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June 2010

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Subscriptions are available at the rate of \$35 per year or \$3.50 per issue. Subscriptions should be sent to: NOW Magazines, P.O. Box 1071, Waxahachie, TX 75168. For advertising rates or editorial correspondence, call (972) 937-8447 or visit www.nowmagazines.com.



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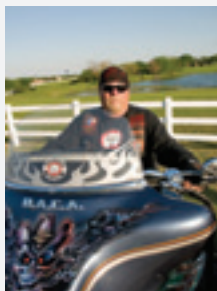
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Lenny "Skully" Hudgins "rides" for the children.

Photo by Amy Ramirez.

Editor's Note

Sweet Summertime!

Summertime has arrived! Weekends are shared with friends at Waxahachie Creek Park, swimming, sunbathing and grilling burgers over an open fire. Evenings are spent at home, working in the yard or relaxing on the porch with a cool, tall glass of lemonade.

June also marks a very special time for me personally. I will drive to Whitney after church on the 20th to celebrate my father on Father's Day. At age 78, he is still a man of great character, and I love him dearly. The visit may be nothing more than sitting side-by-side in lawn chairs, or we may share a fast-paced game of putt-putt miniature golf. We might even banter back-and-forth about nothing in particular. Whatever we decide to do, I know it will be special because I will have shared it with my dad.

Dad, I hope you have a wonderful day. I am so proud of you!

Sandra Strong
WaxahachieNOW Editor



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204 Chesterfield Circle

Wonderful 1st time buyer home is move in ready with lots of space. Huge island kitchen features tons of cabinetry and counter space. Open floor plan w/ corner fireplace. Call Melanie and Michelle at 214-534-8758.



201 S Hill Street

Very Nice family home with 4 large bedrooms and 2 living areas. Master downstairs and all secondary bedrooms upstairs with game room! Spacious kitchen with breakfast bar and open to living room. Call Leslie and John at 972-921-6880.



3026 Eagle Lane

This spacious 4 bedroom, 2.5 baths will suit any size of family. Swimming pool, oversized master bath, open kitchen and upstairs game room. Exterior shed built in 2009 stays. Call Chris Oliver at 972-921-5797.



1804 Alexander Drive

Move-in ready! Highly desirable established neighborhood on a large corner lot with towering trees. Home has been recently remodeled with fresh paint colors, lights fixtures and flooring. \$2500 buyer allowance. Call Donna David at 972-523-4664.



500 Williams Street

Beautiful home with tons of charm & character. Home is decorated like a layout of Southern Living. Completely updated inside and out! Wood floors in kitchen & formal, custom window treatments, beautiful landscaping. Call Leslie and John at 972-921-6880.



116 Overhill Drive

Too many updates to mention!! House has been extensively remodeled. The back yard is a dream. This is definitely a must see house. Call Phillip and Jamey at 972-758-5576.



1328 E Highland Road

Custom Home on one acre lot! Extremely well cared for home with beautiful landscaping! Home features open floor plan with four good sized bedrooms. Beautiful crown molding and wood flooring in living room. Call Leslie and John at 972-921-6880.



105 Redman Lane

Beautifully maintained custom home in well established neighborhood. New carpet throughout, refinished hardwood floors. Vaulted ceilings, custom built-ins and plenty of room for YOUR family. Call Jim Ensinia at 469-585-6012.



100 Dublin Circle

Blooming perennials abound on .5 acres. Game room, extra closets, walk-in attic, stainless appliances, security system, jetted tub and fresh paint inside and out. Call Melanie and Michelle at 214-534-8758.



3240 Mindy Lane

Custom built home outside city limits. Stained concrete floors, wood beams, stone fireplace. Kitchen with tons of cabinets, granite counter tops, walk-in pantry, built in desk area, island, and spacious breakfast area. Call Donna David at 972-523-4664.



102 Chautauque Drive

Upgrades Galore!! This beautiful 3 bedroom, 2.5 bath home in Spring Creek has undergone some fantastic upgrades including slate and wood floors, new vanities and fixtures in the master bath and so much more! Call Chris Oliver at 972-921-5797.



1017 Bells Chapel Road

Large home with rustic finish including beams that separate the living room and foyer. Pool, pergola, upstairs game room and exercise room. Additional 5 acres and workshop may be purchased as well. Call Melanie and Michelle at 214-534-8758.



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BREAKING THE CHAINS

— By Sandra Strong



Looking at the members of Bikers Against Child Abuse (BACA), you might think they are a rough, vigilante group of motorcycle riders, but you would be sorely mistaken. BACA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit group designed to aid children who have been abused. The national organization began in Utah in 1995 by J.P. Lilly, a licensed therapist who saw a need for a group like BACA to help innocent victims get past the trauma that comes with being abused. What began with an 8-year-old boy in Utah quickly spread across the nation. Twenty-seven motorcycles have grown into hundreds upon hundreds of caring individuals who may wear lots of black leather and sport a few tattoos, but their hearts are for the children. “It seems the system has failed the kids,” Sergeant of Arms Lenny Hudgins, also known in the group as “Skully,” said. “Members of BACA become their big brothers and big sisters. The children we serve are adopted into our biker family.”

You might ask how BACA comes in contact with the children. “We receive information from local law-enforcement agencies, Child Protective Services, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) and the District Attorney’s office,” President Rickey Wilson, also known within the BACA circle as “Badger,” stated. The only referrals the group accepts are those where a police report has been filed and an interview with the child has been conducted at one of the aforementioned agencies. “We work closely with only these agencies,” Badger added, stressing the word “only.”

The way members of the group support the child is basic and quite simple.

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They visit the children in their homes, and they will always have several organization members present when the child goes to court. The child builds a line of open communication with at least two BACA members. Those two close buddies are assigned to the child as contacts he or she can call anytime, day or night. "We are probably the first set of people the kids talk to that don't ask them questions about what happened to them," Skully said. "We give them strength so they can tell their stories completely and honestly when they do go to court. The kids gain the



confidence they need to testify against their abusers."

BACA empowers the children to break the chains of abuse. The process begins with a simple interview where BACA members, numbering anywhere from 10 to 100, get on the same level as the child, literally. Once trust is earned, the child is given a road name that fits his or her personality, much like Badger and Skully suit Rickey and Lenny. "Their road name stays with them forever," Skully said, explaining that the children's birth names are never really known, since they each come to BACA by way of a case number. "We present them with a certificate of appreciation for allowing us to be part of their family."

Two more important items are presented to each child BACA serves — a BACA vest and stuffed animal based on the

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child's request. "Their road name is embroidered on the vest, along with a BACA patch," Skully said. The stuffed animal they are given during the second interview is based on the answer they gave during the initial interview when they were asked what their favorite animal is. "But before we give it to the child, we fill the animal with BACA hugs," Skully said, not sounding embarrassed or out-of-place. The vest and the animal give the abused child something tangible they can hold on to.

Many look at the BACA patch and wonder at its validity. At first glance, it seems a bit ominous, much like the majority of the members in the group. But, each item represented, from the closed fist with skull and crossbones to the colors used, have a deep meaning — a meaning that explains in a condensed version what BACA is all about. The

"We give them strength so they can tell their stories completely and honestly when they do go to court."

following areas hold significance: White represents the innocence of children. Red is a representation of the blood of the children that has been spilled. Black stands for the dark days they withstood while going through the abuse. The fist represents BACA's opposition to child abuse, while the skull and crossbones are the symbol that best represents an end to child abuse everywhere. "The chains represent our united organization," Badger explained. "When BACA children see the patch, they know help has arrived."

Several things must happen in order to become a BACA member in good standing. State and federal background checks are completed for both support members and full-patch members. Support members are those who believe in the BACA mission statement, but do not have a motorcycle. Full-patch members, who are at least 18 years old and have access to a motorcycle that can go the speed limit, undergo a bit more scrutiny in order to be considered worthy of the patch. They must attend BACA meetings, rides, court hearings, other BACA events and ride with their

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BACA chapter for one year. Once these things have come to pass, then and only then, are they presented to the governing Board of Directors. It is at this meeting that they become a full-patch member, "but the vote must be unanimous," Badger added.

The organization is made up of ordinary, day-to-day individuals who "love their country, their bikes and their kids." They are business owners, police officers, doctors, lawyers, sales people, mechanics and computer techs, to name only a few. They share one common bond — the love and protection of children. Many come into the group with "road names," while others earn theirs once they arrive. "If you don't come with one or get one fast," Skully laughed, "we'll give you one."

Members may have a rough and tough exterior, but their hearts are as big as Texas. As stated in the BACA Creed,



Treasurer April "Ditsy" Pitts, Vice President Mike "Bear" Garibay, Sergeant of Arms Lenny "Skully" Hudgins and President Rickey "Badger" Wilson.

"My fate is set; my gait is fast; my goal is the ultimate safety of children. I won't flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the presence of adversity, negotiate at the table of the enemy, ponder at the pool of popularity or meander in the maze of mediocrity. I won't give up, shut up, let up, until I have stayed up, stored up, prayed up, paid up and showed up for all wounded children. I must go until I drop, ride until I give out and work 'til He stops me. And when He comes for His own, He will have no problem recognizing me, for He will see my BACA patch and know that I am one of His."

"It's not about you; it's not about me; it's about the children," Skully said, as Badger nodded in agreement. "It's about breaking the chains of abuse, one child at a time." **NOW**



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At Home With Paul and Liz Schwartz

Good Things in a Small Package

— By Janice C. Johnson

Paul and Liz Schwartz felt pleased, but doubtful, about sharing their home with WaxahachieNOW readers. “It’s just a plain, little house. It isn’t very interesting — and neither are we,” Liz said. Paul nodded. “You could probably fit the whole article on a postage stamp,” was his teasing comment.

Some people are just too modest. The 1958 three-bedroom home has a charm all its own, and the Schwartzes have been lending their own touches to it since they bought it in 1964. The result is like a treasury: everywhere you look, from the cozy, casual den to the ruffled and flowered guest room, you find piece after piece of family history and art.

Paul’s roots are in Palmer, Texas. His father, the late Blaine Schwartz, was a member of an old Palmer family, and his mother, Verlean, resides in Waxahachie. Liz is the daughter of the late Ernest and Maurine Allen. Her family was also well-established in Waxahachie; her father was once the Ellis County Tax Assessor-Collector. She and Paul met when Paul, fresh out of high school, was visiting friends in Waxahachie. The two married in 1960 and will celebrate their golden anniversary this year. They share their home with Toby, the cat, and Bonnie Belle, a 2-year-old Beagle mix, who do





their part to keep things lively.

When Paul and Liz bought the house, it had a living room, an eat-in kitchen, three bedrooms, one bathroom and an attached one-car garage. They added on a den next to the kitchen in the late 1960s. In 1997, they converted the garage to a formal dining room. "We had to," Liz explained. "My mother had always told me I was to have her dining room furniture, but we had no dining room!"

Besides the mahogany dining set and china cabinet, the room holds an antique side table with curved glass doors where Liz displays her aunt's cut-glass dishes. Her grandmother's rocking chair sits in front of the window beside a table holding a number of framed photographs representing several generations of family. Her mother's treadle sewing machine rounds out the furniture. Liz remembers watching her mother sew clothing on the machine for her and her sister. Years



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later, Liz's mom painted over the sewing machine cabinet and sprayed the wrought-iron framework gold. "My sister, Ellie, had the machine and was going to throw it out," she said, but Paul managed to restore the cabinet, so it looks like new. Liz remarked, "I'm proud of this room. There are lots of memories in here."

If a favorite room is determined by the amount of time spent there, then Paul's favorite space is his workshop. It is adjacent to the separate garage they built when they converted the original garage into the dining room. After enjoying two careers, first as a machinist and then in photography, Paul took up woodworking as a hobby. His specialty is making decorative clocks. Asked about the patterns he uses for his intricate designs, he said, "Oh, I don't use a pattern; I just make it up as I go along." He certainly has the tools for the job — sanders, a lathe and a variety of table saws fill the workshop and spill over into the garage itself. "I have to



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move the cars to use those other saws," Paul said.

Several of Paul's clocks, each different from the last, decorate the house and fit well with the antiques from Liz's family. One clock in the living room hangs above an ornate side table with a square door. "This was my grandmother's; it was called a 'smoking stand,' and the storage



compartment is lined with copper," Liz said. "It's probably from around the 1910s." Opposite, built-in shelves hold unique china pieces, some hand-painted by Liz's aunt.

A tall display case in the hallway holds Liz's collection: angels of every size and description. The largest and most elaborate one sits atop the case like a guardian angel. Liz's niece crafted the angel from an old sheet that had belonged to Liz's mother.

The den features a fireplace and built-in shelving that Paul built. Liz indicated a hand-pieced quilt hung on a quilt rack in



one corner. "My mother pieced this top for me and another for my sister," she said, "but never got it quilted. I finally took my sister's and had it finished for her birthday; then, she did the same for me. I'm glad we got that done while our mother was still living." In another corner, a toy "steamer trunk" stands full of Liz's old Golden Books, some dated as early as 1947.

One of Paul's clocks and some paintings by family members hang in the master bedroom, while Liz uses the guest room to house more family treasures. One such treasure is a rag doll that her

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grandmother made for her in the 1940s. It sits on Liz's own toddler-size wooden chair. That same grandmother's sewing chest stands under the window. "It has been kept just the way she left it," Liz said, right down to a partially-worked embroidery project still in the hoop and with the needle still stuck in.

The third bedroom has become an office, with a computer desk, comfortable chairs and one of Paul's clocks. Hanging on one wall is a painting of the house Liz's family lived in when she was born. Her aunt painted the picture for her.



"She painted another copy of it for my sister. It was our favorite house," Liz said. "We're very close, although Ellie lives in Cleburne now." A framed document on another wall, her father's Commission as

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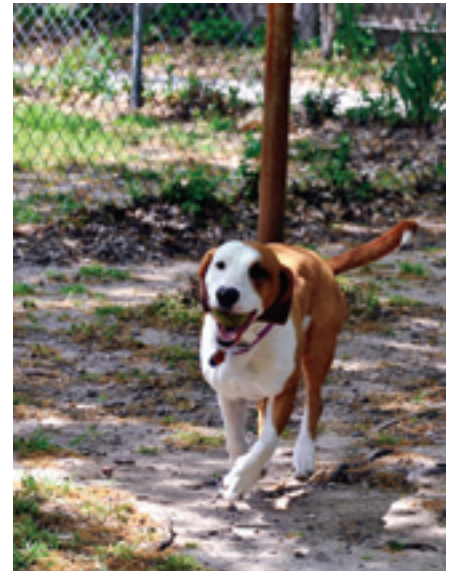
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The Schwartzes enjoy their

comfortable home and their community. Paul, besides woodworking, enjoys yard work and is an excellent cook. Liz retired in 2007 from a long career with a Dallas



insurance company but has stayed as busy as ever. "We are active in the Fellowship Sunday School Department at First Baptist Church," she said. She also keeps in touch with her former colleagues. She has completed one special project: an album about her mother, Maurine. It is filled with pictures dating from Maurine's babyhood through Liz and Ellie's childhoods. The album even includes some recipes of Maurine's, in her own handwriting. Liz made a second album for Ellie, titling both "Mother's Precious Memories."

So there you are, surrounded by historical documents, antiques and art — yet the house never feels like a museum. Each piece, with its own story or fond memory, is matter-of-factly placed where it can be touched, used and enjoyed. One comment of Liz's sums up her attitude about her treasures: "It means a lot to me because it's from family." **WOW**



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Peyton Yates, who just turned 2, was shopping at Lowe's with her parents.

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The Waxahachie Lions Club Mini Grand Prix kept fans entertained and pit crews busy. From top left: Die hard mini grand prix fans line the downtown streets of Waxahachie to see if their favorite car and driver will take the checkered flag; The Red Oak Drug pit crew is busy changing drivers and tires; the Fastenal pit crew is hard at work; the Landrum CPA pit crew members work on the carburetor during the lunch break.



Becky Wilson (left) and Jeff Frazier (right) of Vintage Bank join James and Megan Mills with their son, Max, who attended the Hugh O'Brien Youth (HOBY) Leadership Conference in May at TCU in Fort Worth. Vintage Bank sponsored Max's attendance.



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Flip-Flops *With Flair*

— By Alana Williamson



After spending nine years as a stay-at-home mom to twin boys and two daughters, Jennifer Hernandez discovered her talent for design. In 2008, a shopping trip with her mother inspired her to begin embellishing flip-flops. “We saw a pair of western flip-flops for \$250, and my mom said we could do that,” Jennifer said. “So, we made a pair for everyone in our family.”

Through trial and error, Jennifer found simple, quality flip-flop shoes and began adding her own creative touches. After supplying footwear for her family, she soon moved on to designing for friends. One of those friends requested flip-flops for an entire cheerleading squad in Ennis. It is quite common for Jennifer to see her designs coming and going all around town, and that, no doubt, brings a smile of pride to her face.

Jennifer’s creations include a wide range of flip-flops from western wear to colorful and flashy designs. Popular fabric patterns include cowhide, zebra print and leather. “I look for

unique prints when shopping for fabric,” Jennifer said. “I create what my family and friends like; shoes that fit their special requests or their unique personalities.”

Jennifer stores the items needed — flip-flops, fabrics and a wide range of accessories — in her garage at her home in Waxahachie. She begins the embellishment process with a solid black or brown shoe. Depending on the design, the shoe can have a flat, slight wedge or tall sole. She then cuts out fabric and stitches it to the straps. After that, Jennifer adds what she calls the bling — any number of accessories including shiny peace symbols, western conchos and jewels.

Since that first pair of flip-flops, Jennifer noted that spring and summer keep her busy in her garage more so than fall and winter, especially since flip-flops, when compared to sandals, are one of the most popular shoes for the hot Texas weather. “It seems they become an essential part of everyone’s wardrobe,” she added.

One flip-flop can take between one to two hours to embellish, depending on the design. The time spent on her flip-flop designs are due to the amount of attention to detail she gives each pair,

and no two pairs are exactly alike. They may share some of the same fabric pieces and accessories, but that is all. Jennifer stated that she never glues items, but hand stitches each accessory for longer wearability. She uses only Swarovski crystals, one of the most recognized brands of crystals in the world and a popular couture accessory.

"Summer" is also the name of one of Jennifer's favorite designs. It is a brightly colored flip-flop with blue, pink,

.....
**"I like to shop
 for things that are
 not the norm."**

orange and green-colored turquoise nuggets on black straps and has a large center pendant. One example of a jewel-themed design is "Fire and Ice," which sports a black sandal with red fabric straps, Swarovski crystals and a white flower pendant in the center. In contrast, "Outlaw" is a western-themed shoe with zebra print, a lone star concho and turquoise crystals. In addition, "Revolutionary" has tan leather straps with white rock clusters and bronze buttons. "I like to shop for things that are not the norm," Jennifer said about how she chooses fabrics.

When asked how she comes up with the names for her more than 40 unique designs, Jennifer confessed that she does not. "Believe it or not, my husband has come up with all of the names. He just dreams them up according to what they look like to him," she explained.

Jennifer credits her mom, Debbie Stanford, for inspiring her artistic talents. As a child growing up in Palmer, she remembered her mother making homemade Cabbage Patch-style dolls. "She's always been a very crafty and talented lady," Jennifer said. "I guess I get my talent and imagination from her."

In October of 2009, Jennifer began showing her creations in a small boutique in downtown Palmer. The people who have stopped in have also inspired her

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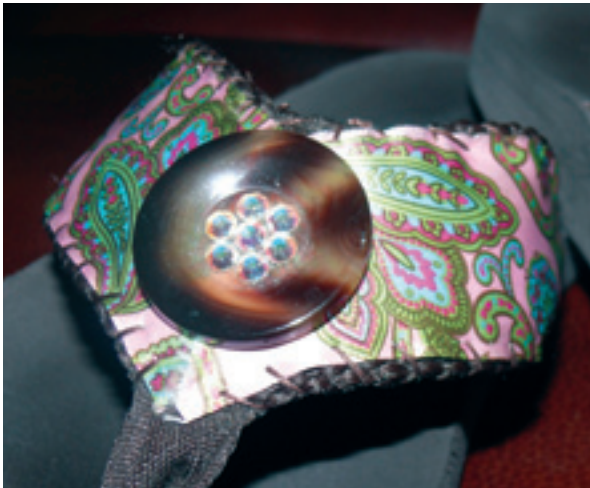
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to continue creating flip-flops for every occasion. In the future, Jennifer said she plans to design flip-flops to coordinate with specific jewelry pieces. She also hosts flip-flop parties where she gives guests the opportunity to create their own unique designs.

Flip-flops have become a more and more common choice of footwear in a variety of settings. As their popularity



grows, so do the variations of styles available. It is not uncommon to see flip-flops worn in the office, worship settings and formal gatherings.

The more "dressed up" an individual is, the more "dressed up" the flip-flops can be. Craft store accessories can be used to turn a plain, solid color flip-flop into dazzling footwear. Jennifer could never have imagined how popular her flip-flop embellishing hobby would become, but she loves creating for family and friends. Jennifer hopes that people will recognize that her flip-flops are "not only eye catching, but also quality, hand-made pieces of art." **NOW**

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NOT ALL ABOUT ME

— By *Teresa Maddison*

Haley Atkins is very much aware of herself as part of a team. “It’s not all about me; it’s about me and my teammates — our team.” That team is the Waxahachie High School Varsity Lady Indians soccer team, and Haley just completed her freshman year. Freshmen are usually relegated to junior varsity (JV) teams. Why soccer? “I like all the running and conditioning required,” she said. “Varsity conditioning is definitely more intense [than junior varsity].” Haley likes to supplement her training away from school by running and working out. Favorite workouts are with her younger sister, who will be a freshman next year and hopes to follow in Haley’s footsteps by securing her own spot on the varsity team.

Haley first stepped onto the soccer field when she was 3 years old. Although she played several sports, Haley said, “At age 8, I realized I only wanted to play soccer, so I stopped

competing in other sports to concentrate on my skills. I switched to select soccer at age 10.” According to select guidelines, speed, “strength on the ball” (ability to shield and control) and winning the ball are critical skills. “I play outside left midfield, and I’m expected to hold the ball under pressure and take a lot of grounders and headers,” Haley said. Additionally, her position requires exceptional field vision, and as Haley put it, “the ability to create options. That is my favorite part about outside left midfield: I can set up a goal with a header or kick and help my teammates!”

Haley spends a lot of time watching professional soccer and studying the women’s game specifically

through documentaries. “I really like Mia Hamm,” she said. No wonder, for Mia Hamm was, at 15, the youngest woman ever to make the U.S. National Soccer Team, going on to score more international goals in her career than any other player in the



Sports **NOW**

history of soccer. "I like her love of the game," Haley confessed, "and she played outside left midfield, too."

When Haley went out for high school soccer this past fall, she said, "I wasn't trying out for varsity; I was trying out for JV. After a particularly tough workout, Coach asked me to stay back; I thought, *Am I in trouble?*" Haley was really nervous while her coach was talking. Realizing he wanted her on his team, "I thought about being a freshman — this was a great accomplishment. So I said, 'OK.'" She was right. The accomplishment was no small feat, especially this past year when a second girls' JV team was added. As

"This season was a real learning experience for me that turned out to be a blast."

for her reaction to the invitation, "I don't remember what I did at that point," she said, "it was just amazing."

Haley is very happy with her coach. "He's not as strict as my other coaches, but he can be if we start goofing off during or outside practice. Then we have to do running drills!" Haley explained. Coach Jason Venable is the head soccer coach at Waxahachie High School and apparently very well liked by this girls varsity team in particular. "[His] keeping tabs on me to make sure I am holding up my end of the deal makes me perform at my best." His coaching style requires accountability. "He wants us to show what we have," she stated, "instead of him yelling to do this and do that."

Coach Venable has the highest praise for this talented freshman. "We don't have many girls at the skill level Haley has. You can tell real quick what a player's ability is in tryouts; Haley's touch on the ball and aptitude is better than we've had in awhile!" Coach Venable was quick to note her best attributes. "She goes hard and is serious on the field. She has a great personality and makes good grades. She's one of the special ones." About his coaching style, he said,

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"I really push character and work ethic. I want to make sure my athletes know what discipline truly is." Truly, that is, because this coach has ingrained in his girls that self-discipline is remembering what you want.

Haley has no problem remembering what she wants. She and her team secured their place in the playoffs with a 2nd place in district and went on to become the 2009-2010 Region II



Semifinalists. What gets Haley most excited about all of this? "My teammates — we are very close." Many of the varsity girls came up through select together and enjoy the dynamics of being on a close-knit team.

In retrospect, Haley said, "This season was a real learning experience for me that turned out to be a blast. I want to thank the team for a great season, especially the seniors and Coach Venable." Thinking ahead, Haley feels the constant strategic thinking will help her succeed in college. "I want to major in kinesiology," she determinedly answered when asked what the future holds. Physical therapy after an injury sparked her interest in sports medicine. As for the discipline needed to accomplish her goal, "I want to make sure I can focus on college work and my grades." Haley is quick to urge young aspiring athletes, "Stay true to what you believe, and stay strong for the team" — advice she most certainly takes herself. **NOW**

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From left:

Donna Maze, Charlie Maze, Daphne Alvord, Deborah Whittington, Jean Davis (yellow) Sal Falcon, Alicia Falcon, James Scott, De Clemons and Les Clemons; an overall view of all the items offered during Trade Days of Waxahachie.

We Are Still Here

Trade Days of Waxahachie offers the quality of Canton without the traffic.
— By Sandra Strong

Jean Davis, Charlie and Donna Maze, Les and De Clemons, Jim and Marilyn Scott, Sal and Alicia Falcon, Daphne Alvord and Deborah Whittington are some very busy individuals. Years in the trade business, when added together, come to well over 50. The partnership that birthed Trade Days of Waxahachie has proven to be a good one, thanks in large part to the group's overall years of experience with the public, but also because they have learned how to mesh with one another. "We celebrated our first anniversary in March," Jean proudly stated. "It's been a slow growth, but we are all pleased with the success we experienced in the first year. We want people to know we're still here!"

Each month, the group of hometown entrepreneurs opens the doors of the Ellis County Expo Center to the public, making

sure to have something for everyone. Offerings include, but are definitely not limited to, food items, handmade crosses, pet items, all-natural candles, clothing items and so much more. There really is something for everyone, regardless of age or gender. "If a child has a dollar, we want vendors who offer items for a dollar for the kids," Jean explained. "We want families to be able to come out and enjoy themselves." When Jean says family, she means the entire family. "Dogs are welcome as long as they are well-behaved and on a leash," she added. The atmosphere is one of family-friendliness — laid-back, relaxing and fun.

Renting booth space is easy. All one has to do is call one of the numbers listed above, visit the Web site, send an e-mail or stop by during operating hours. The Expo Center can

Business **NOW**

accommodate 100 vendors inside and well over 100 vendors outside. "As the weather has grown warmer," Jean said, "we have been able to add more vendors with food items."

As part of the growing Waxahachie community, Jean gets excited as she talks about past and upcoming events. "In March, we supported the Honoring Hearts Across Ellis County event by inviting local nonprofit organizations to come out free of charge to promote their causes," Jean said. "This month, we are highlighting our local artists. In



"We celebrated our first anniversary in March. It's been a slow growth, but we are all pleased with the success we experienced in the first year. We want people to know we're still here!"

November, we will be supporting our troops with a Veteran's Day event. Our plans are to build a wall display to honor and in memory of those who fought for our country." In August, the focus will be on the local police and fire departments, while December brings the second annual Christian Biker's Run. "The motorcycle run is done to support the National U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots program," Jean added. "This is our way to give back to the community. We partner with others so everyone benefits."

Every month is a celebration. All those affiliated with Trade Days of Waxahachie encourage you to shop the many fine vendors; to just come out and be part of the celebration. Brandy Davis, Jean's daughter, summed up Trade Days of Waxahachie best as she said, "We really do offer the quality and variety of Canton without all the traffic." **NOW**

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Teaching Tomorrow's Leaders

— By Sandra Strong

Summer vacation has afforded Molly McInnis the chance to sit back and reflect over her first year teaching elementary-age students. “It was a tough year,” she admitted, “but it was a good year.” Being an educator was not Molly’s first career choice. In fact, college first began for her at Texas Tech University where she studied music. “The school was huge. I was in a class of 400, and I didn’t know anyone,” she remembered. “I love the informality of life with its intimate settings.”

After completing her first year at Tech, Molly moved further away from her family when she decided to transfer to Southwestern Assemblies of God University (SAGU). “I spent four years at SAGU,” she said, explaining that it took her a total of five years to earn

her bachelor’s degree in elementary education. Feeling settled following college graduation; Molly decided to make Waxahachie her permanent home. “I had made so many friends,” she said. “I’d become acclimated to Texas. I couldn’t see going back to New Mexico.” Another very good reason to remain in Ellis County had a lot to do with Vince De Jesus, her fiancé from San Antonio whom she also met at SAGU.

Once the decision to stay was made, Molly set her mind to finding a job within the area. Her first year of teaching was spent in a third-grade classroom at Wedgeworth Elementary School. The first semester taught Molly some valuable lessons. “Early on,” Molly said, “I realized I was going to have to set a

standard for them to follow, and I also had to show them who the teacher was.” She accomplished the correct teacher/student relationship with patience and understanding, thus making for a very successful year.

The first year for any teacher is one filled with trials and errors. The goal is to try something once. If it is successful, then you implement it into the lesson plans. If not, you try something different. Molly’s philosophy of “think before you speak” was successful, so she put it into play early on. It is a philosophy that she stressed all the time with her first-year students, and one she will take back into the classroom this coming school year.

The hardest aspect of Molly’s elementary teaching position was getting accustomed to the 23 personalities and behavioral issues noted with this particular age group, as well as the individual personalities of her fellow third-



grade team members and the support staff. “Everyone has been so supportive,” Molly said. “I learned so much more than I ever thought I would.”

Molly wasted no time answering what she experienced on the opposite side of the teaching spectrum. “What I found most rewarding about my first year was seeing the growth in the students,” she said, smiling as memories began to replay

Education **NOW**

in her mind. "To see them mature while they were learning was the best part. Going back to where they started and then seeing where they were when the year was over; that's what I find the most memorable."

To be totally honest, Molly had to admit that student teaching while she was in college somewhat "jaded" her to the real world of teaching. "I thought I came into this with no preconceived ideas, but I was wrong," she confessed. "I came into the classroom and it felt like I'd been hit with a two-by-four. Student teaching and having a class you call your own are two totally different worlds." But Molly also admitted that her part-time jobs as a nanny and the education she herself earned at SAGU more than prepared her for the differences. "I tried my best to make behavioral issues secondary," she added, "so learning could always be first."

Looking back, Molly feels she ended up being more than a teacher to that first class of third-graders. "I would like to think I made a difference in their lives," she said. "I know I took every opportunity to talk to them about anything and everything. I allowed them to see I'm human; I'm real; and I'm reachable." Molly also pushed the importance of health, hygiene and proper diet to the students. "I felt this was so important when child obesity and lack of exercise is a major concern in our society," she said, explaining the stretching games they played while studying their spelling words.

To watch Molly instruct her class from the sidelines, visitors surely noticed her strict manner, but they also saw the way she communicated with her group using positive reinforcement in all the subjects she taught, from math and reading to science and social studies. "I pushed the students so they would be successful," she admitted. "I set my level of expectations high, and they excelled at a much higher level of understanding."

As Molly looks back over her first year, she understands just what she was able to accomplish. Not only did she become quite comfortable as the teacher, she realizes she had a group of really smart children — the same children who will one day be tomorrow's leaders. **NOW**

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In The Kitchen With Jeff Tittle

— By Faith Browning

Jeff Tittle is Waxahachie born and reared. He has been married to his high school sweetheart, Lisa, for 18 years, and they have two children. Their son, Drew, is planning to attend Le Cordon Bleu Culinary Arts and their daughter, Marnilee, enjoys preparing meals with her dad. "I do all the cooking at home," he explained, "which is a good thing, because my wife doesn't like to cook."

"As far back as I can remember, I always enjoyed cooking," he recalled. "I remember both of my grandfathers cooking." While Jeff was working at Tyler Refrigeration, he attended college for five years earning a degree in Food Service Technology/Culinary Arts. "If I could have one wish," he said, "it would be that my dad would have been there to see me graduate." **NOW**



EGG DROP SOUP

1 Tbsp. cornstarch
3 Tbsp. water
1 tsp. oriental sesame oil
3 cups chicken broth
1 egg, beaten
Salt, to taste
Scallions, for garish

1. Mix cornstarch, water and oriental sesame oil. Whisk into gently boiling chicken broth; cook until clear.
2. Rapidly stir egg into the chicken broth until strands are cooked; add salt. Sprinkle with scallions. Serves 4.

CORN FRITTERS

1 cup flour
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. baking powder
2 eggs
1/4 cup milk
1 Tbsp. melted Crisco
1 1/2 cups cooked whole kernel corn
Crisco, for deep-frying

1. Sift flour, salt and baking powder into a bowl.
2. Beat eggs with milk; add melted Crisco and corn.
3. Lightly combine wet and dry ingredients together. Drop from a teaspoon into Crisco heated to 365 F. Fry until brown and cooked in center (about 4 to 5 minutes). Drain on absorbent paper. Makes 8 medium fritters.

CHICKEN SPAGHETTI

1 12-oz. pkg. thin spaghetti
3 Tbsp. butter
1/2 cup celery, chopped
1/2 cup onion, chopped
1 Tbsp. pimento, chopped
3 cups cooked chicken breast, diced
1 28-oz. can cream of chicken soup
1 cup milk
1 1/2 cups Velveeta, shredded
Salt and pepper, to taste
Cheddar cheese, grated

1. Preheat oven to 350 F. In a large saucepan, cook spaghetti; drain.
2. In another pan, melt butter and sauté celery and onion. Stir in pimento. Add chicken, soup, milk, Velveeta, salt and pepper.
3. Add spaghetti to chicken mixture. Pour into a greased 9 x 13-inch baking dish. Sprinkle cheddar on top. Bake for 20 minutes. Serves 8 to 10 people.

CREAM CHEESE CAKE

1/2 cup butter, melted
3 eggs, beaten
1 box yellow cake mix (about 19 oz.)
1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
1 cup brown sugar, packed
1 cup powdered sugar, unsifted
1 tsp. vanilla
Pinch of salt

1. Combine melted butter, 1 egg and cake mix. Spread mixture in buttered 9 x 13-inch pan.
2. Combine softened cream cheese, 2 eggs, brown sugar and powdered sugar, vanilla and salt; beat until smooth. Spread cream cheese mixture over cake mixture.
3. Bake in preheated 325 F oven for about 45 minutes. Cut into small squares and sprinkle with powdered sugar. Makes 48 1-inch squares.

ORIENTAL TOP ROUND STEAK WITH RICE

1 8-oz. can crushed pineapple
2 Tbsp. cooking oil
2 Tbsp. soy sauce
2 Tbsp. sherry extract
1/4 tsp. ground ginger
1 beef top round steak, cut 1 1/4 to 1 1/2-inches thick (approx. 2 lbs.)
1 tsp. cooking oil
1/4 cup green onion, chopped
3 cups cold cooked rice
1 Tbsp. soy sauce

1. In a small saucepan, combine pineapple, including juice, with oil, 2 Tbsp. soy sauce, sherry and ginger. Cook slowly 10 minutes,

- stirring occasionally; let cool.
2. Place steak in plastic bag; add marinade. Close bag and marinate 6 to 8 hours (or overnight).
3. Drain marinade from meat and reserve. Grill steak to rare or medium, brushing occasionally with marinade; do not overcook.
4. Heat cooking oil in large skillet; add green onion and cook 2 minutes. Add rice, 1/2 cup reserved marinade and soy sauce. Cook slowly 10 minutes, stirring constantly, until heated through.
5. Slice steak thinly across grain. Serve fried rice with steak. Serves 8.

TAMALE SOUP

1 lb. ground beef
1 onion, chopped
1 green bell pepper, chopped
2 Tbsp. oil
1 15-oz. can corn, drained
2 beef bouillon cubes
2 cups water
1 Tbsp. chili powder
1 tsp. cumin
1 tsp. salt
1 15-oz. can diced tomatoes
1 15-oz. can tomato sauce
1 15-oz. can pinto beans, drained
10 fresh tamales, frozen or canned
Grated cheese

1. Brown beef with onion and bell pepper in oil in a large skillet; drain off grease.
2. Add corn and bouillon that has been dissolved in water. Add other ingredients, except tamales and cheese.
3. Cook on low heat until flavors are blended.
4. Before serving, cut the frozen tamales into 1-inch pieces and add to soup to heat through. If tamales are not frozen, they will fall apart. Top with cheese and serve with tortilla chips. Makes 6 to 8 bowls.

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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



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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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Impact-resistant roofing

— By Adam Rope

How about an affordable investment in your home that pays you back in return? There's a fairly new product — impact-resistant roofing — that can do just that. It's available in shingles that look like ordinary asphalt shingles (either three-tab or architectural shingles), as well as other types of materials such as metal and alternative products. Regardless of the material you choose, each type of impact-resistant product tends to stand up much better to hail than do ordinary shingles; and many impact-resistant products are rated for higher wind resistance as well. Here's how this new type of roofing can save you money:

- Many insurers offer an annual discount on homeowners premiums for qualifying roofs. Very important: You'll want to check with your insurer or agent before you buy a roof to be sure the shingles you have in mind qualify for the discount with your insurance carrier.



- If your roof is not damaged from a wind or hail storm, you will avoid having a claim and paying a deductible. With most insurance companies writing higher deductibles these days, your savings could be substantial. And it's our experience that qualifying impact-resistant roofs typically fare very well in storms that cause considerable damage to ordinary roofs.

Perhaps even more important is the protection you're adding for your home and contents if the roof you invest in does a better job of keeping the elements out. The roof you choose is your home's first line of defense in a storm. Everything inside — including items like pictures and heirlooms that would be difficult or impossible to replace — is at risk if your roof fails.

For more information on qualifying impact-resistant roofing, please contact a roofing expert or your insurance carrier. **NOW**

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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.

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**



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Every Thursday

Celebrate Recovery meeting: 7:00 p.m., 408 Water Street, Waxahachie. The purpose of this group is to help people live free from addiction, compulsive or dysfunctional behavior. Contact Brandon Jones at (214) 949-5725 or Brandon@thefrontiercommunity.org.

Every Friday

After Hours Improv Theater presents on a rotating basis: Mystery Murder Dinner at 7:00 p.m. and Standup Comedy Show featuring touring, professional standup comedians at 8:00 p.m. The theater is located at 100 N. College St., Suite 11, in the Rogers Hotel. Call (972) 937-9839 or visit www.AfterHoursImprov.com.

Every Saturday

After Hours Improv Theater begins at 8:00 p.m. Tickets: adults \$10 plus tax. Children 10 and under: \$5 plus tax. Call (972) 937-9839 to make reservations or visit www.AfterHoursImprov.com for more detailed information. The theater is located at 100 N. College St., Suite 11, in the Rogers Hotel.

Third Monday

Ellis County Aggie Moms: 7:00 p.m., Waxahachie First United Methodist Church, 505 W. Marvin, Waxahachie. www.elliscountyyaggiemoms.org.

Third Wednesday

The Ellis County Christian Women's Connection, affiliated with Stonecroft Ministries, monthly luncheon from 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. at the Waxahachie Country Club, located at 1920 W. Hwy. 287 at I-35 East (Exit 401B). The cost is \$13, inclusive. Nursery vouchers are available for those with young children. Reservations are preferred, but walk-ins are welcome. Contact Kay at (972) 937-2807 or windchime423@yahoo.com or Mary at (972) 937-9984.

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Fourth Monday

Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis County meeting: 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the Waxahachie Bible Church, 621 Grand Avenue. Guest speaker: Kari Ott with her program on "Repurchasing Vintage Fabrics."

June 4

Summer Moonlight Movies: 9:00-11:00 p.m., downtown Waxahachie on Franklin St. between Jackson and College Streets. Featured movie: *Places in the Heart*.

June 5

Annual Pancake Breakfast Fly-in: 8:00-11:00 a.m., Mid-Way Regional Airport, located off Highway 287 between Waxahachie and Midlothian. The public is invited. The event and parking are free. Breakfast tickets: Ages 8 and above, \$6; ages 3-7, \$3; and all those 2 and under eat free. Call Tammy at (972) 923-0080.

June 5 and 6

Gingerbread Trail Historic Home Tour and Arts & Crafts Fair, Getzendaner Park. For more information, call (972) 937-0681.

June 11-13

DFW Summer Balloon Classic will be held at Mid-Way Regional Airport. The event offers something for all ages and is free to the public. Visit www.summerballoonclassic.com or call Debby Standefer at (469) 644-4576.

June 18

Summer Moonlight Movies: 9:00-11:00 p.m., downtown Waxahachie on Franklin St. between Jackson and College Streets. Featured movie: *Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs*.

July 16 and 17

Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis County annual quilt show: 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center. Theme: "Stitches Around the World." This will be a judged show; more than 100 quilts are expected to be displayed and available for judging. Contact Carol Sawyer at (972) 921-8576.

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