the greater Dallas Chamber if we could pattern [a dinner] after them," Michael recalled. He knew, however, that one dinner a year would not be enough. "But, we set the first table," he said.

Since that time, the dinners have been a tremendous success. The first official Dining and Dialogue dinner was held on Martin Luther King Jr. Day in 2004. "The idea," Lorraine said, "was to bring in citizens from various cultural backgrounds for the purpose of encouraging communication." There is a facilitator, and as the guests arrive, they enjoy appetizers,

"and just chitchat until it begins." As the planned dinner gets underway, questions are posed for the guests. "We often start by asking what diversity means to you personally, or ask if you have ever experienced prejudice. But we also talk about the economic development in the community and what is happening in our schools. It is not a debate or argument. There are no right or wrong answers," Lorraine explained. It is an opportunity to open the lines of

communication and create a sense of harmony among neighbors.

For Lorraine, the experience was so moving that almost one-and-a-half years after that first dinner, she became the president of the nonprofit organization. For those who know Lorraine, this was not a surprise.

Adopting the philosophy, "If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem," Lorraine founded her own charter school in Oak Cliff in 2006.

After working as a school administrator in Dallas for a number of years, she became frustrated and wanted to make changes. "As an educator in a bureaucratic system, you see things you would like to change but don't have the power to," she commented. Rather than do nothing, Lorraine wrote a grant application to create her own charter school, La Academia de Estrellas (Academy of Stars) in North Oak Cliff. Having the power to help children and their families, reduce dropout rates and introduce bilingual education is important to her, but one service she is most proud of is the community lessons her new students are learning.

"The idea was to bring in citizens from various cultural backgrounds for the purpose of encouraging communication."

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Her students, many of whom are at the poverty level, raise money and collect shoes for others in need. "And yesterday," Lorraine added, "we cleaned parks. We really try to give the students a sense of community."

With that same communal spirit, Lorraine was instantly intrigued by the Dinner and Dialogue concept. "The whole idea is to discuss questions that relate to our community, so we can better understand each other and get to know our neighbors," Lorraine said, adding that this kind of communication truly is the way to break down barriers. "A city can only thrive," she stated, "when its residents are willing and able to speak up and reach out."

With the mission statement, "In harmony with our city's vision, DeSoto Dining and Dialogue arranges for DeSoto residents of different races and ethnic backgrounds to have dinner and conversations in a nonthreatening environment, so that they can connect across America's cultural divide," both Michael and Lorraine have already seen great changes. "I watched a 72-year-old white man," Michael recalled of one particular dinner, "who, at the completion of the dinner, looked at a 40-year-old African-American and said, 'You know, we've had a frank enough discussion tonight that I think I can ask ... do you prefer to be called African-American, black or what?' The other man looked at him and said, 'I want to be called your friend.'"

Both Michael and Lorraine will tell you this is all they want for their city. "But, it's a lot of work," Lorraine said. The dinners are held three times annually in DeSoto, and they are held simultaneously throughout the city in the homes of individuals who are gracious enough to welcome nearly half a dozen strangers into their homes. With this task comes the chore of finding facilitators, who are trained to lead the discussions, the



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meal preparation and, of course, the never-ending fundraising needed to bring about such positive experiences.

One of their biggest challenges is to bring an even exchange between people and ideas. "It won't work," Michael almost laughed, "if we have only 70-year-old residents sitting at the table." For this reason, the DeSoto High School has actively engaged its students in these dinners.

"It's been tremendous," Michael said, noting how the teenagers dramatically changed the dynamics of the dinners and conversations. "A lot of times they can offer more information about the schools than we could get anywhere else." With open, expressive, intelligent dialogue, the students have added a new excitement to the idea of communication.

"Not talking about things doesn't make them real," Lorraine said. "We have to have an open, honest and respectful dialogue about race and our community and what we can do as individuals. This is all very important."

Like Michael, Lorraine is very excited to have the high school students active with the dinners. "If we can talk about it and learn from each other, this is how we get rid of stereotypes," she expressed. For Lorraine, a woman dedicated to the ideals of continued education, this is the greatest lesson of all. "This is the idea behind the program and the more we can reach out, experience and meet neighbors, the better our world will be."

In 2006, the National League of Cities agreed, honoring DeSoto, Texas, the award of All-American City. While it was certainly an honor for the city, Lorraine believes there is much work to be done. "We all want a strong, safe community to raise our children in, and that is what usually comes out of open dialogue."

"No matter how different we may appear," Michael agreed, "people still value the same things." **NOW**



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Duncanville NOW



Duncanville's Own Biggest Loser

— By Beverly Shay

With the popular television show *The Biggest Loser*, many folks' attention has been drawn to dramatic weight loss. News reports have kept the issue of obesity in the forefront of society's mind, yet the solution remains a huge challenge for those who would like to lose weight. "I am a diet poster child," announced Glenn Carter, Duncanville's self-proclaimed "Biggest Loser." "I have tried every diet there is: Atkin's, WeightWatchers, Slim-Fast, South Beach Diet, hypnosis and more. And I lost the weight; but I always gained it back, plus 20 more pounds. Gaining it back is discouraging enough, but that extra 20 pounds really frustrates you," Glenn admitted.

"I tell people, 'I fluctuate between 190 and 380 pounds.' So when I saw the scale tipping at 380 again, I knew I was in trouble. To diet again, gain it back and add 20 more pounds would put me at 400. I just couldn't do that.

So, I told my doctor I needed a plan, which would not only enable me to lose the weight needed to regain my health, but that would enable me to change my lifestyle. I just couldn't face another diet failure," Glenn remarked.

"We formed a plan involving portion control, 1,800 calories staggered throughout a day, learning about food, exercise, time-frame and scheduled weigh-ins," Glenn reported. Time is a key element in effective weight loss. Your body needs time to adjust to fewer calories. Educating yourself on how many calories certain foods have helps you plan meals that will satisfy your needs and will digest in such a manner that you get the punch you need and the lasting energy to hold you through to your next small meal.

"We set a guideline of a minimum of 200 calories for breakfast, 100 for a snack, 400 for lunch, 100 for a snack,

400 for dinner and 100 for an evening snack, adding extra calories as needed. It's not a law, but a way to insure you don't use up all your calories too early in the day and then starve the rest of the day," Glenn commented. "I find that if I eat too much too close to bedtime, I wake up starving. But if I go to bed hungrier, relatively speaking, I wake up less hungry. Eating just enough to take the edge off and quitting before I am full really works. Another portion control method is to never finish everything on my plate."

"Getting healthy was and is a big part of the goal. But in reality, I knew I needed accountability, and I saw that as a means for doing what I like most: promoting others and their businesses. My idea was to offer my weight-loss program as a community project; the community could hold me accountable, and I could raise money for the Duncanville Chamber of Commerce

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by having individuals and businesses pledge a dollar for every pound I lose. Everyone who sponsored me could have their logo printed on my Biggest Loser shirt," Glenn said. Every other week, Glenn and those who wish to join him walk from a local business to the Duncanville Subway, where they eat lunch and then walk back. He hoped 100 people/businesses would sponsor him at one dollar per pound toward his 100-pound weight-loss goal, and thereby help him raise \$10,000 for the Chamber over a one-year period that began November 1, 2007.

The support of the community has been amazing!" Glenn enthused. "Our next shirt production will feature 40-50 business logos. Two companies have pledged \$5 per pound. The Neighborhood Credit Union donated \$1,000, approved by their headquarters in Addison," Glenn stated. Along with his three-point plan of: 1) losing weight for himself, his family ("They seem to want me around.") and his future; 2) promoting his own business (Carter & Company Pest Control); and 3) raising money for the Duncanville Chamber, Glenn has joined LA Fitness.

"I was a skinny runt as a kid," Glenn remembered. "I am not a binge eater or comfort eater. My weight gain is due to circumstances, time schedules and an undisciplined lifestyle. When your business has you running a route, you get some exercise, but nothing disciplined or regular. It is so easy to become a junk food junkie. You're hungry, your body is out of shape, you're not satisfied, you eat on the run; it catches up with you. I keep a card in my wallet with these directions-to-self listed on it: *Drink plenty of water — daily. Don't add salt yourself. NO soft drinks. No fast food — period. (Chick-fil-A is OK.) No sugar added yourself. (Only two coffees.) Bread — hamburgers once a week. NO potatoes.*

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Think about portion control. Exercise — sweat four days a week. When I am out, I can pull that card out and look at it to remind me. It helps,” Glenn asserted.

“Calorie counting can be tedious, but it helps to have an ending point. When I have reached the daily limit, I stop. When I am really hungry, I eat something and wait 15 minutes. It takes the edge off. Eating smaller amounts more often keeps me from getting too hungry and I eat less. I am learning that eating less satisfies more. I have also learned that you have to listen to your body; it will let you know what you need or when you have had too much and when to stop. Your body needs certain amounts of things to store up for proper functioning,” Glenn postulated. “When too much of those things arrive in your system, it looks around for a place to store the excess — and that shows. Eat what you need to provide adequate energy; don’t clog yourself up,” Glenn admonished.

“Of course, I realize that if I don’t lose the weight or change my lifestyle, I really will be Duncanville’s Biggest Loser, in a negative sense,” he said.

Allen Conley, owner of the Subway on Cedar Ridge, has known Glenn for several years. “When Glenn told me he was ready to make a big change in his life, I asked how I could help,” Allen remarked. “We talked about Jared Fogle and I assured him the story of how he lost 245 pounds in one year by eating two Subway sandwiches a day and walking was true. Jared has kept the weight off for 10 years now. Glenn lives about 1 1/2 miles from our Subway, so we talked about walking here for dinner, nutrition and low-fat choices. Along with his walks from local businesses for lunch, Glenn makes ‘solo’ walks at dinner from his home. I support Glenn in his quest ... it is important to me that he makes [his goal] the right way,” Allen concluded. **NOW**



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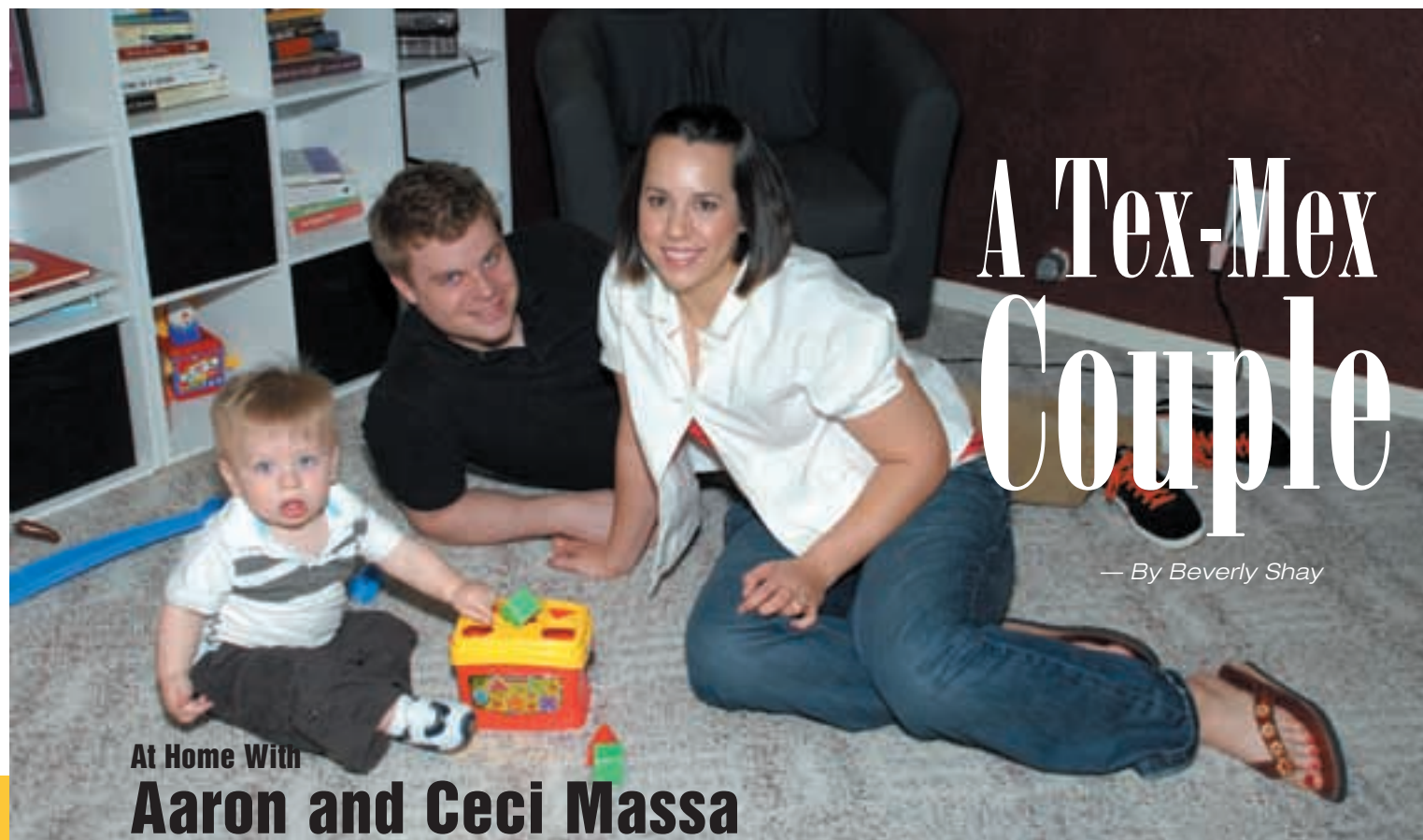


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A Tex-Mex Couple

— By Beverly Shay

At Home With Aaron and Ceci Massa

They met in Guadalajara, Mexico. They met again, in Guadalajara, a year later. This time they noticed each other. He was not planning to meet his future bride. She was not looking for romance. But before the trip was over, he bought her a silver bracelet. The gift impressed her enough that she has kept it all these years. She was 13. He was 12.

Sitting in the family room of their starter home, Ceci Massa commented on how she has now lived in Texas as long as she did in Guadalajara, her home town. Ceci's grandparents went to Mexico as missionaries over half a century ago, and her mother grew up in Mexico and married a Mexican man. They lived in Mexico, where they reared their two children. Ceci was 16 when her parents moved to Dallas. "We were traveling a lot at that point, and it was easier to base out of Dallas than it was out of Guadalajara. My parents wanted my brother and me to go to college in the States as well," Ceci recalled.

Aaron well remembers Ceci's arrival in Dallas. "She was more Mexican than American at that time; in some respects she still is," Aaron stated. "At first, I

liked the idea of coming to the U.S., but I really missed my friends. I was 16, after all. My brother, Beto, 14, adjusted more quickly than I did. It was like we switched roles. In Mexico, I was more outgoing than he was, with lots of friends and social activities. But here, I didn't really know anybody besides Aaron and he was so ... so American!" she laughed. Ceci was homeschooled while traveling with her mother, but Beto went to public

church that had sent Ceci's grandparents out as missionaries, the church where Aaron's father was the pastor. Beto quickly became involved in the youth group, but Ceci hesitated. "I couldn't understand why no one greeted us; they seemed so rude," said Ceci, who was used to the Latino custom of each person greeting every other person as they came into any gathering. "At home, if you met someone on the street and they said, 'Let's get together,' they

came home with you right then. I couldn't understand why they had to call and set up an engagement on another day to get together."

The attraction of their early teens was still there, but cultural



differences loomed between Aaron and Ceci. "It took me a long time to even consider dating Aaron because he was so American," Ceci grimaced.

The Moreno family attended the

Aaron was born in Duncanville, just

a few blocks from the couple's current home. "We really didn't do much together until we were both students at Christ For The Nations Institute (CFNI), in Dallas. We sat together for most of our classes until Ceci got annoyed with everyone asking if we were engaged. She began to sit across the auditorium," he grinned. Their on-again, off-again interest in each other went through another three rounds or so while they attended Dallas Baptist University (DBU),



where they both majored in business.

Sitting in the family room, in addition the previous owners made to the small home, there is no evident residual disinterest between them. Their almost 1-year-old son, Vaughn, toddles between them and toys, investigating, reconnoitering and honing in on mom and dad, lending credence to the name family room. It is a perfect family room, with oatmeal-colored berber carpet, deep burgundy walls and lots of windows letting in the natural light. At one end there are navy couches of Ikea vintage, a large-screen TV with plenty of DVDs, while at the other end are open black-and-white square shelving with Vaughn's toys, which are also sprinkled comfortably across the floor, along with a large exercise ball that is



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bigger than Vaughn.

During one of their on-again periods of friendship, Ceci told Aaron about a guy from her work, saying he reminded her of Aaron. As he left her off that night he commented that it just didn't make sense for her to drive 25 miles for something (read someone) you could have right next door. Later, while Ceci sat her in mother's hospital room, Aaron and Ceci talked the night away on the phone, while Ceci's mom

slept in post-operative recovery. "When Aaron showed up with donuts and coffee the next morning, minus the goatee I had told him I didn't much like during our overnight talk, it made quite the impression on me," Ceci explained, a shy smile tripping across her face.

Soon they were discussing whether to date or not. They decided to. By mid-May of 2003, they began talking about marriage. "My dad was concerned

at first, wondering if we would stick with it. We got engaged in July and Aaron gave me a ring on my birthday in August," Ceci remarked. Their bilingual wedding was well-attended by both sides of the family, and after a honeymoon in Paris, they made their home in Irving, close to where they both worked.

"Our first year together was hectic with trips across town to the church, where we led the college and career



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group. Then with my mother very ill in the hospital, we were spending even more time across town from where we lived. We began looking for a home. This house is just down the street from my parents' home and fit our budget, enabling us to be closer both to family and church commitments," Ceci said.

Built in 1973, the 1,950-square-foot home has three bedrooms, one-and-a-half baths and a converted-garage study.

Aaron replaced the living room and hall floors with laminate flooring he installed himself. Ceci tore down old wallpaper and replastered walls where the paper would not come off. They also took out the half-wall that boxed in the dining room, opening it up to the kitchen. Vaughn's room has the most personal décor in the form of matching curtains, dust ruffle, comforter and diaper stacker, which Ceci and a friend sewed from a geometric print of brown,

beige and pale mossy green.

"There's so much more I'd like to do and probably will," Ceci admitted. That is as Vaughn allows. Having a child has not changed their lives as much as some predicted. "We do almost everything we did before. We just take him along. But we don't get out to the movies like we used to. And, oddly, people don't call as much to ask us out," Aaron said. But then, they have Vaughn to entertain them. **XXX**

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Mel Davenport (left) and Traphene Hickman (right) enjoy a good story.

Everyone wants to hear a good story. When something happens to us, we immediately begin rehearsing in our mind who we will tell and how we will tell it. When we listen to others, our mind frequently conjures up an anecdote that we can add to the conversation to illustrate how we can relate to what they are telling us. We are connected by the commonalities of life as related through stories. We even evaluate people and invite them to certain events based on how well they tell stories.

"I used to get spanked for telling stories," laughed Traphene Hickman, "but now I get paid for it!" Traphene is well-known around these parts as a professional storyteller. As a librarian for 39 years, she was responsible for summer reading programs, which, of course, included telling the stories. She now tells stories to seniors, at churches and "well, wherever I am asked," she said.

"I do whatever people want. Usually, I am asked to speak as part of a program, where I am given 30 minutes to an

hour. At schools, I spend a half or whole day and individual classes are brought in to hear stories," Traphene explained. Storytelling has been part of every culture throughout the ages, as a means of passing down history, as well as explaining life and teaching us how to relate to one another. "Stories or parables bring identification that brings about healing, which is one of the greatest powers of storytelling. It preserves our history while providing entertainment. But it also communicates truths that may not be received from a lecture," Traphene stated.

Traphene has prepared a course for lay speakers on how to tell stories and the part stories play in basic communication. The course is called Dancing with Words. "Caregivers need to be able to communicate, to deal with those who are hurting," she commented. Healing comes when we can identify with someone else who has gone through pain or difficulty similar to ours and have overcome it.

— By Beverly Shay

"I pick stories with a message for a purpose. Morals are a big part of stories; people expect them. It is hard to say what my favorite kind of stories is, because I have favorites in every genre," Traphene pondered. To prepare for storytelling, she reads everything she can about the character and then muses about who they were and what she thinks their emotions and character were like. "I feel like I get to know them and then I can tell their story; I become the one the story is about," she revealed. Traphene uses facial expressions and gestures, but does not use different voices for different characters. "Unless you can do dialect authentically, it's best not to try. I am more comfortable with my own voice," she explained.

"Bible stories are some of my favorites. I like Elijah and Mary of Bethany. But I also do 'Texas Tales as True as I can Tell Them,'" she laughed. "Storytellers get better with age." Traphene should know. She has been with the Dallas Storytelling Guild for 25 years or so, as well as being a member of the State and National Storytelling Associations and the

ARTS NOW

National Organization of Biblical Storytellers. "You learn from listening to other storytellers. They all have different methods and different tales," Traphene enthused.

Another Cedar Hill resident and storyteller is Mel Davenport. "I started telling stories as survival," Mel smiled, explaining that as the oldest of six, she was expected to entertain her siblings. She heard, relished and passed on family stories, setting a pattern for life from what she heard. Later she heard Bible stories and incorporated them into her repertoire. That came in handy for Sunday school lessons and time on the evangelistic field with her husband as they put on programs, which included puppets, gospel magic, ventriloquism, music stories and black light chalk art throughout the '70s.

"When we stopped traveling, my husband went into the education field and I worked in day care, telling a lot of stories. When I was working on my master's in humanities and art, I used storytelling in my classes. I was asked to teach arts and music for children for elementary education majors. Of course, this included storytelling along with creative dramatics and movement," Mel recalled. She branched into wider genres, indentifying with multicultural folktales, especially once she discovered her own Native American genealogy.

"Everything in your life experiences plays into your storytelling," Mel explained, noting that she has written a book on caregiving and Alzheimer's based on her experience caring for her mother. "I worked with her a lot to bring her out of a vegetative state. Traphene was a great support through that time," Mel mentioned. She now tells of those experiences to help others deal with aging parents.

Mel reflected, "I always consider this: If this is the last story I ever tell, is this how I want to be remembered?" **ARTS NOW**



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Business
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Travel Like a Pro

— By Beverly Shay

The influx of Internet travel services left travel agencies a seemingly endangered species. However, if you desire a great travel experience, Red Bird Travel can offer you 32 years of experience and expertise. “Our rule of thumb is to put ourselves in the client’s place and give them the most enjoyable travel experience we can provide. We never underestimate the value of personal relationships; we will listen and determine our client’s preferences and price range to provide a vacation package, cruise, tour or business travel plan that will meet their need,” said Donna Johnson, who started Red Bird Travel in 1976.

Not everything you find on the Internet is as it seems. If you find low prices online, they may not include taxes and fees and have limited availability. “Just like you go to [a] banker or financial planner to invest funds or to a doctor with your health needs, having a travel agent, who deals with travel plans on a daily basis, insures service you can trust. Pricing isn’t the issue some people think it is; a cruise line cannot give a better price to an individual than a travel agency can. Ninety percent of cruises are sold through agents,” Donna informed. “Our relationship with cruise lines allows us to match unique cruise experiences to our clients. We are informed of new routes or new features. For example, *Conquest*, a Carnival cruise ship out of Galveston, is offering a new itinerary to Key West, Florida; Freeport and Nassau in the Bahamas, starting at \$599.29/person for a group sailing on February 15, 2009, promoted through Red Bird Travel,” Donna revealed.

“We qualify our customers to make sure our services are what they want and need. Airline tickets are sold in conjunction with cruises, tours and business travel. As one of the oldest travel agencies in Dallas County, we have built a lasting reputation and client base. Many of our initial customers, their children, grandchildren



Business NOW

and friends return because they had good experiences, were well-cared for and trust us. Sixty percent of our business comes through referrals. I have continued as a travel agent, even through some of the industry slumps (there are 10,000 fewer travel agencies in U.S. than five years ago), because I care about what I do and set high standards, so my clients stay with me," Donna said with evident satisfaction.

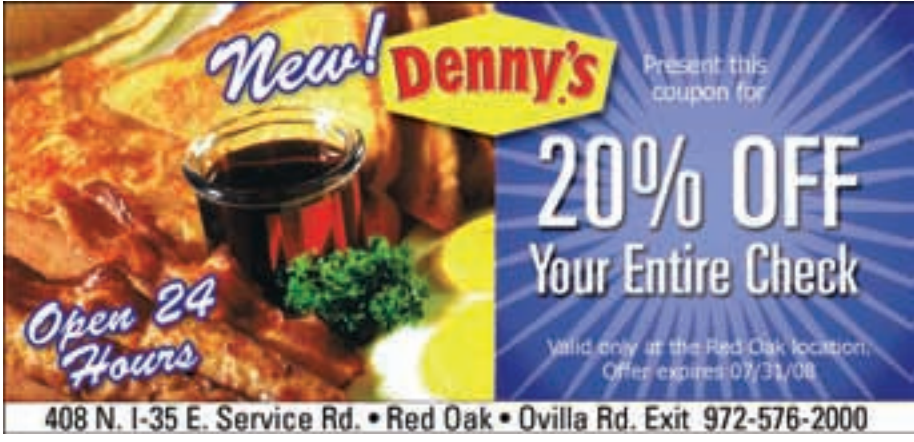
By offering what they do best, they promise to really work for you. Donna's team, with over 75 years combined experience, includes: Linda Dennis, who started there 18 years ago has recently returned; Sheryl Kemp, outside agent and vice president of accounting for 17 years; and Corey Gunn, her young protégée, a Cedar Hill High School graduate now attending University of North Texas. "Our company excels because of our great staff," Donna boasted. Carole Harris, another associate, arranges group outings for retirees, such as: day trips, theater trips, cruises and tours. Red Bird Travel also excels at business travel management.

Donna's advice for both beginning travelers and seasoned veterans is to plan ahead. "Book travel plans for Christmas/New Year's, the most expensive time to travel, by June. Arrange spring break plans by September or October. A weekend in Las Vegas should be booked four months in advance. Avoid hurricane season, June through October, especially late August and all of September. Europe and Alaska are best from May to September; while Australia and South America are best December through March," Donna stated.

Red Bird Travel is located at 320 Cooper St. in Cedar Hill. To start your travel experience call (972) 291-9990 for an appointment. Visit their Web site at www.redbirdtravel.com or e-mail info@redbirdtravel.com. **NOW**



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Around Town Cedar Hill

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Children, top left, lined up to have their faces painted by Mary Kent the clown. Chamber Night Out door prize winners, top right, smiled for the camera. Staff members gave out free T-shirts, second row right, to the first 500 guests attending Cedar Hill Recreation Center's third anniversary and citywide block party. April Chamber Night Out, third row right, was held at the Texas Trust Credit Union. Sandy Martin and Dustin Ledbetter, fourth row left, visited with one another during the block party celebration. Ribbon cuttings were held at Premier Mortgage Capital, second row center; National Title Agency, Inc., second row left; Barnes & Noble Booksellers, bottom left; and Century 21 Judge Fite, bottom right.



Around Town DeSoto

NOW



Cammy Henderson, Wanda Ransom and Dr. Verba Peterson, top left, attended a recent golf tournament. Pierce Monkres and Patricia Coleman, second row left, started their day on the golf course, as did Tom Johnson, third row center. Cheri Henrise, third row left, accepted the Teen Big Award at the Big Brothers Big Sisters volunteer appreciation party. Council member Denise Valentine, Police Chief Brodnak and council member Carl Sherman, bottom left, smiled for the camera. Canterbury School sent seven students, top right, to the state tennis finals held recently in Waco. Col. Dennis Cross and his wife, Linda, second row center, accepted flowers and gifts from many well-wishers at the DHS ROTC Retirement Ceremony held in his honor. DeSoto Mayor Bobby Waddle, second row right, presented Col. Dennis Cross with a certificate and a DeSoto challenge coin. Mia Satterfield posed along with her classmates, bottom right, in front of a fire truck. Mia won a ride on the fire truck following a perfect attendance record at Woodridge Elementary.

Around Town **Duncanville**



DHS German language students, top left, competed in the Texas Foreign Language Symposium held at Texas A&M Commerce. A member of the Dallas County Sheriff's Office Posse, top right, attended the third annual career fair at Kennemer Middle School. Brenda Ellis, second row left, gave a performance as Harriet Tubman to the senior group at Holy Spirit Catholic Church. Fernando Gonzalez Cortez, third row left, built a robot out of geometric shapes. *Panther Tale* editor Dana Burdick, third row right, received a hug from a young admirer. Ribbon cuttings were held at Choice Homes, second row right and Everyday Yellow Pages, bottom left.




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Look Who's Cooking

— By Faith Browning

IN THE KITCHEN WITH CYNDE FRANKS

In between her time running Arts in Bloom Floral Art Studio, Cynde Franks manages to make time for pleasure in cooking. She believes quiche is one of the greatest foods ever created. “You can eat it hot or cold, and it’s great for using up leftovers,” she said. “It’s easy as pie (Get it?) to make.”

Cynde was following recipes by third grade; by sixth grade, she was preparing the majority of her family’s meals. “I can’t remember a time when I didn’t love cooking,” she said. Her earliest memory is baking cookies using leftover pie crust from her great-grandmother’s weekly cherry pie. “Hot from the oven came out the delicious, flaky pie crust cookie,” she said. “It was warm with butter, sugar and cinnamon baked onto it, *yum.*” **NOW**

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

ANYTHING GOES QUICHE

- 1 frozen pie crust
(I think Mrs. Smith’s deep dish is best.)
- 1 to 2 cups your choice ham, asparagus, onions, salmon, capers, dill or spinach (It should fill at least 1/2 to 3/4 of the pie crust.)
- salt and pepper, to taste
- spices, to taste
- 1/2 cup real wine or less if using cooking wine, due to saltiness (optional)
- 5 eggs
- 1/2 cup heavy cream

Depending on the volume of ingredients you have placed in the pie shell, you may have enough of the egg mixture to make 2 quiches. Preheat oven to 350 F. While oven is preheating, take pie crust and pierce several vent holes. Place pie crust in oven and bake about halfway; this will keep the bottom from being soggy later. Remove half-baked pie shell from oven. Fill crust with desired ingredients, salt and pepper. Whisk eggs and cream; pour egg mixture over top of ingredients. Fill almost to the top. Quiche will not rise much. Place in center of the oven; bake about 35 minutes or until firm. If edges of pie crust start to brown too much, cover with a foil collar. Remove from oven; allow to cool at least 5 minutes before cutting. Serving suggestion: A cold melon slice is a nice contrast to the hot quiche and the flavors complement each other. For those watching their carbs, bake this dish without crust by using spray oil on a baking dish.

WATERMELON SHERBET

- 5 cups ripe, seedless watermelon, cubed
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 Tbsp. lemon juice
- 1 2-oz. envelope unflavored gelatin
- 1/4 cup water
- 12-oz. evaporated milk

Combine first three ingredients; cover and chill 30 minutes. Place watermelon mixture in blender or food processor; process until smooth; set aside. Sprinkle gelatin over water in a small saucepan; let stand 1 minute. Cook over medium heat, stirring until gelatin dissolves; remove from heat. Combine watermelon mixture, gelatin and milk. Pour into ice cream freezer

container of a 5-quart hand-turned or electric freezer. Freeze mixture following manufacturer’s directions.

BUTTERMILK PECAN PRALINES

- 3 cups sugar
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1 tsp. soda
- 1 tsp. real vanilla extract
- 1/3 stick real butter
- 2 cups pecan halves

Using a large pot, cook sugar, buttermilk and soda to soft-ball stage. Mixture will darken as you are cooking; stay vigilant — stir, stir, stir to prevent boiling over. At soft-ball stage, remove from heat and add vanilla, butter and pecans. Beat by hand until mixture begins to lose its gloss. Drop by spoonfuls onto wax paper. Pralines will harden in a few moments. Remove from wax paper. Store in airtight container.

CHARLOTTE’S CHOCOLATE COOKIE SHEET CHOCOLATE CAKE RECIPE

- 2 cups cake flour, unsifted
- 2 cups sugar
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 cup water
- 1/2 cup shortening
- 1 stick real butter
- 3 Tbsp. cocoa (I like special dark.)
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 cup buttermilk
- 1 tsp. soda
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- FROSTING**
- 1 stick butter
- 2 Tbsp. cocoa
- 6 Tbsp. milk
- 1 16-oz. box powdered sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1/2 cup pecans, chopped

Preheat oven to 325 F. Combine flour, sugar and salt in mixing bowl. Bring water, shortening, butter and cocoa to boil; pour over dry ingredients and mix. Mix eggs, buttermilk, soda and vanilla; mix into other mixture. Oil cookie sheet or 9 X 13-inch pan; evenly spread batter. Bake in center of oven for about 20

minutes or until done in center. Before cake is finished cooking, mix frosting by melting together butter, cocoa and milk; stirring well, bring to boil. Remove from heat. Add sifted powdered sugar. Return to heat and stir well. Add vanilla and pecans; stir well. Pour over cake when cake is removed from oven; frosting will set in a few moments. This cake is very rich and delicious, warm or cooled.

EGGPLANT MOUSSAKA

When selecting an eggplant look at the base of the eggplant to select a male. The male eggplant has fewer seeds than the female. To tell the difference, the bottom of the eggplant has either a round or an oblong brown mark. Females are more round; males are more oblong. Select eggplants which are firm and free of scars or browning on the skin.

- 1 large eggplant
- oil
- 1 12-oz. can diced tomatoes, including juice
- 1 14-oz. can garbanzo beans, rinsed and drained well
- salt and pepper, to taste
- olive oil, to taste

Wash and cube eggplant (peel skin off, your choice). Soak in salt water for at least 30 minutes. Drain eggplant and press dry between paper towels. In a deep frying pan add enough oil to cover the pan with about 1/8" of oil; brown eggplant. When eggplant is cooked, drain on paper towels. In casserole dish, mix eggplant, tomatoes, garbanzo beans, salt and pepper. Drizzle olive oil over top. Bake at 350 F for about 25 minutes.

CHEESE STRAWS

- 2 sticks butter, softened
- 1/2 lb. sharp cheese, or any hard cheese of your choice
- 1 tsp. dried parsley flakes
- 1/2 tsp. cayenne pepper
- 2 cups plain flour, not sifted
- 1/2 tsp. salt

Cream together butter and cheese. Mix dry ingredients together; add alternately to creamed mixture. Use cookie press to make straws or roll into little marbles and press with a fork on cookie sheet. Bake 5 to 12 minutes at 375 F. Do not let them get too brown.

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Get More Value

— By Tom Castleberry, Judy Howell and Gary Rope

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

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

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

- **Multiple line:**

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

- **Good student:**

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

- **Multiple car:**

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

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

- Do you have one person to call when you need help?

- Is the insurer available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week?

- Does the insurer make it easy to file a claim?

- Is the insurer available to discuss your needs and help customize a package of services that is best for you and your family?

- Do you feel confident in the insurer's financial stability and ability to pay if your family suffers a loss?

Be sure you are getting the most value for your time and money. Call your agent or insurance company today and ask if you can get more value by having all your insurance needs taken care of in one place. **NOW**

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Health NOW

Antioxidants... the Fountain of Youth?

— By Dr. Lesa Ansell

A topic of great interest these days, especially to the baby boomer generation, is how to stay looking and feeling younger longer. Among the many options — drinking adequate water every day, eating right, exercising and having a healthy mind — another quick answer is taking antioxidants. But why take them?

In the process of utilizing oxygen, the body's cells produce byproducts called free radicals (unpaired electrons). This occurs because when an oxygen molecule becomes charged (radicalized) it attempts to neutralize the charge by stealing electrons from another molecule. This process can cause damage to the DNA or other molecules. Over time, this damage may become irreversible and lead to diseases including: heart disease, diabetes, cancer, macular degeneration and others.

In addition, exposure to tobacco smoke and radiation can also lead to free radical formation. Antioxidants are substances or nutrients in our foods which can prevent or slow the damaging effects of oxidation to our bodies. Antioxidants act like “magnets” to free radicals, thereby repairing damage or preventing future damage by them.

The process is a balancing act. One must consume enough antioxidants to “neutralize” the free radicals. Food sources rich in antioxidants include: fruits and vegetables, nuts, grains and some meats, poultry and fish. Consuming seven to nine servings of fruits and vegetables each day is recommended. These should be in many varieties and colors to get complete coverage.

Another way of achieving this is by drinking “health” juices. Many are on the market, including: Noni Juice, Vita Vie, G3 Juice, Gogi juice, etc. As with any supplement, one should be cautious in trying these without the advice of a doctor or trained nutritionist. G3 stands out in its safety and efficacy, being the only one listed in the Physician's Desk Reference (PDR), which is regulated by the FDA.

When searching for supplement assistance to elevate your level of antioxidants, you

should look for pharmaceutical-grade products. These are held to strict standardization and quality control practices. Typically, these products are available only through your medical or chiropractic physician, nutritionist or dietician. Typical vitamin stores often do not carry products that pass these strict standards. Good sources to look for in supplements, drinks and foods include: Beta-carotene, Lutein, Lycopene and Vitamins A, C and E.

Just like internal damage is happening, external damage shows as aging of the skin. Biophotonic antioxidant laser scans are good ways to measure the carotenoid antioxidant levels in your skin, which provides a more accurate and reliable biomarker of your overall antioxidant health status than other methods of measuring antioxidants, such as blood tests. When your skin levels are higher, your skin will be healthier, giving a more youthful appearance. **NOW**

Dr. Lesa Ansell is the CEO of Pro-Adjuster Chiropractic Clinic and is a member of the Texas 4 Disaster Medical Team under the direction of the Department of Homeland Security.

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Mother's Day *Forever*

— By Nancy Fenton

Did you get one of those big, beautiful hydrangeas for Mother's Day? It does not have to be a one-time thing, if you are willing to give it a little help.

When it starts to droop inside, soak it overnight in a deep dish outside and find a good-sized spot near your back door for it. Get that spot ready by digging in lots of organic stuff like dead leaves or compost. Hydrangeas need lots of air and water and will grow large. Our clay/rock soil needs organic help in that area. Of course, we are talking about a shady spot since hydrangeas will not take hot sun without burning up. After the plant has soaked overnight, plant it in a wet hole in that shady spot you have ready. Planting it by the door where you walk in and out makes it easier to remember to water it!

The plants that are forced in a greenhouse will grow outdoors with a little extra care, but do not

look for luscious blooms next Mother's Day. It will take a bit longer, but they will bloom if you have not cut them back. All hydrangeas bloom on old wood, so trimming is in line right after they bloom. If you wait until spring, you stand a chance of cutting off all the stems that would have bloomed! They can be shaped up after blooming and left to make lots of new blooms the following spring.

Nurseries sell several varieties, if you did not get one for

Mother's Day. Bluebird is a sturdy variety with oblong olive leaves and flat lacecap flowers. Annabella develops into a white hedge, whereas the newest variety, Endless Summer, produces large, showy flowers over several months.

Winter care requires heavy mulching to protect the plant from the cold. If you have yours in a large pot, a light place in the garage will do. Plant and protect for a lifetime of blooms to remind you of a special Mother's Day. **XXXX**



Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener in Ellis County.

Young, growing church is in need of musicians to help us in our praise and worship.

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June 2008

Community Calendar

Every Wednesday

Rotary Club of Cedar Hill: 7:00 - 8:00 a.m. at CH Recreation Center, 310 East Parkerville Road.

Every Wednesday and Friday

Preschool story time: 10:30 -11:45 a.m. at CH Library. (972) 291-7323.

Every Friday

Cedar Hill Music in the Park: 8:00 p.m. at Valley Ridge Park Amphitheater, 2850 Park Ridge Drive. Bring your lawn chair or blanket, a picnic dinner and enjoy free concerts throughout the month by various artists while relaxing under the stars. June 6: Crawfish (variety); June 13: Drop Top Rocket (rockabilly-'50s); June 20: Fingerprints (jazz/urban); June 27: Island Boogie (steel drum/Latin).

First Mondays

Readers on the Hill Book Club: 7:00 p.m. at CH Library. (972) 291-7323.

First Tuesdays

Duncanville Education Committee: 11:30 a.m. at Chamber office. (972) 780-4990.

First and Third Tuesdays

Good Morning DeSoto: 7:30 a.m. at MCM Grande Hotel. (972) 224-3565.

Training Academy for Dental Assistants' free informational sessions: 5:30 p.m. (972) 842-2999.

First and Third Wednesdays

Duncanville Business Interchange: 7:30 a.m. at Chamber offices.

Fourth Mondays

Duncanville Board of Directors meeting: 5:30 p.m. at Chamber offices.

Fourth Tuesdays

Duncanville Chamber Champions Luncheon: 11:30 a.m. at various locations.

Second and Fourth Mondays

Texas Ladies Networking: 11:45 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. at Ryan's Grill, Waxahachie. (214) 587-1221.

Second and Fourth Tuesdays

Cedar Hill Lions: Noon - 1:00 p.m. at Good Shepherd Church, 915 Old Straus Road. (972) 291-0651.

Cedar Hill City Council: 7:00 p.m. 502 Cedar Street.

Second Tuesdays

Duncanville Governmental Affairs meeting: 8:30 a.m. at Chamber offices.

The Dallas Area Writers Group at CH Library. Visit dallaswriters.org.

Second Wednesdays

Duncanville Monthly Luncheons: 11:30 a.m. at various locations.

Second Wednesday

Cedar Hill/Duncanville Early Childhood PTA: 10:00 a.m. at Cedar Hill Hope Lutheran Church, 917 N. Straus Road.

Third Mondays

Duncanville Executive Board meeting: 4:30 p.m. at Chamber offices.

Third Thursdays

Duncanville Fun After Five: 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. at various locations.

Third Saturdays

Cedar Hill Star Party: Sunset until 11:00 p.m. at J. W. Williams Park, 1605 High Pointe Ln., beside West Intermediate School. Come watch the stars. Free fun for the whole family. Bring your telescope or enjoy the sights through our telescopes.

June 5

Duncanville's Summer Concert Series: 7:30 p.m. at Poe-Hobden Amphitheatre, Armstrong Park. Featuring Aspen Creek (rock). www.duncanville.com.

June 7

Annual Pancake Fly-In at Mid-Way Regional Airport, Waxahachie: 8:00 - 11:00 a.m. Classic airplanes and fighters, plane rides/Discovery Flights, remote control model flyers, flight demo (T-28s), The Classic Swing Band, Midlothian Classic Wheels and other attractions. Breakfast tickets \$6.00. One child under 8 eats free with a paid adult ticket. Event and parking are free. For more information, call Tammy at (972) 923-0080.

June 12

Leadership Southwest/Big Brothers Big Sisters Recruitment Reception: 6:30 p.m. at DeSoto Town Center, 211 Pleasant Run. Contact Beth Trimble at (972) 274-8212.

Duncanville's Summer Concert Series: 7:30 p.m. at Poe-Hobden Amphitheatre, Armstrong Park. Featuring Shades of Gray (good old rock 'n' roll). www.duncanville.com.

June 14

DeSoto hosts Annual Best Southwest Juneteenth Celebration. Parade: 3:00 p.m. Party: 4:00 -10:00 p.m. at L. Carroll Moseley Park, 1300 Honor Drive, DeSoto. Included are: musical performances, children's activities, pool, rock climbing, fire safety house, 3 on 3 basketball, Buffalo Soldiers, American Indians, Charro horse roping, arts and crafts booths and food. Join the fun which volunteers and city staff from Cedar Hill, DeSoto, Duncanville and Lancaster have planned and organized. Contact Carolyn Campbell at (972) 230-9651.

June 19

Duncanville's Summer Concert Series: 7:30 p.m. at Poe-Hobden Amphitheatre, Armstrong Park. Featuring Ten 55 (Texas country/southern rock). www.duncanville.com.

June 20 - 22

The annual Summer Balloon Classic will be held at Mid-Way Airport. Over 50 hot air balloons will take to the sky in all colors, shapes and sizes. The media flight will take place Friday from 6:00 - 8:00 a.m. The regular schedule is Friday from 4:00 - 9:00 p.m., Saturday from 6:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. and Sunday from 6:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. The event is free to the public. Parking is \$5. For information, visit www.summerballoonclassic.com.

June 21

First Annual Citywide Neighborhood BBQ Cook-off: 3:00 - 6:00 p.m. at historic downtown Cedar Hill. Admission is free. Contact Patty Bushart at (972) 291-5100, ext. 1084 or visit www.cedarhilltx.com.

Small Town Saturday Night: 6:00 - 9:00 p.m. at historic downtown Cedar Hill. Admission is free. Contact Patty Bushart at (972) 291-5100, ext. 1084 or visit www.cedarhilltx.com.

June 21 - 22

Photo Expo 2008, Midlothian Conference Center. Sat. 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Sun. 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Contact (972) 723-7919 or e-mail midconfcntr@aol.com.

June 23 - 26

Canterbury Summer Camp Program's Basketball Camp. Contact Scott Vaughn at (972) 890-7280 or vaughns@thecanterburyschool.org for details.

June 26

Duncanville's Summer Concert Series: 7:30 p.m. at Poe-Hobden Amphitheatre, Armstrong Park. Featuring Joel Sprayberry Band (acoustic/progressive/psychedelic/folk/rock). www.duncanville.com.

July 4

DeSoto and Lancaster present an Old Fashioned 4th in Lancaster. Contact Mark James at (972) 218-3750.

Stars, Stripes & Sports Festival: 4:00 - 10:00 p.m. at Armstrong Park in Duncanville. Nickelodeon Game Lab: 4:00 and 5:45 p.m. Water slides, inflatables, face painting, train rides and more. Concert at 7:30 p.m. featuring Inside Out (funk/r&b). Fireworks at dusk. www.duncanville.com.

July 14 - 17

Canterbury Summer Camp Program's Volleyball Camp. Contact Scott Vaughn at (972) 890-7280 or vaughns@thecanterburyschool.org for details.

July 21 - 24

Canterbury Summer Camp Program's Baseball Camp. Contact Kyle Skelton at (972) 824-0998 for details.

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For more community events, visit our online calendar at www.nowmagazines.com.

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