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On The Cover

Bottle art has become one of Paige Rodriguez's most recent passions.

Photo by Shana Woods.



Editor's Note



Hi Friends!

If you are like me, you have learned time is tricky. Seems it either flies by at lightning speed or crawls past ever so slowly. In retrospect, for me it is usually flying. To quote Dr. Suess: "How did it get so late so soon? It's night before it's afternoon. December is here before it's June. My goodness, how the time has flown!"

I have been reading a book by Donald Miller called *A Million Miles in a Thousand Years*. I highly recommend it. The book has encouraged me to make my life a story worth living. Also it has also made me realize, once again, what wonderful stories people are living here, right underneath our noses. From Paige's charming trinkets to Jessie's ballin' baseball boys to our local Boys and Girls Club of America, Mansfield is full of heroes with a story to tell. Share yours!

Jaime Ruark
MansfieldNOW Editor

A vertical advertisement for Bravos Mexican Restaurant. At the top is the logo with a sombrero and the word "BRAVOS" in large red letters, with "MEXICAN RESTAURANT" below it. Below the logo is a banner that says "We Cater - Private Parties". The main image shows a plate of food, possibly a taco or burrito. A yellow starburst graphic with the text "BYOB" is overlaid on the image. Below the image is a dashed border containing the text "FREE ENTREE with purchase of another regular priced entree of equal or greater value". Below this is the phone number "817-473-3757" and the address "1585 E. Broad St. @ Hwy 287 (south 1/2 block)". The hours "Mon/Tues 11-3 Wed-Fri 11-8 Sat 8-8" are listed. At the bottom, it says "Open Saturday for Breakfast @ 8:00".

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A horizontal advertisement for Vacation Bible Camp. On the left is a logo for "SADDLE RIDGE RANCH" with a cowboy hat. The main text says "Vacation Bible Camp! June 21-24, 2010". Below this, it says "9:00 a.m. to noon... age 4 through 4th grade". A banner across the middle says "special needs program available." Below that, it says "Register online or call (817)477-2287, ext. 112." On the right is a wooden post with the word "FREE" written vertically. At the bottom left is the logo for "FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH MANSFIELD". At the bottom right is the address "777 N. Walnut Creek Dr. (across from Super Wal-Mart)" and the website "www.firstmethodistmansfield.org".

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June 21-24, 2010

9:00 a.m. to noon...
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special needs program available.

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Dell Williams, Elyssa Mendez and Clayton Phillips pose with Steve Wurm, president of the Mansfield Boys and Girls Club.

In today's world, it can be tough to be a child. As the saying goes, sometimes it takes a village, and sometimes, as Steve Wurm, president of the Mansfield Boys and Girls Club, knows, "It can just take that one person who will give their time." With over 22 years personally invested in the Boys and Girls Club (BGC) of America and its programs designed to help children reach their ultimate potential, Steve has been a part of many amazing success stories and speaks from experience. "All kids have challenges and obstacles in life. Sometimes it takes more than just parents to steer a child onto that critical pathway to success. Our programs truly are universal," he added.

A SOLID FOUNDATION

Building Strong Futures

— By Jaime Ruark



Beverly and Jamara Hogan. Jamara was named Boys and Girls Club's Youth of the Year.

As president of the BGC for the last eight years, Steve has seen first-hand just what the club has to offer. "BGC kids have a high school graduation rate of 85 percent. That's higher than the national average. Seventy-eight percent of our first- through fifth-grade students, who are failing a subject, will be passing it at the end of one semester," he said. "On an annual basis, we have anywhere from 6,000 to 8,000 kids involved in our programs. Because we know if a kid comes to our clubs at least 50 times in a year, we will have a solid, positive impact in their life, our goal is to make sure that kid comes as often as possible. We're helping our kids become the heroes of today in our communities and the role models for tomorrow."

BGC has five nationally recognized core programs: Character and Leadership; Education and Career; Health and Life Skills; Arts; and Sports, Fitness and Recreation. Each program is designed to address today's most pressing youth issues, teaching them life skills in a safe and fun environment, all for just a \$15/year membership fee. "The club is different than it was 22 years ago when I first got involved," Steve noted. "Kids are different. The challenges they're facing are different. We have to make sure we're providing the necessary skills to meet today's needs."

As father to three girls, who enjoy the sports and leadership programs BGC has to offer, Steve's work, which started out



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as volunteer work in college, has gone beyond just a job. "What happens is, you begin to see what an impact BGC has on these kids, and, in turn, what an impact it starts to have on you," he explained. "I've seen kids overcome obstacles in their life that a lot of adults can't overcome, and that's a direct result



"We have to make sure we're providing the necessary skills to meet today's needs."

of coming to the club every day. Because of the programs, the support and the guidance they receive, kids who would've been high school dropouts are going to college and are becoming productive citizens and integral members of their community. Sometimes you don't see the direct impact until years later. You can't always look for that immediate reward, but you can know it's there. Every year, I have seen more and more of that positive impact. Throughout my 22 years, there's always been a kid who keeps you going. That's why it became less of a job to me and more of a calling."

Steve keeps a picture in his desk for when he needs a reminder of the good. "There was a girl who came to us when she was 12 or 13 years old. She was basically kicked out of school. She was in a gang. From my very first meeting

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with her, she challenged who I was," he recalled. "She had a hard time with our rules at first, but she kept coming and she slowly came around. Every day she came back, because she was finding an outlet and staff who were taking the time to listen to her. As we got to know her, we began to understand her, why she was where she was. She had never had a positive role model or a stable environment in her life. Her dad was in jail, and eventually died in prison. She was bounced around the juvenile system, the whole works." It took time, patience and the programs of BGC, but the picture Steve takes pride in is of that same girl, dressed in an ROTC uniform, preparing to graduate high school. "She wasn't over all of her obstacles just like that — we watched her go in and out, and we really had to work with her to overcome the gangs and the drugs and her negative outlook on life, but it happened."

As BGC says, the true measure of



The programs of the Boys and Girls Club make a difference in the lives of children like these everyday.

their success is their alumni, and local 17-year-old Youth of the Year, Jamara Hogan, and her proud mother, Beverly, are yet another example of lives being changed. "I used to be really shy," Jamara admitted. "I started coming to the club because my brother did, and ever since then, it's been uphill with me." BGC has awakened in Jamara a passion for volunteerism. Last year, she completed over 800 volunteer hours, and this year she already has over 200 hours under her belt. "I've really learned how good it feels to help and give back," she added.

With obvious emotion, Beverly shared, "I just thank the Lord that I haven't had to worry about Jamara. The staff is so dedicated, and the programs just grabbed her attention. I know the Boys and Girls Club saved my kids from the streets. I've gotten to watch my daughter bloom!"



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Boys and Girls Club staff, pictured left to right are: Zach Curtis, Matt Munson, Marian Hill, Destiny Clemons.

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Thanks to the continued success and hard work of Steve and his staff, and despite recent tough economic times, BGC's main branch in Arlington has undergone a \$1.2 million expansion and remodel. "It's a much-needed facelift, plus we'll be able to accommodate over 200 children every day," he explained. BGC workers hope to bring the successes of the Arlington programs to Mansfield.



Currently, there are two on-site school extensions of the BGC at the Martha Reid and Anna May Daulton elementary schools, and the Cromer branch in south Arlington also serves Mansfield children. "There is such a need in Mansfield," Steve expressed. "It's a greater need and a different need, because there really is a lack of resources right now. Both of the school-site programs are full, and we do a summer program, as well. The kids there need the opportunities we provide, and they need a place where they can go every day. I'd like to see more opportunities there.

"All kids should have every opportunity possible to excel in life. I don't think there is a kid who wouldn't benefit from something we offer," Steve continued. "I think, speaking as a parent, that it's our job to realize there are going to be outside sources and other people who are going to impact our children. It's our job to make sure that impact is a positive one. You need a solid foundation to build on in order to have a strong future," he advised. "That's what we offer at the Boys and Girls Club." **NOW**

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CROSSES AND COWBOYS

— By Adam Walker

Many young children mow lawns for a summer or two and then move on to something else. Shane Farrar made a lucrative business of it. Now he and his wife, Keziah, run that and two other businesses from their home in Mansfield, and they have plans of starting another business or two in the near future.



At Home With
SHANE & KEZIAH FARRAR

Shane started out with a few yards from people he met while selling cheese and crackers and wrapping paper for school contests. He soon built up a clientele of 15 customers. He got a weed eater from Santa when he was 13, who also gave Shane a commercial lawn mower when he was 15. By the time he was 16, he was doing 45 yards a week. In his senior year of high school, he owned a baby blue truck and trailer, which the football team all made fun of, so Shane made sure that by the end of the year several of those guys had worked for him in that truck. At 19, he was handling year-round commercial lawn care contracts and making enough money to buy his parents' house at age 21, and remodel it just in time to marry Keziah.

Both Shane and Keziah grew up in Mansfield, and both their families still live there. They met during high school. "He



walked up to me in a yellow Tommy Hilfiger shirt on the last day of my freshman year and asked me to sign his yearbook,” Keziah said. She claimed that was so he would not have to see her again all summer if she turned him down, but Shane denied that. They married in 2000, and Keziah finished her degree in business marketing in 2003. They tried living just outside town, but decided to move back into town with their two boys, Landon and Hagan, and their white Labrador retriever, Mercedes. They wanted to be closer to their boys’ friends and be able to have people over more often. They have lived in their current house for a year-and-a-half now and have put a lot of effort into remodeling it into just the space they want.

“Shane likes the rustic style,” Keziah explained, “and I randomly find things to tone it down.” One of Keziah’s most



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prominent additions to the decor is her large collection of crosses, most of which are mounted on the walls of the downstairs living areas, but crosses of every description in many different materials and styles find their way into most parts of the house. “I have so many that I’m running out of room to put them. I think they’re interesting. I see them everywhere I go.”

Another recurring motif throughout the house is one Shane prefers — big Texas stars. A row of them can be found above the living room windows and a large mirror with a Texas star hangs from the ceiling above the desk in the office. The stars show up in other places as well — some you might expect, like in the cut-glass of the front door. Others are more surprising, like the ones in the custom-



made, hammered-copper sink basins in each of the bathrooms.

Unusual chandeliers are a design element they both enjoy. “There’s a story behind every light fixture,” Shane admitted. The chandelier in the entryway is the couple’s favorite. Custom made for Shane and Keziah from a wagon wheel, it features

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Unusual chandeliers are a design element they both enjoy. "There's a story behind every light fixture."





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horseshoes, spurs and six-shooters in its design with cowhide lampshades and a central teepee, also of cowhide. The chandelier in the living room is made of antlers and so large that the only way they got it into the house was because the front door had not yet been installed. The tiled dining room opposite the study across the entry features another wagon wheel chandelier designed of other rustic motifs. Upstairs in the game room is yet another interesting pool table chandelier; this one is rusted, wrought iron and bearing gabled shotguns and hunting scenes.

The game room is also where you will find their collection of autographed photographs of country music legends filling an entire faux-finished wall. Shane indicated some of the autographs were acquired in person, while others were purchased at charity auctions. According to Keziah, Shane had to fight for one of them!

The boys' bedroom is, predictably, an Old West campground

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“Shane and Keziah have installed a new hot tub and a koi pond in addition to their swimming pool to create what Keziah calls their backyard oasis.”

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with colorful decals of lawmen's badges and other Western icons decorating the walls. The room is furnished with rustic wooden bunks, but Keziah seemed to think her sons do more talking than sleeping in them.

The guest bedroom is decorated with a number of paintings by Keziah's father, including one of a spot in Colorado,



where Shane made sure to take Keziah before they married. She had to love it as much as he did. Shane's brother has also contributed artwork to the collections covering their walls, alongside their dramatic black and white family photos displayed throughout the house.

The backyard can be reached by a tightly spiraled metal staircase descending from the balcony outside the guestroom. The yard has been the focus of their most recent remodeling project. Shane and Keziah have installed a new hot tub and a koi pond in addition to their swimming pool to create what Keziah calls their backyard oasis.

Returning to the house, the living room, in addition to the antler chandelier, showcases other unusual elements, such as a lamp, also made of antlers, and the leather rug. Yes, the Farrars own a leather shag rug. Keziah saw something similar

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in a friend's house. She loved the idea of a rug made of randomly sized leather scraps so much she had her own rug designed to fit in with her dark palette of browns, blacks and rust. The dark walls and ceilings really make the lighter elements, like the white rock of the fireplace they added, pop.

The couple proudly showed their kitchen, remembering all the work that went into remodeling that room. Keziah added a bar made of the same white rock as the



fireplace. Shane did not like the white cabinetry, so they glazed over all the facings and doors to create a more mellow atmosphere. The large, metal pan rack hanging from the ceiling has received as much attention as the chandeliers in other rooms; it has been recoated several times as the Farrars changed their minds about colors.

You might think with three businesses, two small children and the many remodeling projects that their lives would just go by in a blur, but Shane and Keziah are careful to avoid that. Their motto, which sits prominently displayed on an end table in the living room, is a quote from C.R. Lawton — "Time is the one thing that can never be retrieved." Sounds like good advice. **NOW**



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The annual Women's Club Yellow Rose Charity Event is another huge success thanks to the hard work of many. From top left: Marilyn Gerloff, Jane Tecklenburg, Debby Frear, Genie Herman, Dolores Tate, Kathleen Powers Doris Benoit Enanorea Pina and Karen Payton; Lucretia Mills, Loretta Goodfellow, Anita Hughes, Katherine Owens, Sherry Williams, Jane Cooper and Ann Monroe; Master of Ceremonies Russ Arnold and attendee Lisa Osborn of NTC Texas.



Leasa Zeppa, Mary Cather, Stephanie Stewart, Pat Morrow and Connie Yelle pose in the midst of their interdenominational Bible study at America's Best Coffee.



Birthday girl Keira Ruark gets ready to cut into her special Tinker Bell cake.



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Golfers and volunteers turned out for the Chamber of Commerce Golf Tournament at Walnut Creek Country Club. From left: Justin Coon, Bryan Baughman, Bryan Adkison and Scott Dement pose between holes; Lisa Osborn golfs while Julie Garner of NOW Magazines and Sylvia Truebitt of Guardian Protection volunteer at the hole; Tom Ware, Katie Watson, Jerry Wiley and Sylvia Truebitt enjoy the festivities.



Jennifer Records and Jaime Ruark show off their Mardi Gras-themed team colors at the Crawl for Cancer, an annual charity event.

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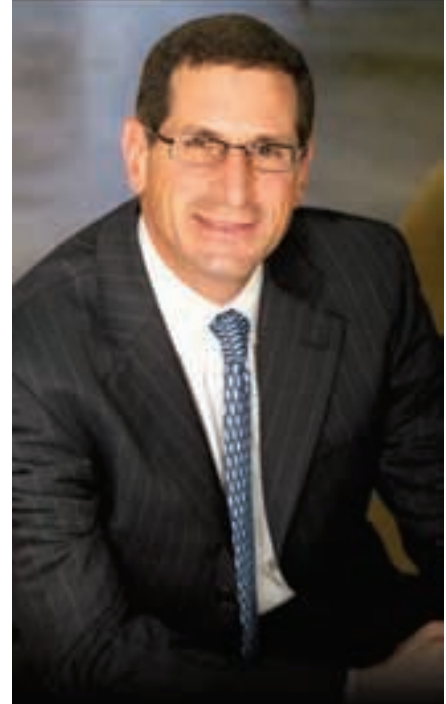
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The famous Spanish painter, drawer and sculptor, Pablo Picasso, is credited with the quote, "The artist is a receptacle for emotions that come from all over the place; from the sky, from the earth, from a scrap of paper, from a passing shape, from a spider's web." Local artist, Paige Rodriguez, is bringing that quote to life. Her handmade, one-of-a-kind creations are original, intricate and whimsical, each piece infused with the charming personality of its creator. Her artistic, fun and down-to-earth personality has helped Paige turn her passion into her business, French Charmings.

Paige came to Mansfield via San Antonio with her husband,

Charmingly Original

— By Jaime Ruark

John. Able to run her business from home thanks to the support and encouragement of John, Paige is a stay-at-home mom, who speaks with great pride of their children: brilliant Adam, a graduating college senior; gorgeous, 19-year-old daughter Jessi; sweet Sam, a tenth-grader at Legacy High School; and cute-as-a-button Sophie, who is 5. Before giving herself over to her art, Paige tried her hand at a number of jobs, from driving a Caterpillar forklift in Antarctica to selling life insurance and real estate. "I was in sales forever," she shared. "I never liked it or felt like I was good at it, but I never really thought of myself as artistic, either."

The dormant artistic side of Paige came to life thanks to a stained glass class at a local Hobby Lobby. That class opened up

the door to a whole new world, one made beautiful when viewed through colored glass. "Classes like that are really neat, because you can go and learn in a short time these techniques that other artists use," Paige said, explaining she continues to frequent local classes, using them as a starting point to inspire her own creations. "I want to have my own style, so a lot of what I've done has just been experimental. I'll learn a technique and then go from there."

One of her hanging glass "suncatcher" creations, which she calls *The Beginning* and admits is a personal favorite, showcases her natural skill at combining colors, shapes and textures. The brilliant cobalt blue, greens and ambers of each glass piece combine with the support of a branch to give the piece a feeling of depth and

strength. Her *Blue Sea* hanging glass piece combines natural stone with a blue glass rondelle (a round disk of glass formed by spinning and flattening an opened, blown glass bubble). "I like my things to have a rustic, natural feel to them," she noted. "I found that gorgeous blue geode in a little shop in San Juan, and I found the branch in my front yard. Everything is usable;



everything is pretty in its own way.”

Like many artists, Paige has a wandering eye. She is forever picturing something in a completely different way than its intended use, which makes her pieces fanciful and fun. She brings a sense of humor to everything she does, especially her personalized custom jewelry. From the namesake, French postage stamp charms and pendants featuring timeless queenly beauties to her “dangly hanglies” made from old



“I want to have my own style, so a lot of what I’ve done has just been experimental.”

European coins, Paige makes something old meet something new in a fantastical way. “I love things that have an antique look, and I guess you could say I have a weird sense of humor,” Paige laughed, pointing out a charm made from a Mongolian postage stamp displaying a monkey riding a bicycle. “I love it when people see something I’ve done that they connect to, a charm or a pendant that expresses something unique about them. I like to say I’m creating wearable art for those who want to express themselves.”

As a self-professed introvert, Paige’s experimental personality may have not been suited to sales, but it is definitely

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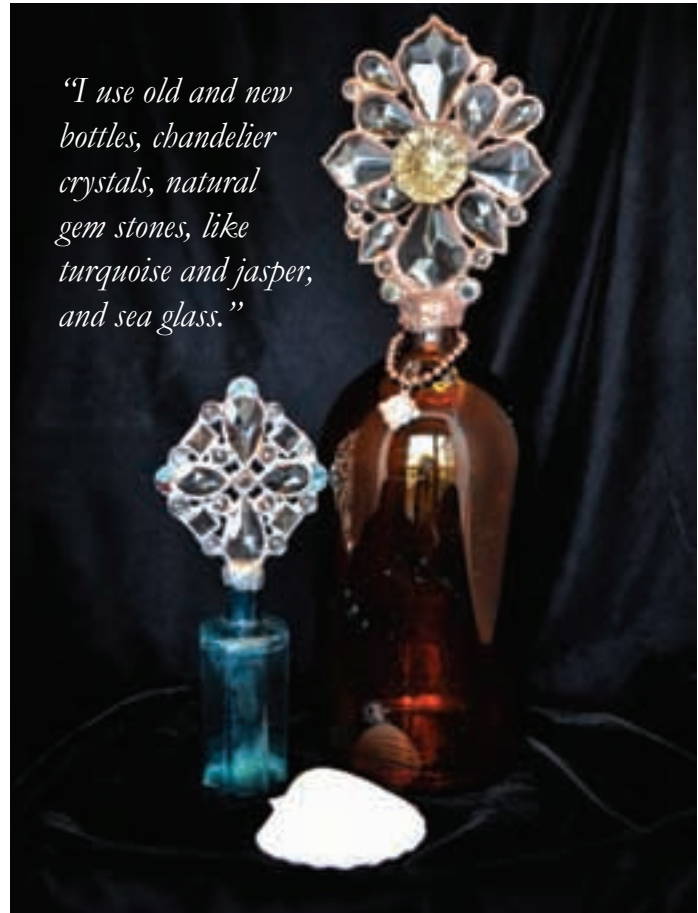
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expressed in her art. From a room in her house, which she converted to her studio, she pours over her creations. Lately, her time has been focused on her newest love: bottle art. “Like



everything I do, these kind of evolve as I make them. I use old and new bottles, chandelier crystals, natural gem stones, like turquoise and jasper, and sea glass,” she said. Paige solders the gems and crystals together with different materials, such as sterling silver or copper, creating crosses, sunflowers, butterflies and *fleur-de-lis* patterns that are eye-catching. “I use old wine or milk bottles or crystal decanters, just any bottle with a shape I find interesting,” she added.

Many of Paige’s pieces focus on the play of light through objects, and as her skills as a glass artist grow, so too does her confidence in her self-expression. “My new favorite things to do are my wind chimes,” she smiled. “I hate for things to go to waste. I think everything can be used in one way or another, and this is the perfect way for me to use all the odds and ends I have. It’s fun and bright.” The strands of her *No Time Like the Present* wind chime display old Japanese pennies, chandelier crystals, glass beads and watch faces along with vibrant yellow and light green glass rondelles. The juxtaposition of high quality Kokomo glass against old copper coins is completely original and completely, charmingly Paige. **NOW**

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— By Jaime Ruark



"I enjoy working with kids. I think that's probably my true calling."



The crack of the bat as it connects with the ball. The rush of pride for making the catch. The camaraderie of friendships being forged on the field. For Coach Jessie Jackson and his RiverCats baseball team, it just does not get any better than this.

The Mansfield RiverCats boys have been playing together since 2007. "Our team came together because there was a group of us parents who were all friends,

and we all had kids who played multiple sports together," Jessie said. "We got together to start an organization where they could all continue to play on the same team, and we could bring more kids in, still allowing them the freedom to play multiple sports and not have to be specialized at such a young age." Thanks to the support of the team parents and their title sponsor, the law offices of Brenda G.

Hansen in Fort Worth, the RiverCats organization now boasts three age-based teams: 7-year-olds, 8-year-olds and a 10-and-under team — playing baseball, basketball and football. "We want to keep getting bigger every year. We think a good sports organization makes a real impact on our kids' lives. No matter how big or small their involvement, that impact is there for life," Jessie added.

Jessie, a graduate from Arlington

High School, where he also played ball, has three athletic children: son, Ommar, who is 9; and daughters, Miyah and Nenah, 6 and 3, respectively. His children are the reason he got into coaching, something he now feels passionate about. "I enjoy working with kids. I think that's probably my true calling," he shared.

This year, the 9-year-old RiverCats baseball boys had two teams: the Black team, beginners coached by head coach, Roderick See, and assistant coaches, CJ Washington, Leroy McKinnis and Roland Lavine; and the Red team, more advanced players coached by head coach, Jessie, and assistant coaches, Justin Jackson (Jessie's brother), Kim Mitchell, Michale Cornish and Jay Valdez. "We practice on Saturdays, Sundays and Wednesdays and we play on Mondays and Fridays. These boys and their parents are really dedicated, obviously, because that's a lot of time spent on the field," Jessie pointed out.

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Jessie and his coaches work hard to teach these children the fundamentals. "Our coaching strategy is to focus on baseball fundamentals. Run, catch and throw, and don't be scared of the ball," he explained. "We don't teach bad habits. I do my research to make sure I'm teaching them the right way to play. Our goal is to prepare these kids for high school ball. We plan on keeping them together until they're 14. We say, 'If they stay with us until then, they will make their high school team.'"

Team mom, Rose Jackson, said, "One thing that is amazing to me is to see how much these players' skills and knowledge of the game has grown since they were 7. I truly enjoy every game."

Jessie proudly added, "Rose is the coordinator; she's the glue that keeps everything together. Without her, it wouldn't happen. I just do the easy part and work with the kids."

The RiverCats played well their first year, and thanks to determination and talent, they have continued to improve each year. "We ended up doing really well in some of our tournaments, and we went on to win the USSSA [United States Specialty Sports Association] Class A World Series our first year out. That was awesome," said Jessie, who speaks highly of the Mansfield Youth Baseball Association (MYBA). "Last year, the




boys were 8. We did pretty well overall, but our competition was a lot stronger, which is a great thing. We competed in the AAYBA [American Amateur Youth Baseball Alliance] World Series. We came in eighth place out of 32 teams."


These young athletes might not yet realize how Jessie's sporting philosophies carry over from the field to every other aspect of life, but someday the truths

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After their exciting third season, Coach Jessie and the RiverCats are looking forward to the AAYBA World Series tournament next month. As always, Jessie will lead his boys onto the field by example. "I try to let these boys know the disciplines they're learning now are going to carry over to high school and even to their jobs someday," he explained. "This is life. You work hard at something if you want to be successful at it." **NOW**

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From left:

Beverly and Gary Bullard take pride in building beautiful homes and in giving existing homes the custom make-overs their customers will love.

Rising From the Ashes

Whether it is a custom build or remodel, trust Phoenix CHR to give you the house of your dreams.
— By Jaime Ruark

Like the mythical phoenix, Gary Bullard and his wife, Beverly, owners of Phoenix Custom Homes and Remodeling (Phoenix CHR), a Texas Residential Construction Commission (TRCC) registered and approved company, have built their thriving business during a time when others are going under. Rising from the ashes of a floundering economy was no accident. “Beverly and I had actually been building and selling some houses on our own years ago, so we sat back and devised a game plan. We actually started building for the public two years ago, right at the downfall of the economy,” Gary said. “We’re a family business. It’s just Beverly and me, so we are not a Goliath builder, but we offer good quality at a fair price. We’re a 100-percent debt-free company. We don’t even run credit with our purveyors. We

choose to stay completely debt-free, with no overhead, which is why we can build a better house for less money.”

The question Gary is always asked: “How can you do it for \$73/foot?” He explained, “Our homes fit a profile. I can’t build every home for \$73/foot. Our typical home will run between 2,000-4,000 square feet. We’re not the 10,000-square-foot builder. We don’t want to be.”

Phoenix CHR offers a full-service build, from start to finish. “We work with Texas Real Estate Professionals. When people are in the very beginning phases and just looking for property, our agents are very knowledgeable. They’ll do whatever it takes to negotiate the deal and advise people in the right way to go,” Gary detailed. “We even offer construction lending through a local

Business **NOW**

bank at a time when most banks aren't doing construction lending. We also buy distressed properties; we're more than willing to buy a home and do a 'flip.'" Phoenix CHR also has designers available to help anyone struggling with indecision.

The Bullards' remodel of super-satisfied customers Jon and Mariana O'Brien's home, from the beautifully detailed, one-of-a-kind cabinets and artfully placed lighting fixtures to the energy-efficient and cost-effective windows, is the perfect testament of Phoenix CHR quality. "Gary made the transition very smooth and painless for us. He pointed out ahead of time things we needed to do, which saved us cost and time," Jon said. "We got other estimates; they were either higher or less comprehensive." With five of their eight children and two dogs underfoot, it was

"We rely on our subcontractors, so they're hand-picked. Down to the trim guys, everyone we use does excellent work."

important to get the work done quickly.

Mariana added, "They stayed within their time frame. Their people were always on time. Everything was done so fast, and it's so beautiful now, I don't think I ever want to move!"

For anyone who has ever built or remodeled a home, perhaps the biggest testimony of Phoenix workmanship is the fact that, as Jon laughingly said, "We were friends before, and we're still friends after. He was very patient with me. We spent hours and hours at the cabinet shop, but Gary never made me feel pressured."

Beverly, who knows first-hand how stressful yet rewarding a remodel can be, added, "We rely on our subcontractors, so they're hand-picked. Down to the trim guys, everyone we use does excellent work. From start to finish, we guarantee quality."

"Building or remodeling a home can be really emotional for people. There's a lot that goes into those kinds of decisions, and it can be life-changing for people," Gary continued. "To give someone a place to live, when there was just dirt there before, that's the most rewarding thing." **NOW**

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Gears, Gadgets and Grit

— By Janice C. Johnson

Imagine walking into a crowded indoor arena at The University of Texas at Arlington (UTA). Costumed mascots stride around, inciting fans to wild cheering. The atmosphere vibrates with team yells, announcements, loud music, last-minute strategy and pre-competition nerves. You might think you are at a high school sports tournament — but there is not a basketball or volleyball in sight. Instead, teenage competitors wielding laptops and joysticks gather around several 12-foot-square playing fields. The “FIRST Tech Challenge” robotics competition is about to begin.

Such was the case for a group of Mansfield students and mentors in February. With only four months to prepare, the extra-curricular Robotics Club had designed, built and programmed a robot to perform an assigned set of tasks. A series of

games pitting robot against robot would measure their success. The students attend engineering courses at Ben Barber Career and Technology Academy, which serves all four Mansfield high schools.

The FIRST Organization (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) aims to harness our culture’s obsession with sports, and focus that fun and energy into engineering competition. Mansfield engineering teacher, James Wilson, advises Ben Barber’s two robotics teams. Perched on the corner of a table littered with tools and materials, he said, “FIRST wants engineers — scientists — to be celebrated as much as quarterbacks are.” After all, it takes as much courage for Challenge teams to perform before the public as it does for athletes.

At the February competition in Arlington, Ben Barber’s Fighting Pickles

(Who says engineers lack humor?) won the Connect Award for community service and fundraising. The Crusading Cucumbers won the Innovate Award for their unique robot design. A group, comprised of members of both teams, competed under the name Fighting Pickles in San Antonio last March, taking second place overall and the Motivate Award for team spirit.

Preparing for FIRST challenges builds real-life, problem-solving skills. FIRST unveils the game criteria in October, and teams have until February to get their robots ready. Students analyze each required task and figure out what kind of mechanism could complete it. Then they must build those mechanisms into a robot within the game’s design limitations; write code to get the robot to perform the tasks; test the robot; then trouble-shoot failures, tweaking the mechanisms and/or code to correct any problems. Gary Privett, a junior and two-year team veteran, goes into action after that first brainstorming session. “I put everyone’s ideas into Autodesk Inventor [3D mechanical design software] and fabricate the parts,” he said.

James watched his team and grit take their robot through its paces: scooping up Wiffle balls from the floor and throwing them through a target. The teammates were still talking about possible improvements. “These students do each step on their own, along with the fundraising,” he said. He glanced around and, lowering his voice, confided, “I don’t really need to be here.”

The students contradicted his modest statement by their frequent calls of “Wilson!” as they posed questions or ideas.

“Some of our kids start out as ‘gearheads’ just wanting to make things out of metal,” James said. The program, however, encourages teamwork and cross-skill training rather than specialization. “Realistically, these students’ careers are likely to change within the industry. They need to learn about several aspects of engineering, not just how to build robots.”

And they do learn, often by trial and error. On entry, each Challenge team receives a kit of essential components that would be too difficult for them to

Education **NOW**

fabricate on their own, such as motors and omni-directional wheels. But the components are not fail-safe; students can (and sometimes do) make a flawed design, such as the robot without a motor cool-down mechanism. After that motor burned itself out, the team had to replace it and then integrate a cool-down to protect the new motor.

All this problem-solving and thinking ahead promotes another valuable skill: the team members show a great deal of initiative. Freshman, Chase Grigsby, started preparing for next year's Challenge in March. Primarily an engineer, he is learning programming, as well. "This year's competition team was mostly seniors. I'm one of the only ones who will be here next year," he explained.

"These students do each step on their own, along with the fundraising"

James is happy to see his students get ideas and run with them. He indicated senior, Chris Brubaker, who was driving the robot with its PC game controller, while teammates, Ed Borrero and Noor Portillo retrieved stray Wiffle balls. Kyle Jurik caught the ones the robot sent flying through the practice target. "Chris spent weeks working on an ultrasonic system to let the robot 'see' distance," James said. "It gave him only numeric input, so he wrote code to interpret the readings and have the robot position itself the right distance from the target."

Even with the Challenge kits provided, James estimates expenses at \$3,000 per year. Senior, Dusty Johnson, an energetic promoter, shines in the fundraising department. The club has established "Ben Barber Engraving," which creates custom laser-engraved metal and Plexiglas pieces. Their clients include other Mansfield Independent School District schools. The students work with the principals to design awards or other items, build the products and handle sales. "We also love sponsors," James smiled. Interested? Learn more by visiting www.firstusa.org and www.misdrobotics.com, or e-mail James at wilsja@mansfieldisd.org. **NOW**

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Who's Cooking **NOW**

In The Kitchen With Robert Campagna

— By Faith Browning

Since he was a little boy growing up in New York, Robert Campagna has loved to cook. The culinary traits his parents, many aunts and uncles exhibited during their large family gatherings inspired him to become the cook he is today. "My fondest memories are sitting down every Sunday to a homemade Italian meal," he reminisced. "My mother or father would start the sauce early Sunday morning and

would let it simmer until we sat down for dinner later that afternoon."

Robert enjoys boating, hunting, cooking and spending time with his wife, Angela, and their two children, Caelan and Grayson. "I enjoy cooking Italian food since that is what I was raised around," he said, "but I have also grown to love barbeque and enjoy slow smoking food in my backyard smoker." **NOW**



TACO PIE

1 lb. lean ground beef
1/2 cup minced onion
1/2 cup salsa
2 Tbsp. taco seasoning
1/4 tsp. pepper
1 can ranch-style beans, drained (do not rinse)
1 cup shredded cheddar cheese or Colby-jack cheese
2 eggs
1 cup milk
1/2 cup biscuit/baking mix

1. In large skillet, combine meat and onion and cook over medium heat until meat is no longer pink; drain.
2. Stir in salsa, taco seasoning, pepper and beans. Transfer to a 9-inch pie plate; sprinkle with cheese.
3. In large bowl, combine eggs, milk and biscuit/baking mix until blended. Pour over cheese and bake at 400 F for 25-30 minutes or until a knife inserted near the center comes out clean.

SAUSAGE AND PEPPERS

1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 pkg. Italian sausage sweet or hot
3 lg. green bell peppers, sliced into 1-inch strips
1 lg. red bell peppers sliced into 1-inch strips
1 lg. yellow onion, sliced into strips
5 gloves garlic, chopped
1 28-oz. can crushed tomatoes
Salt and pepper, to taste
1 Tbsp. dried oregano
1 Tbsp. dried basil
1 Tbsp. garlic powder
1/2 tsp. sugar
1 pkg. Italian hoagie rolls
Parmesan or mozzarella cheese

1. In large frying pan, add 1/4 cup olive oil and brown Italian sausage on medium heat. Remove sausage from pan once browned on all sides.
2. Add the remaining olive oil to pan and sauté green and red bell peppers until they begin to brown; add the yellow onions. Continue to cook onions and peppers until

tender; add the chopped garlic.

3. Add the sausage back to pan; add the crushed tomatoes. Season the sauce with salt, pepper, oregano, basil, garlic powder and sugar. Let everything simmer on low heat for about 40 minutes. Serve sausage on a hoagie roll and top with pepper, onion and tomato mixture. Top with grated Parmesan and mozzarella cheese (optional). Serves 4-6

GRANDMA CAMPAGNA'S ITALIAN SCRAMBLED EGGS

8 large eggs
1/4 cup milk
1 Tbsp. dried oregano
1 Tbsp. dried basil
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. pepper
1 tsp. garlic powder
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 large yellow onion, diced
3 gloves of fresh garlic, chopped
1/2 cup Italian bread crumbs
1/2 cup Parmesan cheese, shredded
3/4 cup mozzarella cheese, shredded

1. In large bowl, mix eggs, milk, oregano, basil, salt, pepper and garlic powder until well-beaten.
 2. Heat olive oil in large frying pan on medium heat; sauté onion and garlic until translucent.
 3. Add egg mixture to pan over medium heat. Once the eggs are semi-firm add the bread crumbs and cheese. Cook until eggs are moist and fluffy and remove from heat. Drizzle with a touch of olive oil and serve with Italian bread.
- Serves 4-6

TOMATO AND MOZZARELLA CAPRESE

2 8-oz. balls fresh Buffalo Mozzarella or fresh Mozzarella
6 Roma tomatoes or 3 large tomatoes
Extra-virgin olive oil
Fresh basil leaves
Salt
Pepper

Oregano

1. Slice the mozzarella and tomatoes into 1/4 inch round slices. In a circular design around the side of a serving plate, alternate fresh mozzarella slices with sliced tomatoes, overlapping for effect.
 2. Tear fresh basil leaves and sprinkle liberally over the slices. Drizzle olive oil liberally over the cheese and tomatoes. Add salt, pepper and oregano to taste.
- Serves 4-6

RIGATONI AND BROCCOLI PESTO

1 Tbsp. salt
4 heads fresh broccoli
1 lb. Rigatoni pasta
1/2 cup walnuts or pine nuts
2 cloves garlic
1/2 cup Parmesan cheese
Extra-virgin olive oil

1. Fill large pot 3/4 full with water and add salt; add broccoli and bring to a boil. Cook the broccoli until the stalks are soft and easily pierced with a fork; remove from water. Don't dump the water; add the rigatoni pasta and cook until al dente.
2. Take half the broccoli, nuts, garlic and cheese and combine in a food processor; pulse a few times. Slowly add olive oil in a steady stream to the food processor as you blend the broccoli, nuts, garlic and cheese. Stop to scrape down the sides of the food processor. Add a pinch of salt and pepper to taste.
3. Once pasta is cooked, remove from water. In a large bowl add the pasta and pesto together and mix. Serve the pasta topped with remaining broccoli, Parmesan cheese and drizzle with olive oil. Serves 4-6

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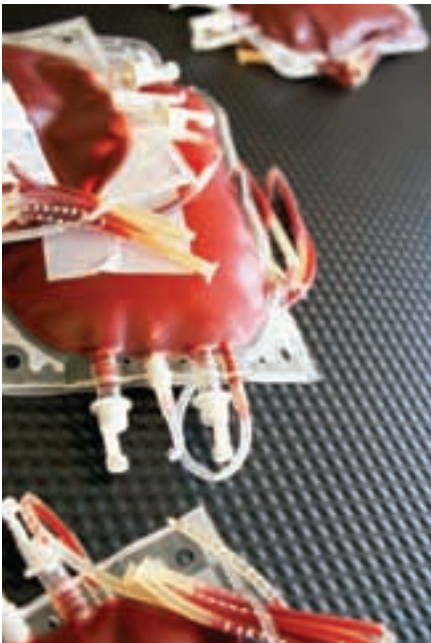
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Liquid Gold

— By Betty Tryon, R.N.

To donate blood for the need of others is truly a gift of life. To state the obvious — human beings cannot live without blood. Blood is the liquid gold



our bodies need. It carries everything we need in nutrients and oxygen, removes our bodily wastes, helps us fight infections and has countless other functions. The only way a person in need of more blood can receive it is if it is donated by another human. Blood cannot be manufactured or harvested.

Without sufficient quantities, life will not sustain itself. Countless numbers of people have benefited from the kindness and generosity of others who took the time to donate their blood.

The need for donors is great. Many who donate do so because they want to help others. Some donate because they see it as a way of giving back if they or a family member has received blood in the past. A tangible advantage for donors is you get information from the screening process that normally would come at a cost from your health care provider. You get a blood test to determine if your red blood cells are within normal range, blood pressure, pulse and temperature checked. An extra bonus is you find out your blood type. All of this medical information is provided to the donor for free.

Your donated blood goes a long way because as many as three to four people can benefit from your generous donation. Some of the separated components used are: red blood cells for trauma victims or surgery needs; platelets to aid with clotting; plasma for burn victims or those

with liver disease; and cryoprecipitate, which is used to help those with hemophilia.

In order to donate your blood, the minimum age requirement varies between 16 and 17 years of age. Parental consent may be necessary for 16-year-olds. Weight is important. If you are underweight, it may not be healthy for you to donate. Your health history will also determine whether you are eligible to donate. All information given is confidential. Some conditions, such as cardiovascular disorders, bleeding disorders, HIV positive and malignancy, make you ineligible for donating. Temporary conditions, such as some viral infections, pregnancy, recent tattoos or recent surgery, are all eligible with the appropriate passage of time. Contact your local blood bank or the Red Cross for specifics.

According to the Red Cross, only three of every 100 Americans donate blood. Donated blood cannot be stored forever. It is good for only 42 days, so the need is great and ongoing. Some people use their birthday or an anniversary date as a reminder to donate. Give an invaluable part of yourself: donate your blood. **NOW**

This article is for general information only and does not constitute medical advice. Consult with your physician if you have questions regarding this topic.



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Dr. Culp graduated from Texas Christian University with a Bachelor of Science degree in biology. He earned his Doctor of Podiatric Medicine degree from Temple University School of Podiatric Medicine in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He completed his three-year residency in foot and ankle surgery at Kaiser North Bay Consortium in Vallejo, California, where he served as chief resident his final year. A member of the American Podiatric Medical Association and the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons, Dr. Culp has presented his research at professional conferences.

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GOT QUESTIONS? GET ANSWERS.

— By Nancy Fenton



More and more I am faced with interesting questions, most of which I cannot answer off the top of my head. You can do the same thing I do; research a bit. There are several Web sites that are very helpful. Once into any of these sites, you can enter your question, plant name, etc. and sit back for more options than you probably have time to look at. The Master Gardeners' standard is <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu>. This site includes areas on disease identification, as well as a great search tool called the Plant Selector, located in the EarthKind section. This search tool takes your requirements for the color, size, water available, sun, etc. and comes up with a list of several that will do well in your ZIP code area.

For lovely pictures, brief descriptions and plant features and requirements visit www.Monrovia.com or www.davesgarden.com. A relatively unknown site is <http://Texasforestservice.com>, which helps identify native plants and trees. They have great pictures plus information from helpful arborists available by e-mail.

[Http://ecmga.com](http://ecmga.com) is a great place to look for relevant information about local plants, concerns and events. The Master Gardeners of Ellis County have a great monthly e-newsletter free for the asking on that same site. When all else fails, you can search the Internet for the plant name, type or location and ask for images — sometimes that works! There are many pages to go through so be prepared.

Do not let your questions go unanswered. If you are not in the computer mode or do not have access to one, call the Ellis County Master Gardeners at the AgriLife extension office, (972) 825-5175. We may not know all the answers, but we can do some searching or may know someone who can help. **NOW**

Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener.



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Texas Mystique

— By *Becky Walker*

Texas: strong, brave, free-spirited, independent-minded and proud of it! From longhorns, 10-gallon hats, vast ranches, yellow roses, bluebonnets and cowboys on horses, to Cowboys on the football field, skyscrapers and the lights of some of the largest cities in the nation, the spirit of Texas is found everywhere you turn. It is said that everything is bigger in Texas, and what else should you expect from the largest contiguous state in the Union?

For many Texans the pride in state is just as strong as their pride in country. Where did such state pride come from? To gain understanding, you must take a step back in time, to the days when Texas was part of Mexico. Tensions were high due to a series of legislative actions, which were seen as harmful to the growth of Texas, including: tariffs, an unnatural union making Texas and the State of Coahuila one state and a law restricting immigration to Texas. When Santa Anna repealed the Constitution of 1824 and established himself as dictator in December 1835, war was just around the corner. Texans



grow up with stories about the heroes of the Texas Revolution: Sam Houston, Davy Crockett, Stephen F. Austin, Jim Bowie — men who laid their lives on the line against impossible odds, and though many of them paid the ultimate price for freedom, their cause succeeded. For 10 years — 1836-1846 — Texas was a sovereign nation covering a huge amount of land including all of the current state of Texas and parts of New Mexico, Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado and Wyoming.

Though the Alamo is probably the most recognizable symbol of the Republic of Texas, the official birthplace of the republic is a little closer to home for North Texans. Nestled near the Brazos River approximately an hour northwest of Houston, is Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site. What better place for a proud Texan to visit than the site where independence was declared? The park features a replica of Independence

Hall where the Texas Declaration of Independence was drafted using the United States Declaration of Independence as a model.

The park is also home to Barrington



Living History Farm, which gives visitors a feel for what daily life was like for Dr. Anson Jones, the last president of the Republic of Texas, and other early settlers of the area. The Star of the Republic Museum displays republic-era artifacts, documents and details of the Texas Revolution. A walk down Ferry Street leads to a scenic overlook of the river. As the water rushes past, you can almost hear the voices of the brave pioneers, who birthed a nation — and a mystique as big as Texas!

Tickets may be purchased at individual sites, or at the Visitor Center. Those interested in visiting multiple sites may purchase a Brazos Pass for all sites. For more information, visit www.birthplaceoftexas.com. **NOW**



Happening **NOW**

All Month

Thinking about getting a pet? Check out the Mansfield Animal Control. New hours. Weekdays: 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. No longer open on Saturdays.

All Summer

"Catch the Reading Express" Summer 2010 reading program, presented by the Mansfield Public Library. Reading logs, book presentations, story and craft nights and more. Show reading logs to earn Texas Rangers game tickets. Reading logs available June 7 at 10:00 a.m. For more information, call (817) 473- 4391.

Monday-Friday

Young at Heart luncheon (for residents ages 55 plus): noon-12:30 p.m., Mansfield Activities Center. (817) 453-5420.

Every Monday

Story Time for Tots, for infants to 3-year-olds: 10:30-11:00 a.m., Mansfield Public Library.

Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday

Senior Bingo: 11:30 a.m.-noon, Mansfield Activities Center.

First and Third Monday

Planning and Zoning Development Commission meeting: 6:30 p.m., Mansfield City Hall.

Second and Fourth Mondays

City Council meeting: 7:00 p.m., Mansfield City Hall, 1200 Broad St.

First and Third Tuesdays

Senior Dance: 7:00-9:30 p.m., Mansfield Activities Center. Bring a covered dish. Cost: \$5. For more information, contact Suzanne Newman at (817) 453-5420.

Every Tuesday

Small business counseling provided by SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives): 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Mansfield Chamber offices, 114 N. Main St. By appointment only. (817) 473-0507.

Rotary Club meeting: noon, Spring Creek Bar-B-Q, 1724 Hwy. 287 N.

Crafters' Book Club meeting: 11:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Mansfield Public Library. Join other crafters (scrapbooking, knitting, quilting, beading, etc.) and listen to audio books during craft time.

First Tuesday

Mansfield Economic Development Corporation meeting: 6:00 p.m., Mansfield City Hall, 1220 E. Broad St.

First and Third Tuesday

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

Third Tuesday

Park Facilities Development Corp. meeting: 7:00



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—Happening **NOW**

p.m., Mansfield City Hall, 1200 E. Broad St.

Every Wednesday

Children's Story Time for ages 3-6 years: 10:30-11:00 a.m., Mansfield Public Library.

First Wednesday

Zoning Board of Adjustment meeting: 6:00 p.m., Mansfield City Hall.

Second Wednesday

Library Advisory Board meeting: 6:00 p.m., Mansfield Public Library Community room, 104 S. Wisteria St.

Third Wednesday

Lunch 'N Learn, sponsored by Charter Business: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Mansfield Area Chamber of Commerce, 114 N. Main St.

First Thursday

ABWA Empowering Women Express Network monthly meeting: 5:45 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center, 1 Community Circle, Midlothian. RSVP to Daphne Brewer at (972) 723-6551.

Third Thursday

Mansfield Park Facilities Development Corporation meeting: 7:00 p.m., Mansfield City Hall, 1200 E. Broad St.

Every Friday

Mansfield Kiwanis Club: 6:45 a.m., Methodist Mansfield Medical Center, 2700 E. Broad St. (817) 473-9886.

First and Third Fridays

Free blood pressure screenings by appointment only at the Huguley Memorial Medical Center. To schedule your screening, call Dr. Meenu Sharma at (817) 615-8627.

June 3

Senior Canton Trip: 7:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. For more information, contact Suzanne Newman at (817) 453-5420.

June 4, 5

Historic Mansfield Arts Festival: corner of Main and Broad Streets. Friday: 7:00-11:00 p.m. Evening concert at Steven's Garden and Grill, 223 Depot St. Saturday: 11:00 a.m.-11:00 p.m. Art show and evening concert, Smith St. between Broad and Oak Streets. Local artists and demonstrations, festival food and live music. Free admission.

June 5

Mid-Way Regional Airport Annual Pancake Breakfast Fly-in: 8:00-11:00 a.m., located off Highway 287 between Midlothian and Waxahachie. Event and parking are free. Public invited. Breakfast tickets: \$6 for ages 8 and above; \$3 for ages 3-7; free for 2 and under. Classic airplanes/fighters, The Classic



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June 11

Mansfield and Surrounding Area's Networking Group meeting: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Fat Daddy's Sports and Spirits Café, 781 W. Debbie Ln. Free group for business owners in and around Mansfield. Meets every other Friday.

June 15

Keep Mansfield Beautiful Commission meeting: 5:30 p.m., Mansfield City Hall.

As the Page Turns adult book club: 6:30 p.m., Mansfield Public Library. June's book: *Traffic, Why We Drive the Way We Do* by Tom Vanderbilt. Discussion leader: Wayne Hodges.

June 17

Robert B. Parker Memorial Book Club: 6:00 p.m., Mansfield Public Library. Come immerse yourself in trivia, discussions and more regarding Parker's most famous character, private detective Spenser. For more information, call (817) 473-4391.

June 18

Senior Father's Day Party: 9:00 a.m.-noon, Mansfield Activities Center. For more information, contact Suzanne Newman at (817) 453-5420.

June 20

Father's Day.

June 24

Senior Intergenerational Beanbag Baseball: 9:30 a.m.-noon, Mansfield Activities Center. For more information, contact Suzanne Newman at (817) 453-5420.

June 28

Senior Intergenerational Ice Cream Social and Bingo: 10:30-11:00 a.m., Mansfield Activities Center, 106 S. Wisteria St. For more information, contact Suzanne Newman at (817) 453-5420.

July 16-18

My Fair Lady, presented by the Mansfield Community Theatre and directed by Marty Fredrick and Scott Ferrell: Kennedale Performing Arts Center, 901 Wildcat Way, Kennedale. Bring the whole family and share in the magic of a 36-piece orchestra, a cast of over 60 and beautiful sets and costumes. Show times: July 16: 7:00 p.m. July 17: 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. July 18: 2:00 p.m. Tickets: \$16-18. For more information, contact Marty Fredrick at (682) 518-1565 or martyfredrick76@gmail.com or visit the theatre Web site at www.mansfieldcommunitytheatre.org.

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

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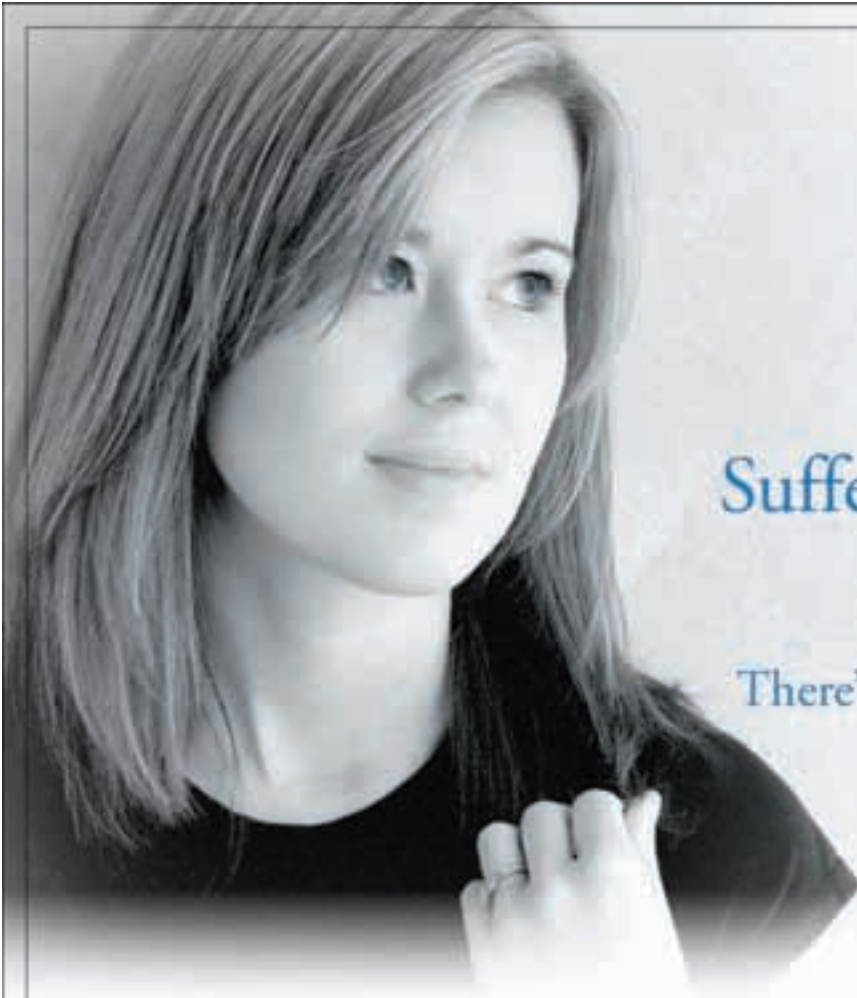
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