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Publisher, Connie Poirier

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Managing Editor, Becky Walker  
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Editorial Coordinator, Sandra Strong  
Editorial Assistant, Beverly Shay  
Writers, Jeremy Agor . Tim Bordelon  
Katrina D. McNair . Betty Tryon  
Zachary R. Urquhart  
Editors/Proofreaders, Pat Anthony  
Teresa Maddison . Angel Morris  
Pamela Parisi

## GRAPHICS AND DESIGN

Creative Director, Chris McCalla  
Artists, Julie Carpenter . Martha Macias  
Allee Brand . Cherie Chapman  
Marshall Hinsley . Arlene Honza  
Brande Morgan

## PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography Director, Jill Odle  
Photographers, Opaque Visuals

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## On The Cover



Rex Wenger enjoys the flowers planted by the love of his life, Opal Rose.

*Photo by Opaque Visuals.*

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## Editor's Note

*Hello, Friends!*

This summer, two schools in Mansfield ISD take delivery of big boxes full of high-tech gadgets that will help next year's students join in the learning process with a little more confidence. Thanks to a gift of \$5,000 from Methodist Mansfield Medical Center, the principals at Martha Reid Elementary School and Brooks Wester Middle School were able to purchase ActivExpression Clickers for use in classroom technology upgrades.

These white-board clickers were the reward for teachers who took the 12-week Principals' Fitness Challenge. Martha Reid elementary teachers lost weight, while students learned to read food labels in order to make better choices. At Brooks Wester, teachers began to rethink their soda intake and increased their exercise. Kudos to Methodist Mansfield and the Mansfield ISD for taking the first steps toward improving the health and wellness of the district and community at large.

Have a healthy June, Mansfield!

*Melissa*

Melissa Rawlins  
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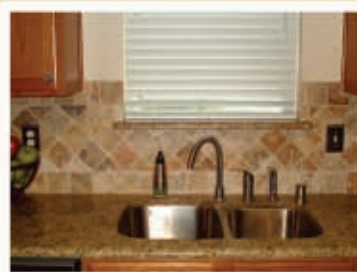
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# Busy as a Bee

— By Melissa Rawlins

*Rex Wenger likes to hang the American flag over the Mansfield Farmers Market. “To me, that’s the most important banner we can put up,” Rex said. One of five on the board who oversees the farmers market, the 79-year-old gentleman wakes at 5:00 a.m. every Saturday during the season to help set up all the awnings, tents, trash cans, hoses, electrical cords and odds and ends required for vendors to display their wares. Rex also carries along a case of pure honey with live enzymes. “Seventy percent of the customers buy raw honey for their allergies,” said Rex, who uses honey as a sweetener because he is a diabetic.*

He raised bees in high school, as part of Future Farmers of America (FFA) education, but would not dare raise bees now. He has not lived on enough acreage to keep the bees happy since he left his father’s farm and joined the service in 1949. “I stayed for three-and-a-half years, and got out because I wanted to go to college. Thanks to the Korean GI Bill,” Rex said, “I was the only one in my family fortunate enough to finish college. Now my daughter has her degree.” Rex

worked 41 years as an aircraft designer, retiring 14 years ago.

Hard work has not hurt this man. “I’m a share cropper’s kid. I started doing a man’s work when I was 12, driving mules while my dad drove horses. We farmed 90 acres up in Oklahoma, raising corn, wheat, oats, milo (sorghum) and cotton,” Rex recalled. “We had livestock and a garden. Mainly you raised your crops for feeding the stock. We raised cotton in some bottom lands, and that was for sale.







**“You haven’t lived until you’ve had fried green tomatoes.”**



“That gave us some cash, but not much.” The most money Rex ever saw his dad have at one time, after the last bill was paid and seed was bought for next year’s planting, was \$300.

“Everybody else I knew was poor, but we didn’t know we were poor,” Rex said. In addition to a roof over their heads and clothes on their backs, the family had plenty of food to eat: green beans, potatoes, peas, carrots, turnips and parsnips. “Mother made bread, and we



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had livestock plus wild game, squirrels, rabbits and quail. We raised our own sorghum, made our own molasses. I had honey bees, and we'd get fish out of the creek. We had a good variety. We had plenty." They ate big because they worked hard. His father preferred using only



horse and human power on his farm, and Rex is therefore skilled with the use of the saw and axe.

"The only thing that came on our property was a thrashing machine, because that was a community-type event with every one helping everyone during harvest season," Rex remembered. "My dad was an organic farmer before they coined the word. We didn't use pesticides because they didn't exist at that time. We used arsenic of lead strictly for potato bugs. Everything else was the manure out of the barn and mulching your crops. My mother had a garden and was consistent about keeping the soil in good health. Organic is getting your soil like it was originally, the way God made it."

Accomplishing this in Texas is no small task, although Rex believes it is more economical. "Anytime you're doing business outside, the weather controls what you're going to do whether you like it or not," Rex said. "You till the garden, prepare the soil, get it planted — and that's always a guess to keep from planting too early and then getting it frosted. The weeding and watering and picking and cleaning and getting it to market is a big-sized task if you have a large plot."

Knowing Rex had the knowledge to



help local farmers get their produce to market, his friend, Russell Zimmer, called Rex 10 years ago to help organize the farmers market in Mansfield. Joining forces with John Cox, Vicki Asher and James Hudson, they found full-time produce farmers willing to offer their

harvest to Mansfield shoppers. Now, Nancy Markos and LaMarilys Doering help supervise the market. Busy as bees, their community effort still pays off.

This is the closest Rex has come to a farm environment since he moved off the farm at 17. The soil where he lives now has never been used except for a small garden plot used to grow corn and squash, but has lain dormant the last four years since the

passing of the love of his life, Opal Rose. The couple moved to Mansfield in 1977, and their great neighbors and strong church friends have supported his efforts to adjust to being single. Hanging on his dining room wall is a beautiful set of Harvest Plates Opal painted. They are a symbol not just of his happy, hard-working youth, but of work that



requires dedication and planning. As a member of the Mansfield Lions Club, Rex has contributed time and energy to their projects that help handicapped children and vision-impaired people. "I'm old-fashioned," Rex said. "I don't just haphazardly go and join something,



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because it doesn't make sense to join a service organization and then not participate."

In more ways than one, Mansfield is reaping the harvest of Rex's desire to do something useful. "I enjoy the people who participate in the farmers market, too, and because of my background I feel like I'm doing something worthwhile even though I'm not growing anything," he said. But Rex is able to judge the quality of the produce. "Most people who do that kind of business are really



conscientious about what they present."

It works, as evidenced by the other farmers markets in Dallas, Grand Prairie, Arlington and Burleson.

As people become more aware of health issues, consumers are experimenting with organic produce. Rex feels the value of organics is rising. "If you've studied anything about what it takes to raise those homegrown tomatoes, you can value them despite the fact they do not look as nice as those that have been dyed and sprayed with a little wax coating," Rex said. "And if you've ever gone out in the garden with a salt shaker and picked a tomato off the vine, you'll never forget that taste — and you haven't lived until you've had fried green tomatoes."

At the end of each Saturday, Rex loads up his trusty white Toyota pickup and hauls the farmers market's infrastructure back to his garage. This type of work keeps him strong. Once home, he can relax with magazines like *Birds & Blooms* and *A Backwoods Home Anthology*, and get busy planning his fall garden. **NOW**





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# Guitar Hero

— By Zachary R. Urquhart

Wood has innumerable uses: houses are built, campfires are burned and baseball bats are swung. One of the most beautiful implementations of wood is luthiery, the art of making guitars and other stringed instruments. Chris Jenkins can attest to the creative ingenuity needed to sculpt wood into a music-making masterpiece. As a young man, Chris sliced his hand on a table saw. He regained full use of his hand, though the injury finished Chris' guitar-playing days. As a



self-proclaimed "very bad guitar player," Chris would play no more. Decades later, he built a guitar for his son on a whim. Now he spends several hours a day creating individualized, handcrafted works of art. With guitar-making a full-time hobby and part-time career, Chris has become a recognized luthier, a true artist among his peers.

Helping animals is one of Chris' passions, and he has worked for three decades as a veterinarian, but on most nights, he spends his time crafting handmade instruments. He and his





**With guitar-making a full-time hobby and part-time career, Chris has become a recognized luthier; a true artist among his peers.**



son, Jeremy, churn out about a dozen instruments each year: guitars, gitjos (six-string guitar banjos), banjos and other specialties. Their company, Lame Horse Instruments, is in the business of creating art.

Chris and Jeremy's guitar-making craft began in 1994. Jeremy was playing bass and needed a new instrument, so Chris suggested they build one themselves.

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What started as a father-son bonding moment turned into a lifelong passion. Chris and Jeremy made a simple, solid-body bass. Soon, the rest of Jeremy's band wanted Jenkins-made guitars as well, so Chris got to work. As his building picked up, Chris knew he needed to understand the trade. "I thought those early guitars were great," Chris admitted, "but seeing pictures now, they don't look as good as I thought." Chris' luthiery needed serious honing.

In 1995, Chris ventured to the Mecca of luthiery to study under Charles Fox. Charles headed a luthier school in Healdsburg, California, where a biannual luthiers' festival took place. With the help of Charles, and other luthiers, Chris learned the importance of wood density, bracing location, back and side hardness and the necessity of a great neck.

Most people do not understand the value of a handmade guitar. "The main difference between a handmade guitar and a factory one is that factories won't take the time to work with the materials," Chris explained. Chris estimates he spends 200 hours building each instrument from scratch. The wood is first shaved down to a thickness of roughly nine millimeters. The top and back are cut to shape with careful measurements and precise saws. For the sides, the slivers are curved delicately and shaped using one of several molds, depending on the model being built. The sides are laminated to ensure stiffness, so the vibrations creating sound are focused on the top and back. The neck, one of Jeremy's specialties, must be carved to exact size, weight and shape specifications. "[Jeremy] is better at neck carving and fretting. He enjoys that more





than I do,” Chris admitted. “The neck is the key. If it’s wrong at all, [the player] will set it down.”

Each part of a guitar requires a specific wood type. For the top, conifer wood offers the highest strength-to-weight ratio, which is needed to counter the intense pressure caused by the strings’ pulling on the body. Chris’ creativity shows when he picks out wood for the sides and back. He looks for good tone, but also for beauty. Some instruments are built to an individual’s specifications, but usually, he has the freedom to choose anything he wants. Chris likes an African Rosewood called *bubinga*, as well as *cocobolo*, Madagascar rosewood, mahogany and many others. Many people overvalue Brazilian rosewood, but Chris does not favor its sound, so he prefers not to work with it. “All of the Brazilian rosewood trees are already cut, so you are just using what has already been harvested.” Using an extinct Brazilian wood is an environmental concern Chris faces, but not the only one. Another of Chris’ favorites is *koa*, which grows exclusively on Hawaii’s Big Island. Due to its rare nature, *koa* cannot be cut down, so the only available lumber is from trees that die naturally. Fortunately, there are plenty of species that produce quality sounds while looking magnificent.

In the same way Chris started building instruments on a whim, he accidentally brought about a fundamental change in guitar crafting. Typically, the insides of an instrument were unfinished. Bracings, notches and sometimes electronics were all that showed through the sound holes; the inner beauty was not an artistic consideration. Ten years ago, making a particular guitar, Chris ran out of the

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wood used to add strength to the inside of the instrument. He had to piece together three sections of scrap material. "If I have to put this stuff together, I might as well make it look pretty," he said. That nonchalant idea led to what is now commonplace among luthiers. The result was a beautifully finished guitar, inside and out. Todd Taggart found out about Chris' development, and he featured a photograph of one of Chris' instruments in the Luthier Mercantile International catalog. Chris' inner finishing evolved as people expected beauty in all aspects of his instruments. "After the feature, I couldn't really stop," he explained. "People would feel cheated."

Six years ago, Chris' luthiery changed drastically. Jeremy, for whom that first solid-body bass was created, called Chris and asked to join him in the craft. For the past several years, Chris and Jeremy have "worked best together, 200 miles apart." Chris sends pieces to Jeremy in Austin, and he and Jeremy talk frequently. The two come up with design ideas, discuss construction methods and are currently collaborating on a new model, the LH-14. They continue to constantly tinker with stylistic innovation.

Early in his luthierie career, Chris received an invitation to the Healdsburg Guitar Festival. At the time, he did not realize what an honor it was, but he has since gone back and will show again in this year's event. At the festivals, he met some of the world's best luthiers, and he improved his own art. From major developments, such as the finished interior, to minor touches like creatively placing sound holes, Chris has developed his craft. He has something special in the works for this year's festival. Regardless of what he brings to Healdsburg, it will exemplify what Chris has learned through years of working with various woods and joyous discovery, "It's amazing what Mother Nature can create," he said. **NOW**



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Tessa Pierce is a Certified Public Accountant with over 14 years of experience in accounting and finance. She has worked for small and large publicly-held companies, as an auditor at Deloitte & Touche and as a VP of a multi-billion dollar private investment fund doing both capital management and financial reporting. Tessa has a BBA in accounting from the University of Oklahoma and an MBA in finance from Dallas Baptist University.





AT HOME WITH RONNY AND RAELYNA FORD

# Roots Are Firmly Planted

— By Katrina D. McNair

*The term “home is where the heart is” is seen by some as a bit cliché. But for those who have been away from the place they call home, surrounded by the comfort of family or friends, home truly is where the heart is and they’re not complete until they return. Such was the case for Ronny and Raelyna Ford, married now for 11 years. The couple met while both were working at the local Walmart. “Our first date was for my 17th birthday,” Raelyna said. “He asked me what I was doing, and I said, ‘I don’t know, probably nothing.’” Since it appeared she wasn’t doing anything, Ronny decided “to take me out,” she smiled, as Ronny laughed.*







Knowing almost immediately that their future was set with one another, the Fords had an extremely busy schedule leading up to Ronny's college graduation. "I graduated one weekend, got married the next and then the following weekend, we were literally moving to Lubbock," Ronny said. He had been accepted to medical school at Texas Tech University.

The couple made a deal to only be there for four years, enough time for Ronny to attend medical school. However, the four-year deal turned into a nine-year living experience, but there was a reason they didn't settle permanently in Lubbock. "We moved back here in June 2009," Raelyna said. "This is home to us."

The five-bedroom Ford home is cheerful and family-oriented. The downstairs area lends the perfect

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backdrop for entertaining. The rounded entryway looks different from a typical foyer, complete with a leather chair and large reading lamp that when switched on, illuminates a red paisley pattern. The study, just to the right, is used as a center for Raelyna's scrapbooking hobby. "I love taking pictures. It keeps me busy," Raelyna confessed. "There's at least one book for every year we've been married."

Just a short walk from the study is the family's formal dining room, with a large table and matching china cabinet, the rich dark wood offset by three crystal-clear candle stands. A large mirror rests on one wall and on the other, a framed photo features several crosses, a testament to the family's Christian faith. Three framed pictures of the Ford's oldest child, two-year-old Mason, are displayed on the adjoining wall.

Mason's room and that of the newest addition to the Ford

family, Madison, are nearby. A princess theme abounds in Madison's room, in shades of cocoa brown and pale blush pink. Above her crib, script letters read: All because two people fell in love. "You'll find those all around the house," Ronny said, referring to the decal message. "We haven't really had time to paint, and it's an easy way to decorate."

Mason is very interested in animals and ferocious things. His room is filled with stuffed wild animal toys and dinosaurs. One fixture in his room, a high-backed rocking chair, may offer a glimpse into his professional future. "When you graduate from medical school," Raelyna explained, "you're given a doctor's chair, and this is actually the chair that was given to Ronny when he graduated."



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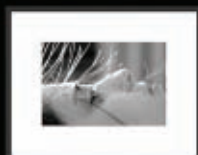
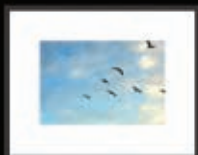
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The living area is awash in calming tones of blue and green, accented by cool silvers and a clear glass look from lamps and wall fixtures. A small wine bar is situated between the living room and kitchen, complete with glasses, ice bucket and cork remover.

The kitchen is painted red, accented subtly by red glass candle holders, decorative platters and other pieces that rest atop a high cabinet. Cheerful place settings, pairing a sunny yellow with the red decor, brighten up the family's table. An expansive marble island also provides an additional eating area. With lots of "bling" in the living room, the couple wanted to "tone it down" in the kitchen. "Raelyna's always wanted a red kitchen," Ronny added.

In the couple's master bedroom, soothing shades of green, cream and cocoa on the bedspread provided inspiration for the remaining decor. In the corner, a mini baby station is set up, complete with a bassinet and changing area. Nearby, a large chair with a foot rest is the scene for baby feedings and watching a little TV. The backyard view is easily seen through six bay windows. "That little swing set out there is just swallowed up by the yard," Raelyna laughed. "We're planning on adding a pool at some point, so it'll be different."

Ronny's dreams for the backyard involve a favorite Texas tradition. "I have this image of playing football with my son out there one day," he said, mentioning that was one of the home's selling points.

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The playroom upstairs is full of bright, primary colors, and houses a large collection of stuffed toys, a rocking horse, an Elmo play table and other interactive play items. However, a comfortable brown leather couch, with teal throw pillows, is where Ronny and Raelyna are able to sit back and relax, too. The room also serves as an area where Raelyna's PTA group meets and can watch their kids play. As an alternative to an office nook in one corner, the Fords had the homebuilder add a small sink and space underneath the counter for a small refrigerator – a great place for storing juice boxes and snacks instead of running downstairs to retrieve them for thirsty toddlers.

Off the play area is the family's favorite room, according to Ronny. Ascending a few steps takes you to the family's media room. Not wanting to go with the traditional individual leather chairs, the family instead has an overstuffed corduroy couch, large enough



for all members (and a few guests) to take in the latest flick. Novelty movie-themed pieces hang on the walls and inset lighting makes it the perfect movie room. "We just like to come up here and cuddle up as a family," Ronny said. "We've had guests who've been here, and they just want to stay in here and sleep on the couch instead of sleeping in the guest room. It's that comfortable."

Though the family has not been in the house for very long, the most important thing to them is that they're all together and have had a chance to make a home – and not just have a house – for them. "It's a feeling of finally being settled," Raelyna said as she gently rocked Madison in her arms. "This is our home, and we have a feeling of accomplishment with what we've done. We've finally settled down and have our roots planted, and you know that's a great feeling." **NOW**

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# MANSFIELD'S *History* *is in His Hands*

— By Jeremy Agor



*Vern Raven knows Mansfield history, and he is in the unique position of being able to add to his knowledge every day because of the vast quantities of information at his fingertips. Vern is the museum director at the Mansfield Historical Museum and Heritage Center and is entrusted with the care, display and cataloging of thousands of artifacts, photographs and documents. "I love this history stuff, and it's a neat old museum. I've read, touched and looked at everything in this place. Everything has a story, so I just started picking it up," Vern said.*

Vern and his wife, Sheila, came to the Metroplex in 1963 and raised their two sons in Dallas and Plano while he worked at Texas Instruments. Sheila, after going back to school, worked at Electronic Data Systems. Vern took early retirement, and the couple moved to Colorado, where he found another job to keep himself busy. Seven years later, they moved to Mansfield to be closer to family. They built a new home, and Vern started looking for a job in their new community.

Jobs were scarce in 2008, and he finally responded to a newspaper ad looking for volunteers at the museum.





He worked through the summer and fall before its curator resigned to pursue other opportunities. Around Christmas, he decided to be proactive and approached the board of directors about running the museum as an employee, not a volunteer. After making his interest known, he applied, was hired and has since made the most of his new position.

"I read something every day and take advantage of my free time. I've done genealogy research and helped people with projects when they ask. There are oodles of information here. I came into the job curious and learned from members of the Mansfield Historical Society, including Bill Beard, who was the president. He was born and grew up here and knows everyone," Vern explained.

"I'm not an expert on Mansfield history," he continued. "I go to the old-timers to try to get as much documented as I can. It would be nice if we had more artifacts here, and we're working on that. People routinely come in with items to donate. There are lots of photos out there, but they're usually stored under someone's bed and forgotten."

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important — a story to accompany two artifacts. The great-great-grandson of Julian Feild, one of Mansfield's founders, donated some items. During the course of conversation, he noticed two of Feild's Masonic swords, which the man had played with in the woods as a child.

The museum owns the *Foster Diaries*, written by Louisa Foster from the 1840s to the 1860s that lend a unique glimpse into the city's history. Louisa married



into the Feild family and wrote 16 diaries, one of which included a cookbook. One member of the Historical Society transcribed the cookbook (as written, including directions such as "add flour" with no indication of how much) and sent recipes home with other members to be tested and eventually put into a cookbook for sale in the museum's gift shop.

Among the museum's exhibits, of which there are many, are displays about





the railroad coming to town, men and women who have served their country, Indian uprisings and many items about daily life in the city. Many photos show how Mansfield used to look, and more feature buildings that no longer exist. Doing its part to provide an educational opportunity for the city, the museum hosts groups of local schoolchildren regularly. When that happens, Vern and his volunteers split the large group into three smaller groups and include a visit to Fire Station No.1 and the city administration building to give students an even broader insight into where they live.

In addition to learning about the city's history, Vern has embarked on a few projects to improve the museum. He convinced the museum board to purchase computer software called Past-Perfect, which is specifically designed for museums, and he is digitizing the museum's holdings, including objects, archives, the library and photos. "We have 1,600-1,700 photos loaded, so I've seen them all and read about all of them. After we finished that, we went through, photographed and entered data on all our objects with documentation, then moved on to the archives," he explained.

Vern is also working on improving the museum's Web site, using newer technology and modernizing its look and updating its information. There are plans to include an online gift shop, membership area, as well as other upgrades.

"Being able to bring new technology and new ideas to the museum makes running it easier," he explained. "Technology has helped us be more responsive — if someone wants to know about a particular person, for example,

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they can search for that name on the computer. If a photo has that name attached to it, it'll come right up. It really gives you a feeling of doing a good job."

Vern's other focus is keeping the museum open. Since there is no charge to visit, and with more competition for the city's hotel tax dollars, incoming funds have diminished. He has needed to rework his budget to a bare minimum. He writes grant proposals, but grants generally do not fund operational expenses. He has also approached corporations looking for sponsorships



and held fundraisers, but money hasn't reached the level he needs yet. "I wish a corporate sponsor would step up and give \$30-40,000 for next year, but so far that hasn't happened. The economy's bad, so I just don't know what will happen. We need a Save the Museum campaign," Vern sighed.

In the meantime, he continues to make improvements and is the museum's cheerleader. With the help of students at Mansfield's Ben Barber Career Tech Academy, he's producing DVDs to accompany exhibits informing visitors about the exhibit. He's also working with other downtown merchants to bring in business and invigorate downtown. "All the downtown merchants are working together to create events that will attract people. I welcome school tours too, because after they look around, they drag their parents back in later," Vern said.

"I enjoy history, and the museum gives me an opportunity to meet people. I don't know everyone in town, but I know the people who come through. Sometimes it's like being a Maytag repairman and you have to get used to the solitude, but there's always something to do." **NOW**

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# Life Lessons, Hard Earned

— By Jeremy Agor

*At first glance, Aaron Samano is just your average guy. When he sees you and starts a conversation; however, it becomes obvious he is driven by his enthusiasm and a positivity that gets to you in a good way. His hands move constantly while he speaks, giving life to his personal triumphs and attitude toward life contained in a series of stories about the people he credits with helping him rise above a dismal home environment.*

One, José Martinez, filled a void created by Aaron's father and taught him the value of hard work, dedication and respect by being a mentor and friend for 22 years. "Being with José was



a Jedi experience before *Star Wars* even came out. He had a minimum education, but he would draw out the maximum from a person. When there was a time to be harsh, he did it in a prescriptive manner. He never raised a hand to me, and I learned from him,” Aaron said. “José was very fractured and flawed, but all his goodness came out anyway. He used to take me to Mass at 6:30 a.m. We got up in the dark and finished work in



the dark. He was poor as a church mouse and would still give everything he had to someone in need.”

Aaron's father came from money and leased three gas stations in the tiny town of Hidalgo, Texas. He was not, according to Aaron, a man to look up to, and he eventually left the family. One day when Aaron was 4 years old, José came into one of the stations to get his car repaired while Aaron's father was babysitting. José offered to take Aaron for the afternoon back to the ranch where he worked. Aaron discovered his love of horses that day when José let him pick a horse and ride it around a track. Soon, Aaron was learning about life while helping with chores. Most important, he learned about horses and became a horseman, which is different than a cowboy, because a horseman sets up the animal for cowboys to ride. Aaron absorbed the wisdom of José's lifetime of work, as well as that of José's friends, all of whom were 50 years old or older. He learned how to rope “anything with a head” and also how to carry himself. “When you walk into a room, [you need to] do it without being showy, rather, like you own the place, with confidence and humility. This combines easily with great enthusiasm,” he explained.



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Through working with horses, Aaron learned the importance of being mindful of his surroundings and his situation, as well as respect for the power of the animals and the danger they could present if he forgot where he was. However, he also learned how subtle things, like the way he positioned his body or certain angles he used to guide horses with ropes, were often more effective than brute force.

"Even when I was a little boy, José never carried me or picked me up. The horse sense I got from him applied to the rest of my life. What I learned taught me to remember to come back and fix things which I messed up. Anything he taught me morphed into something more modern, like 'wax on, wax off' in *The Karate Kid*," he explained. "There was always a purpose in what we did, and it came from real contact and interaction with others. I value the importance of helping others and being a positive role model because of him."

In addition to working with horses, Aaron also worked at a cattle auction from the time he was 15 years old until he turned 20. "A perfect training ground for new dads. Most guys would rather change a diaper than step in that mess," he laughed. His mother enrolled him in as many activities as she could during his childhood. He learned to swim, later becoming a lifeguard at age 23, and took gymnastics lessons. He was the type of child who started slowly until he figured out how to do something, then went at it full-bore. He was a good enough gymnast to get a job teaching the sport at the Melba School of Dance and Gymnastics

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at age 21. He had no formal training in coaching, but Candace McCoy, another mentor, knew how to mold talented people into coaches, and he stayed on for seven years. Along with horses, he had found the hobbies that he would turn into his vocation.

After 18 years teaching swimming and gymnastics at the Melba School and another club in South Texas, Aaron decided to move on. He has lived in North Texas for about 11 years. When he left South Texas, he left the horse business behind, focusing instead on gymnastics and taking a job as a junior high gymnastics coach at Hurst-Euless-Bedford Independent School District. He eventually left that job and now works at Spirals Gymnastics in Mansfield, teaching swimming, gymnastics and horseback riding. Summer is the slowest time for most gyms, freeing Aaron's time to put his horsemanship skills to use for about 340 horse owners. Now, he can work year-round on the things he likes most.

Aaron's experiences have driven him to become a mentor for the children he teaches at the gym. He is full of positive energy and works hard to build his students' confidence, making learning



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enjoyable for them. "I have some rules I always apply. I'm considerate of the child I'm dealing with and the moment we're in. I reinforce the development of security and don't reinforce negatives. I use humor to deflect insecurities. And I follow through," Aaron said. "I can get any child to do anything based on sincerity and choices – something or nothing. Kids want to choose, and they'll usually make the right choice if they're allowed. I especially love teaching preschoolers because they learn to 'be' and 'do,' and I can be someone's mentor with great humility and simplicity." This has also been true with the best job he's ever had – rearing his own children, Zachary, 22, and 16-year-old twins, Luke and Matthew.

More than anything else, Aaron exudes positivity. He refuses to dwell on the past at the expense of the present. He feels like he is unlimited in what he can accomplish because there are no assumptions or other roadblocks holding him back. He is also unfailingly thankful he found people he could trust who helped him become who he is. "I had the good fortune," Aaron reflected, "to find people who provided me with the tools to provide for myself, my family and my future." **NOW**

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Swankyville's Flamingo Alley offers outdoor inspiration. Tenna Scott, holding Angel, and her daughter, Keila Elkins, choose "funky" items for the boutique.

## A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

*Step out to Swankyville for a fun shopping experience with that hometown feeling.*

— By Melissa Rawlins

The only thing not for sale at Tenna Scott's Swankyville Boutique is Angel, the little white Maltese in charge of security. Otherwise, each specialty gift bought during an excursion to Swankyville leaves in a zebra, pink or black paper sack brimming with pretty tissue paper. The Swankyville experience is so vibrant, ladies come during their lunch hour just for the fun.

For your relaxation, Tenna plays different kinds of music — sometimes modern pop, reggae or doo-wop ditties from the '50s and '60s. Elvis was one of her inspirations, in fact. "I wanted my boutique to be a swanky place. Imagine Elvis pulling up in a pink Cadillac," Tenna said. She opened this boutique so people would not have to leave Mansfield to find the kind of jewelry, ladies' clothing, purses, candles, shoes and customized decor she offers.

One of her best selling items is the Texas General Square

line of candles, in scents like China Rose and Lemonade and OooLaLa! Repeat customers pop in almost every week for special-occasion jewelry kept current by Tenna's buyer, her daughter, Keila Elkins. "We're best friends, definitely," Tenna said, explaining that her fascination with flamingos began more than ten years ago with Keila's trip to Mexico. "I used to collect just wild animals — zebras and giraffes — but Keila brought me back a pair of papier mâché flamingos, which fed into the fact that pink was my favorite color."

Now, Swankyville's hot pink flamingos light up the northeastern end of historic Mansfield, where Tenna opened her boutique a year ago after retiring from 36 years in a downtown Dallas office. "I just did it cold turkey," Tenna said, "and learned a lot in a year!" Her husband, Lloyd, is the



silent CEO, who was part of the purchase and renovation of the little house-turned-boutique. He always asks how her day went and talks with Tenna about landscaping improvements or future projects.

Tenna was born with an eye for decorating and a flair for down-home hospitality. To start with, her property opens to both Smith and Main streets with parking on both sides. On Saturdays, she makes frozen drinks and shares with her customers. People bring their friends together for parties at Swankyville, and sometimes come by just to take pictures with their children in the landscaping. This spring, Tenna worked in the boutique's colorful yet tidy yard, putting in new flowers and renovating Flamingo Alley, the patio where she hosts shoppers during downtown Mansfield's semiannual Wine Crawl.

When Tenna first opened Swankyville, she offered a lot of furniture and home decor. By taking the inside out and bringing the outside in, Tenna created a fabulous atmosphere, which invites women to look around. A self-professed "junk junkie," Tenna reads magazines like *Romantic Country* and *Flea Market Style* to get ideas for how to present a table or a rose garden. "I used to think, *Who would*

**"I wanted my boutique to be a swanky place. Imagine Elvis pulling up in a pink Cadillac."**

*buy that old rusted stuff?* Now, I get the biggest rush from finding a piece of junk and making it into something beautiful," Tenna said. "That is the ultimate."

And that is what has made Swankyville such a fascinating boutique: the junk mixed in with the clothes, the jewelry literally dripping from an old wrought iron piece of furniture painted pink and turquoise, and the shoes stacked atop the antiqued hutches! "I wanted my customers to say, 'Let's go to Tenna's and see if she's got what we want.' A lot of times people will tell me what they want, and I'll try to go find it. To me, that's fun." From her free-spirited Swankyville Boutique, Tenna offers everyone that hometown feeling. **NOW**



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*Ashley Watson enjoys lunch at the park with daughter, Shelby and son, Marcus.*



*During Mansfield Relay for Life, Renee Chappell, Event Chair, hugs her mom, Linda Statum, Survivor Chair and 10-yr breast cancer survivor.*



*Jr. ROTC members at Mansfield High practice drills daily to build discipline and skill for these fine young men.*

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# Stop Obesity in Children

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

Childhood obesity became a hot news item courtesy of First Lady Michelle Obama. Even though there is much political discussion about the government's role, an open dialogue about this subject is necessary. An alarming statistic of childhood obesity tripling in the last 30 years begs the question why.

Genetics and hormonal imbalances play a part, of course, but the truth is that today's youth are less active and have more access to high caloric foods than ever before. Fast-food restaurants in easy proximity filled with fattening, cheap food are easily accessible. You can even supersize a modest portion for mere pennies. Countless hours are spent watching TV, playing video games or social networking on the computer. When you look at how easy it is to gain weight in America, the question is not why are children becoming more obese, but why aren't more?

Unfortunately, although reasons for this trend abound, explanations do nothing to mitigate the damage of obesity in children. Children find themselves at risk for diseases that only used to be commonly found in adults. Diabetes, cardiovascular disease, bone and joint problems are just a few of the possible pathological and orthopedic complications. In addition, self-esteem issues come into play with overweight children. Societal pressures regarding a specific body image of thinness can weigh heavily in an adolescent's mind. Bullying or harassing of children because they are overweight is common and tragic.

Now that childhood obesity has reached the national consciousness, many programs are in place to help reduce the number. However, a child does not need to go to a program to lose weight. The "fix" is within easy reach with thoughtful and considerate deliberation. Decreasing sedentary habits is crucial. Encourage children to limit their time in front of the television or computer and join a sport or club. Replace chips and candy with



fruits and trail mix. Limit soft drink consumption and drink juice and water. Water mixed with a small amount of fruit juice is better than flavored water purchased at the store. Make a concerted effort to serve and eat less carbohydrates and fatty meats and replace them with leafy green vegetables, lean cuts of meats and whole grain products. Drink low fat milk and watch those meal portions. Be a great role model for your child with your food choices and level of activity. Do not put your child on a diet without the advice and guidance of your physician. The risks of obesity are great, but the good news is with work and determination, the remedy is within reach. **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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# Do you have a road map for your financial future?

— By *Tim Bordelon*

Many of our dreams are dependent upon the choices we make throughout our lives. That's why planning carefully and making smart choices will help ensure you realize your financial dreams and goals.

Are you saving for a child's college education or a new house? Dreaming about starting a new business or hoping to retire by age 55? Whatever your financial goals and dreams may be, you need a road map — an action plan — to help reach your destination.

If you have a road map outlining how you'll achieve your financial goals, how long has it been since you reviewed it? As your family circumstances and finances change, the plans you have in place may need to be adjusted — to make sure you're still headed in the right direction.

If you don't have a plan of action in place, you may be asking yourself, "Where do I start?" Consider enlisting the help of your insurance agent or a qualified financial services specialist. Today, several companies offer personalized services designed to help you come up with practical solutions for achieving your financial goals.

The important thing is to get started today. The sooner you clarify and prioritize your goals and create a road map for how you'll get there, the greater success you'll have at achieving what's most important to you. **NOW**

*Tim Bordelon is a State Farm agent based in Mansfield.*



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### June 3

Christian Music Concert and Benefit for Jamie McLester: 6:30-11:00 p.m. NewLyfe Paperboy (hip-hop) and Supernova Remnant (rock) close out the show, which starts with spoken word and praise. Visit [www.ctgiveshope.com](http://www.ctgiveshope.com) or contact Jamie McLester at [jamesmichael9@gmail.com](mailto:jamesmichael9@gmail.com).

### June 4

Annual Pancake Breakfast Fly-in: 8:00-11:00 a.m., Mid-Way Regional Airport, 131 Airport Dr., Midlothian (off Hwy. 287 between Midlothian and Waxahachie). Classic airplanes/fighters, flying contests, remote control model flyers, The Classic Swing Band, helicopter rides, Midlothian Classic Wheels, Gold Wing Road Riders and vendors. Event and parking are free. Breakfast tickets: Ages 8 and above, \$6; ages 3 to 7, \$3; and children 2 and under are free. Call Tammy Bowen at (972) 923-0080.

### June 5

Mansfield Wind Symphony Formal Concert: 7:00-8:30 p.m., St. John Lutheran Church on Debbie Lane. For more information about this free concert, call Dana Rivard at (817) 456-3262.

### June 10

The 2011 Mansfield Parks and Recreation "PARD"-ners Award Nomination Deadline: The Mansfield Parks and Recreation presents The "PARD"-ners Award to citizens whose voluntary contributions have improved the quality of leisure opportunities through recreation, parks and beautification programs and projects. If you would like to nominate someone for this award, please download the one-page form from <http://www.mansfieldtx.gov/apps/b2/media/PARDNERSNominationForm.pdf>, and provide a one-page written narrative on why you feel this person is deserving of this award. The winner of the award will be recognized at a City Council meeting on Monday, June 27. For details, call (817) 804-5797.

### June 14

Flag Day: 7:30-9:00 p.m., American Legion Post 624, 2950 FM 917, Mansfield. On this day

every year, the American Legion hosts a flag retirement ceremony. They retire unserviceable colors, which are tattered, collected from schools and post offices, in honor of POWs, MIAs, those who have lost their lives in foreign wars, veterans and those who are serving now. Visit [www.alpost624.org](http://www.alpost624.org) or call (817) 477-2207.

### June 19

Happy Father's Day!

### June 25

Mansfield Area Chamber of Commerce Member/Community Picnic: 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Katherine Rose Memorial Park, 303 N. Walnut Creek, Mansfield. Call (817) 473-0507 or e-mail: [frontdesk@mansfieldchamber.org](mailto:frontdesk@mansfieldchamber.org).

### June 28

Board meeting for Mansfield Independent School District: 7:00-9:00 p.m., 605 E. Broad Street, Mansfield. Call Julie Moye at (817) 299-6382.

*Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your event details to [melissa.nowmag@sbcglobal.net](mailto:melissa.nowmag@sbcglobal.net).*

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## In The Kitchen With Carrie Jernigan

— By *Melissa Rawlins*

As a young girl in Tyler, Texas, Carrie Jernigan learned she had flair in the kitchen. Her mother praised her cooking, and many years later she had the privilege of meeting her favorite cook, Julia Child. Now Carrie caters and prepares home-cooked meals for people who like to spend very little time in the kitchen. She has lived in Korea and travelled Asia during 30 years of world-exploration with her military husband. "In every country, they had some kind of noodle soup and most of it was good. It was also good not to know what was in it sometimes," Carrie said. Her Asian Noodle Soup recipe — similar to the *Pho* (pronounced Fuh) available at Vietnamese restaurants — combines tastes of the Philippines, Korea, Japan and China. **NOW**

### Egg Rolls

#### Filling

**1 1/2 lbs. ground pork, beef, chicken or shrimp (or combination)**  
**1 lb. green American cabbage, shredded**  
**1 bunch green onion, diced**  
**1 lb. fresh bean sprouts, washed and dried**  
**1/2 cup carrots, shredded**  
**1 Tbsp. garlic, chopped**  
**Salt, pepper and soy sauce to taste**

#### Egg Wash

**1 egg**  
**1 tsp. water**

**1 20-count pkg. square 6"x6" egg roll wrappers**  
**1 16-oz. bottle peanut oil for frying**

### Hot mustard Dipping sauce

1. Cook meat in skillet. If using shrimp, chop before cooking.
2. Add cabbage, onion, carrot, garlic and bean sprouts. Cook until crisp-tender. Add salt, pepper and soy sauce. Let cool completely.
3. Beat the egg and water together to make the egg wash.
4. Assemble by spooning 1/4 cup of filling in a rectangular shape into center of each wrapper. Fold in ends toward the center. Beginning at bottom, roll up the wrapper like a jelly roll, using a little egg wash to seal.
5. In peanut oil, fry the egg rolls in batches until golden brown and drain on toweling.
6. Serve with hot mustard and/or dipping sauces.

### Pot Stickers

**1/2 lb. ground pork or beef**  
**1 tsp. garlic, chopped**  
**1/2 bunch green onions, chopped fine**  
**1/2 tsp. sesame oil**  
**1 bunch cilantro, chopped**  
**1/2 52-count pkg. square 2"x2" wonton skins (freeze remaining wonton skins in ziplock bag for future use)**  
**1 egg**  
**1 tsp. water**  
**1 16-oz. bottle peanut oil for frying**

1. Cook first 5 ingredients in skillet, mashing down while cooking to make a mush or paste. Let cool.
2. Separate the skins and brush with egg wash. Place a generous spoonful of mixture onto each wonton, and seal edges.
3. Fry in small amount of vegetable oil until browned on both sides. You may need to do this in batches. Put all pot stickers back into skillet. Cover with 1/2 cup water. Simmer for about 5 minutes. The water should be absorbed.
4. Serve with dipping sauces like sweet 'n' sour, plum and sweet chili. It is fun to do this for a party and get an assembly line going after your friends arrive.

### Asian Noodle Soup

**6 cups chicken broth or stock**  
**1 lb. chicken breast, cooked and shredded**  
**1 cup onion, diced**  
**1 cup celery, diced**  
**1/2 cup carrots, diced**  
**1 tsp. fennel seeds**  
**1 tsp. salt (optional)**  
**2 tsp. fresh ginger, chopped**  
**1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon**  
**6 oz. thin spaghetti**  
**1/2 lb. fresh bean sprouts**  
**1/4 cup green onion, sliced**  
**1 bunch cilantro**

1. Cook broth, chicken, onion, celery, carrot, fennel seeds, salt, ginger and cinnamon together until hot.
2. Meanwhile, cook spaghetti.
3. Serve broth and noodles together, adding fresh bean sprouts, green onions and cilantro to each bowl. They will be crisp and crunchy.

**To view recipes from current and previous issues, visit [www.nowmagazines.com](http://www.nowmagazines.com).**



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