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M A G A Z I N E

JUNE 2013

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A photograph of a young Black woman, Ashley Cunningham, sitting on a red running track. She is wearing a white athletic singlet with a blue and black logo, black shorts, and pink sneakers. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background shows a chain-link fence and some greenery.

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On The Cover



Ashley Cunningham was captain of the track team during her senior year at Midlothian High School.

Photo by Amy Ramirez

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Editor's Note

Dear Friends,


Years ago, we lived in Arizona, and for summer vacations, my husband and I would pack up the three kids and go across the country to visit grandparents in both Texas and Michigan. Those were long trips. There are just so many times one can listen to *Adventures in Odyssey* on tape or me reading a story.

I would prepare boxes of goodies to delay the moment of complete and utter breakdown of civility in the backseat. It starts tame enough with, "Stop looking at me," with the perpetrator saying, "I'm not looking at you," (while looking dead-on at that person). Forget the healthy snacks. Desperate times call for desperate measures. I started throwing candy into the backseat to keep the bloodlust down. It doesn't sound like fun, but those trips made great memories, because we also played car games and laughed uproariously. We bonded because we were together. This summer, make some unforgettable memories with *your* family!

Betty

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District Flier

— By Betty Tryon

She could feel the weariness in her body. The illness had definitely taken a toll. Still, Ashley Cunningham did what she always does. She kept running and giving her best effort. Feeling somewhat discouraged after her race for the indoor track meet at the University of Arkansas in January, she waited for her score. "I didn't think I did well," she stated. When the score was announced, the news was great. "I ran the 200 meter race in 24.7 seconds! It was the third-fastest score in the nation," Ashley exclaimed. Throughout her time at Midlothian High School, Ashley's participation in track has brought accolades and wins to her team.

It almost never happened. Ashley did not want to be on the track team, because it seemed as if it required more energy than she was willing to put into it. However, mother knows best, and Ashley's mom, seeing the potential in her daughter, insisted. "When I first started running, it was fun and wasn't about competition all the time," Ashley shared. "I enjoyed the people I got to meet. I wanted to do gymnastics and be a cheerleader.

I was a cheerleader in eighth grade, but it is hard to do track and be a cheerleader at the same time."

Ashley made the choice to run track exclusively. That decision paid off with a scholarship to Columbia University in New York City. She takes with her to Columbia a record of running the 100



"I only disliked running when I lost. When you're running just for fun, it doesn't matter if you lose."

meter last year in 11.7 seconds, which made her No. 1 in the district and third fastest in the state. Like any dedicated athlete, the joy is in winning. “I only disliked running when I lost. When you’re running just for fun, it doesn’t matter if you lose, but if you are running for a competition, then when you lose you get sad. You want to try and start over, to get another chance. Whenever I have practice after I lose, it makes me want to work that much harder.”

Ashley’s success was not only on the track field. She excelled in her school work. Going into her final semester in high school, she carried a 4.97 grade point average (GPA). With her track scores, GPA and exemplary character, it is no surprise she operated as a leader on the track team. “I was the captain of the track team,” she shared. “I lead stretches, helped Coach Christine Gann come up with workouts for certain days and gave encouragement to the girls. If someone got down on themselves in practice or was slacking off in practice, I cheered them on and encouraged them to never give up.



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"I always try to find the positive in every situation. If I'm not feeling well, I try to work through it to show that we all have our bad days, but we can all get through it, no matter what. Another reason they may have made me captain is because last year I was really sick and didn't do so well, but I still came to practice and did all the workouts. I was trying my hardest. They could see that people who are really good have really bad days."

Ashley had many bad days last year. She started having symptoms of incredible pain and fatigue but did not



tell her mother right away. "My stomach was bleeding," she said. "I finally told my mom, who took me to see the doctor. He said I was OK, and it was nothing. He gave me pain medication and sent me home where it became much worse. I had to go to the hospital, and they found that my blood count had dropped to borderline needing a transfusion."

With that discovery, Ashley was transferred to Children's Medical Center where she was diagnosed the next day with ulcerative colitis. Her illness was so severe that she was admitted to the hospital for two weeks. Ulcerative colitis is a chronic inflammatory disease in parts of the digestive tract. Thankfully, the doctors were able to get the disease under control and a blood transfusion was not necessary.

"Before being admitted to the hospital, I had been training for indoor track, so I was in good shape. But after the hospital, I was in no shape. Even going to school was a struggle. I was tired halfway through the day, and at practice I could barely run. So my coach had to work me back up to where I needed to be. With the track season starting and participating in the first meet, I did really badly. I had a doctor's appointment the Wednesday before the meet, and I was OK. After the meet I felt really sick, so my mom took me to the hospital and my blood count had dropped three points in three days. That was like unbelievable, so I was readmitted for two more weeks right after



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the first meet."

The diagnosis of ulcerative colitis has changed Ashley's life. She now has to make frequent trips to her physician for monitoring. Her diet had to have a major overhaul. That would be a trial for any teenager, but because of her heavy caloric need to provide energy for training, finding proper food that appealed to her was a challenge. "My diet is very strict. I can't eat raw fruit or vegetables, high fiber foods and spicy food. I can't eat what I want to. When I found that out, it kind of broke my heart a little bit," she laughed.

It was difficult to attend practice and compete in track meets, but Ashley did. "My teammates cut me a lot of slack. They were very encouraging. My teachers were supportive and would gather my work and have it ready for my mom to pick up." During this difficult time, Ashley looked to her faith for strength. "The Holy Spirit floods my soul, and I don't think God would take me through something that would destroy me. When I would get really down, my grandmother would tell me that if I don't give up, I will have a good testimony through this. I will have a good story to tell." Jesse Owens, winner of four gold track and field medals in the 1936 Summer Olympics, made the statement: "We all have dreams. But in order to make dreams come into reality, it takes an awful lot of determination, dedication, self-discipline and effort." Ashley has what it takes to make her dreams come true. **NOW**



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The Tie That Binds

— By Zachary R. Urquhart

The girls seem different in almost every way. One is an 8-year-old who spends much of her free time taking dance lessons for fun. The middle girl, 10, always has her nose in a book and competes for the school Math Pentathlon team. And the 14-year-old loves going to football games, along with being a part of the junior high yearbook staff. But despite their differences, these three girls share a common passion. For Caroline Gaul, Emily Bishop and Hailey Poland, gymnastics is the tie that binds them together.

Caroline is a third-grader at Longbranch Elementary. She and her family are active at the Cowboy Church, and she dances when she is not at the gym. She started gymnastics several years

ago at a local gym, and her favorite event is the floor routine. Her goal is to one day earn a college scholarship, and she hopes to compete in the Olympics. Caroline's favorite thing about gymnastics is "when I learn a new skill. I like it when I know I've learned one."

Emily is a fourth-grader, also at Longbranch, who loves being studious. Her family attends First Baptist in Midlothian. Emily has been doing gymnastics since she could walk, starting in Little Gym programs at the age of 15 months, and her favorite event is the balance beam. She has been at a local gym for several years and also hopes to one day earn a scholarship, become an elite gymnast and compete at the Olympics. Emily especially loves two aspects of gymnastics. "I like to compete," Emily stated. "I'm very competitive, and I like meeting new people, too."

Hailey attends Walnut Grove Middle School where she helps with yearbook, is active in National Junior Honor Society and enjoys spending time with her friends whenever she can. She and her family are also involved at First Baptist. She danced when



“My favorite part is being able to express my abilities through the events.”

she was younger and has been with a local gym for four years. Hailey wants a scholarship and is already focused on the University of Missouri, the University of Arkansas and Louisiana State University. Her favorite event is the floor routine, which is part of why she loves gymnastics. “My favorite part is being able to express my abilities through the events,” she explained.

Caroline, Emily and Hailey came to the local gym at different times, but they have become an unlikely and inseparable



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trio. They often ride together to practice, which is at least four days a week, if not more. They encourage and cheer one another on, and they try to help one another overcome the most challenging parts of their sport. "The hardest thing is staying confident and trying to do your best," Emily shared.

Hailey, who has had more competition experience, said, "It's tough not getting to do what you want sometimes, having so much of a schedule."

For Caroline, the challenge is simple. "The meets are hard," she admitted. "I



get nervous at the meets.”

The girls do more than just practice and compete locally, though. This January, they were among 18 girls representing their community at the Cancun Gymnastics Classic in Mexico. This was the second year for a team to be sent from Treviño's Gymnastics School, owned by Rich Treviño, who helped start a men's gymnastic program at The University of Texas at El Paso and who opened his own gym in Lancaster in 1984. This was the first time for each of these three girls to go to the contest. At the meet, they met gymnasts from around the world, with teams representing Mexico, Canada, states across the country and even teams from Japan. The girls agreed that meeting gymnasts from around the world was one of the most amazing things they have experienced, so far. Hailey expressed their thrill. “We were really excited to see how different gymnastics is in other countries. Even seeing what it's like in other states was fun.”

“They all exchanged hair bows, clips and shirts. They got lots of stuff from other countries,” Rich added.

Adding a new country, on top of being the biggest competition in which they had yet to participate, was a big step for the girls. “I was mainly excited to compete against other countries. And I was excited to see the beach,” Emily enthused.

“It was a little scary because of the

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meet and all of the girls,” Caroline said. This was her first placement meet — at the younger levels, girls can compete for placement, or they can be judged solely for achievement, meaning they are not competing against each other. In her first ever placement competition, Caroline won first place. In fact, all three girls earned all-around gold medals in their age divisions.

The girls enjoyed the excitement of traveling to major international competition, but there were also new challenges involved for the team. “It was more stressful in some ways,” Hailey explained.

Emily further noted, “It was a lot louder. There were more teams and more girls, and you heard people yelling in a lot of languages.”

The team got to experience the enthusiasm shown by parents and supporters in other countries. They agree that the atmosphere was much rowdier than anything back here at home.

The girls did not stop in Cancun. They have been busy competing in the last several months, with Emily and Hailey each having posted single event scores in the national top 10 of the Level 7 gymnasts in the United States. Hailey, one of the team leaders, has not minded the busy schedule as much lately, due in large part to the success she’s gained. She also has embraced spending time in the gym. “The gym is like home, sometimes,” she explained. “We form bonds with our coaches and each other.”

Caroline, Emily and Hailey started on different paths, but they have found common ground through gymnastics. Loaded with gold medals and elite ability, they’re an all-around team balancing life and sport, one carpool ride at a time. **NOW**

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The Art of Life

— By Randy Bigham

At Home With
Gerard and
Sandra Zurawski

Dr. Gerard and Sandra Zurawski's appreciation for art rivals their respect for nature and love of animals. From their luxurious home, full of as many modern paintings and sculptures as a museum, to the dogs, horses and other pets that add even greater meaning to their lives, the couple seems to have it all. When they relocated to Texas in 2004 from the San Francisco Bay area, they were looking for a place that would remind them of California, and they found it in the hills of Midlothian. The sweeping view of a fertile valley from their 3,000-square-foot estate, perched on a knoll in a quiet community, convinced them they had found the house of their dreams.



"Everything about it spoke to us," Sandra admitted. "It had beautiful hilltop scenes like in California. It had a pasture and a pond, and it had things we didn't have before, like a swimming pool and a guest cottage. It wasn't hard to say 'yes' to this place." The three-bedroom, three-bath abode with an open floor plan, a swimming pool, even a built-in aquarium, has become an oasis of comfort for the hardworking pair who not only share the spacious dwelling, but a profession that absorbs them.

Gerard and Sandra, scientists affiliated with Dallas' Baylor Institute for Immunology Research, are involved in vaccine development, and the hours are long. Gerard, originally from Australia where he earned a Ph.D. in genetics from the University of Sydney, is head of the Biotechnology Center, and Sandra works with him as a researcher, sharing her expertise in molecular and cellular biology. It was to accept a position as a lead investigator at the Baylor Institute that Gerard made the move to Texas with Sandra, who was also offered her current job. "Our work is time-consuming, but it's also passion-driven," Sandra said. "We're very dedicated to what we do, and we hope we are making a larger difference."

When Gerard and Sandra aren't in the laboratory, they are enjoying farm life, riding horses and feeding the menagerie they have accumulated. These include a llama, pig and three beloved canines — Grizzly, a long-haired Dachshund; Ruben, a 200-pound Newfoundland; and Sampson, a Great Pyrenees. "You should see us when we take them for a walk in public," Sandra laughed. "They really attract a crowd, and people go crazy taking pictures with their phones!" The Zurawskis' horses are also adored — they have a Lusitano and Friesians



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Approved Home Health Care announces their new Administrator

Midlothian, Texas — February 3, 2012 — Approved Home Health Care announces the promotion of Karen Torti to Administrator/Director of Nursing. Karen has been an RN, Case Manager with Approved since Feb 2011. We are proud to have Karen leading our team! Congratulations, Karen!

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care as they give the pets they love. “Art is close to our hearts,” Sandra confessed. “It was always something we were interested in, and we collected what we liked, but it wasn’t until more recent years that we started concentrating on it and making it a part of our lives.”

The artwork that defines the appeal of the Zurawskis’ home is contemporary, from brilliant swathes of color in paintings by Pierre Marie Brisson to exotic sculptures by a range of American and European craftsmen. One of the most outstanding pieces is the intricately

carved redwood bust, modeled on one of Sandra’s favorite horses, that sits triumphantly in the entryway, its curling mane seemingly in motion. A tribal motif is evident in other pieces, including a wall hanging from New Guinea that decorates the living area, remarkable for its large picture window. And there is another striking piece of wall art in the dining room, made from the tiles of an old French rooftop and ornamented with designs inspired by hieroglyphs.

“Most of the art we’ve acquired comes from Galerie Horizon in Marseilles,

and they are very proud of these magnificent breeds. “The Lusitano actually came from Portugal,” Gerard said. “And he was trained in bullfighting.”

Sandra likes to watch how the horses interact with their other animals. “All of them get along great,” she said. “But I haven’t been able to decide yet who rules the roost. I think it’s a toss-up between our pot-bellied pig and the Lusitano. We really love them all. They bring such value to our lives.”

There’s also value in the art the couple has collected and arranged with as much



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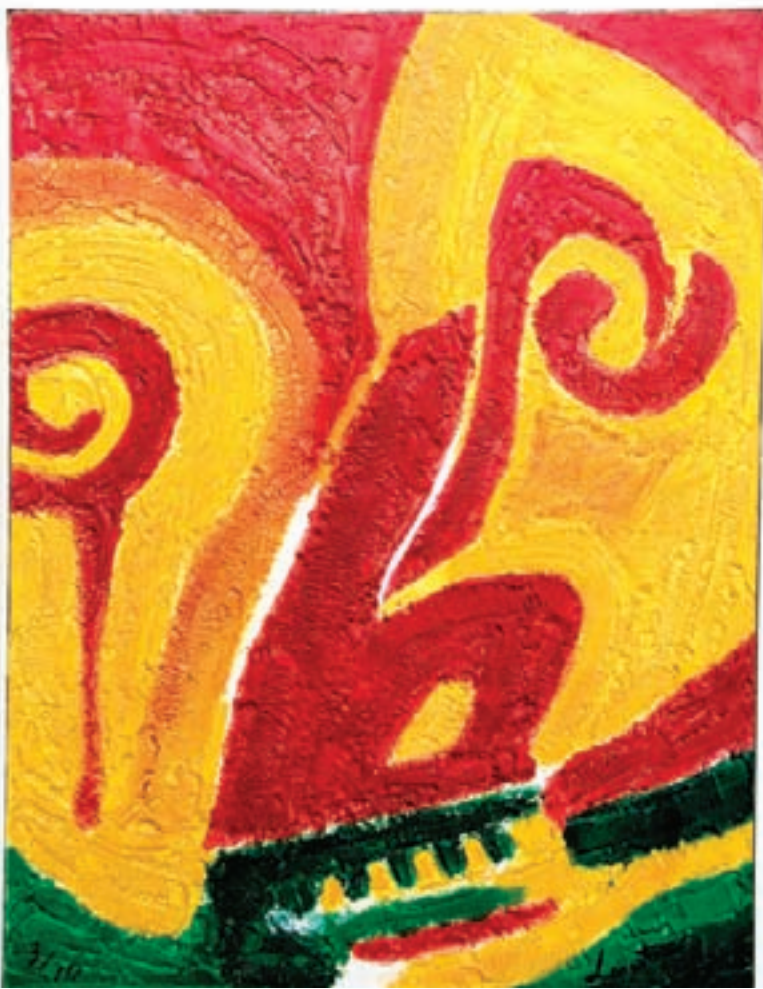
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France, owned by Claude Mannoni,” Sandra explained. “And it happened kind of by chance through a funny miscommunication.” Because of the language barrier, the Mannoni’s thought the couple had invited them to exhibit art in their home where they would host a soiree and join their guests in buying some of the pieces on view. “What I actually said,” Sandra laughed, “was that it was hard to make a decision when buying artwork without seeing it placed in your home first.”

But, the misunderstanding resulted in many European art pieces being transported to the U.S. “This led to some exciting showcases in our home,” Sandra said. “The art was well-received during these venues and some items were sold. We have never considered ourselves art connoisseurs. We just knew that we liked this style of art when we saw it.”

Gerard was proud of the pieces he purchased, but he also remembered the worry of storing over a million dollar’s worth of art prior to those venues in California. “That made me just a little nervous,” he smiled. “But the most wonderful aspect of this whole art encounter was the unexpected, deep bonding friendship that we fostered with the Mannoni family, along with the selected pieces that now hang in our Texas home.”

The interior design of the Zurawski home is as modern as the artwork that

graces every nook and elegant cranny, and the color scheme throughout is a blend of neutrals that forms a pleasing backdrop for the colorful, avant-garde paintings and sculpture. There are a few examples of antique furniture mixed in, such as a console table that serves as a buffet in the dining room. "It belonged to my grandmother," Sandra said, "and it just seemed to fit, sentimentally and style-wise." Although the interior colors are subdued — cream, tan, gray, brown and black — the effect is far from somber. With high ceilings and so many windows, the overall vibe is one of peace and contentment.

And contented is exactly how the Zurawskis feel about their home and the town of Midlothian. "We love this community," Sandra said. "We're so glad



we chose to live here. The drive back and forth to Baylor is long, but it's worth it to have our home in such a beautiful place like this where we are close to the city but still have the country experience we want."

Sandra and Gerard also laud the excellence of Midlothian as a civic center and school district, and they praise the friendliness of their neighbors and the local merchants they patronize. "We have never regretted the move from California," Sandra said. "We feel like we have always been here, so I guess it was meant to be." **NOW**



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MISD

MHS Valedictorian And Salutatorian

Midlothian High School is proud to recognize Noah Rodgers as Valedictorian and Rebecca Walker as Salutatorian of the Class of 2012.

Noah, son of Joe and Nicol Rodgers, is a member of the Panther Regiment marching and concert bands, and the Midlothian Bible Church youth worship band and youth group. He has volunteered at Manna House and participated in the Houston and Amazing Grace Mission Trips. In the fall, he plans to attend Texas A&M University at College Station and major in both physics & music. He hopes to become an acoustical engineer in music production.

Rebecca, daughter of Dr. Randy and Sue Walker, has been involved in UIL mathematics, UIL calculator applications, UIL number sense, Student Council and National Honor Society. She has volunteered at the Church Food Pantry Outreach and Ellis County Animal Shelter. Rebecca plans to attend the University of Texas at Austin and major in accounting.



Congratulations MHS Class of 2012

View Senior Class link on MHS webpage for more information.



Farm Business Management Team: 2nd Runner-Up at State Competition.



Panther Regiment received superior ratings at UIL Regional Marching Contest, 1 All-State and 6 All-Regional Orchestras.



MISD Education Foundation contributed \$30,639.08 to classrooms through the Innovative Teaching Grant Program.



Walnut Grove Middle School Tenor/Bass Boys Choir was selected to perform at Texas Music Educators Association.



Academic All-State Team for 2011-2012

Congratulations to these students who have excelled in the classroom and on the field. To earn Academic All-State, athletes must: have an overall grade point average of 92 or above in grades 9-11 and during the first six weeks of grade 12; be a member of an athletic team in good standing; and, be a senior with good moral character.



J.A. Vitovsky Elementary principal Cherie Wagoner is proud of JAV's recognition for Distinguished Performance Award given by the Texas Education Agency.

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Lessons Galore at the Educational Showcase

The district curriculum is based on guided lessons designed by teachers who provide engaging work for students on a daily basis. These lessons are showcased at the annual Educational Showcase held at Midlothian High School. Over 2,000 visitors journeyed through 100 booths with students demonstrating lessons on static electricity, Texas history, math concepts and other K-12 projects in all content areas. Throughout the evening, student performance groups took part in acting, singing and a variety of musical selections.

Seventh Graders Qualify For Duke Tip State Recognition

Duke Talent Identification Program is a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving academically gifted and talented students. The 7th Grade Talent Search identifies bright seventh graders based on standardized test scores achieved while attending elementary or middle school. Candidates are invited to take the ACT or the SAT college entrance exams as seventh graders, which allows them greater insight into their academic abilities.

Of the 19 Midlothian ISD 7th graders who participated this year, six qualified for state recognition. The Frank Seale Middle School students recognized are Bryce Boyd, Abby Hopkins, Zack Krawczyk and Mykl Miller. Walnut Grove Middle School students recognized are Haley Deselle and Christian Mann. These students met rigorous performance standards that compared their scores to national percentile rankings of all students who took the ACT or SAT. Earning special recognition means that these middle school students outscored a significant number of high school juniors and seniors who took the same college entrance exams.



WGMS students Haley Deselle and Christian Mann



FSMS students Bryce Boyd, Mykl Miller and Zack Krawczyk (Abby Hopkins not pictured)

MHS Student to Serve on Teen Advisory Board

Sydney Alvarado, MHS sophomore, is a member of MHS Student Council and chairs the Drugs, Alcohol, Safety and Health (DASH) program.



She was recently selected to serve on the 2012-2013 Teens in the Driver Seat Advisory Board. During a recent reception at the State Capitol with Texas Secretary of State Hope Andrade, the students were honored and met with other students to take their positions.

Teens in the Driver Seat (TDS) are the nation's first peer-to-peer safety program for young drivers, involving teenagers directly in developing and delivering driving safety messages. The program empowers teens to spread the word among their peers about deadly driving risks and encourage them to make smart choices while behind the wheel and as passengers. "There are many ways to raise awareness about this deadly risk among teen drivers. I plan to encourage other students to get involved with TDS," said Sydney.

Read more about the Teens in the Driver Seat at www.i-driver.com.

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MHS Alumni website at www.misdalumni.org

Men of WAR

— By Randy Bigham

Ever since a high school history teacher encouraged him to research and write about the events that interested him, Midlothian's Clark Highsmith has been doing just that. His latest book, Famous Men of the Second World War, focuses on a series of absorbing personal tales of self-sacrifice and leadership at a time of tremendous global struggle for freedom.

"The Second World War was the most complex event in history," the author wrote in his introduction, and through an accessible format and engaging turn of phrase, he has penned a remarkably comprehensive, yet succinct, account of the legendary conflict.

Originally from Illinois, Clark has called Midlothian home for 11 years, and with his wife and son, he is active in a community he said is second to none for offering a happy, close-knit environment in which to rear a family. Friends and colleagues have been supportive of his new book, which took 18 months to compile. "Sometimes, it seems you'll never get there," Clark said of the grueling process of writing and research. "But it's satisfying in the end to see a big project like this come to fruition."

Clark was inspired to write *Famous Men of the Second World War* by a series of history books published by John Haaren over a century ago. In his volumes on a variety of subjects, Haaren concentrated on individual biographies of the men and women who peopled the eras he was exploring. Clark may have patterned his basic premise on the Haaren books, but his own work is geared pointedly to the young reader. "I made it a point to keep the book kid-friendly. I avoided colorful quotations



and graphic photos. I do not want to glorify war or gloss over the evil that was committed,” he said.

Among the 31 men profiled in Clark’s book are names many will recognize — Churchill, Patton, Mussolini and Stalin — but there are others whose lives aren’t as well-known to modern readers. Important in their day, they have since fallen into the margins of history. These cases were among the most intriguing for Clark, and he felt a responsibility to document their stories as faithfully as he has related the careers of their better-remembered counterparts. “For instance, Raoul Wallenberg fascinated me,” Clark said. “He was a Swedish diplomat who saved many Jews during the Holocaust. The more research I did, the more astounded I was by the lengths he went to in order to secure freedom for Jews in Hungary.”

Another favorite for Clark is the story of a Soviet hero, Georgii Zhukov, whom the author identifies as one of the

most eminent generals of the war. “No Russian played a greater role in the Allied victory,” Clark said. “Stalin counted on Zhukov to restore the situation in every military crisis the Soviet Union faced during the war.”

the Soviet Union faced
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A simple line drawing of a biplane, shown from a side profile, flying towards the right. It has two sets of wings, a tail section, and a single propeller at the front. The drawing is in a light brown or tan color.

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Clark's well-written, finely paced evocation of World War II is a "who's who" of the conflict's most influential personalities. British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, the U.S. Army's Chief of Staff George Marshall, Admiral Chester Nimitz and Generals MacArthur and Eisenhower are examined thoroughly but concisely in Clark's 220 pages. Keeping with his goal of teaching children about WWII, Clark has included review questions at the close of each chapter, sidebars with trivia and a glossary of military terms.

One of the most thrilling stories of bravery and dedication included in the book is the tale of Audie Murphy. The Texas-born Army platoon sergeant won the Medal of Honor for his courageous service in WWII and went on to become a Hollywood actor, popular for his Western films. "Audie Murphy



became the most decorated soldier in the history of the United States Army," Clark said. His awards included a Bronze Star for feats against German advancement, the Distinguished Service Cross for taking a German stronghold and, finally, the Medal of Honor for leading a critical offensive in the final days of the war. Although only 19 when he enlisted, Murphy proved himself a brilliant squad leader, seeing "almost continuous combat" for two years. Illness plagued him at intervals, but it didn't lessen his excellent tactical skills and resourcefulness, which were amply rewarded not only by medals but by fame as a movie star after returning home.

In addition to his stirring biographies of the men on the front lines, Clark has not forgotten the women who served stateside and in the war. He points to examples of inspiring contributions to the fighting effort by women in the U.S., Great Britain and Russia. Clark mentions Margaret Bourke-White, the *Life Magazine* photographer who was the first woman reporter embedded on a combat mission. "She was one of the first journalists to cover the liberation of Nazi death camps," Clark wrote. He also recounts in his book the efforts of Russian female pilots. "This group of women flew biplanes at dark, dropping small bombs and grenades on German troops who used to call them the 'Night Witches.'"

An area of research Clark concentrated on in his series of biographies was the importance of fighting on the



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Eastern Front, which was among the most ferocious on record. Eastern Front battles involved unprecedented destruction and loss of life due to combat, starvation and disease. The Eastern Front was also the site of almost all the extermination camps. The total of WWII deaths is in the neighborhood of 50 million. While the U.S. was not engaged in combat in the Eastern Front, this country and the United Kingdom supplied aid to the Soviet Union in fighting the Nazis.

Clark is proud of the work he has accomplished in paying tribute to the American heroes of WWII, as well as in providing fair assessments of some of this nation's foes in that conflict. Clark hopes young people and adults alike will appreciate learning about one of the direst struggles in human history as told through the biographies.

When he isn't writing, Clark is an avid hiker, and he's looking forward to backpacking the Ouachita Trail that travels through Oklahoma and Arkansas. But he is mostly a contented husband and father, teaching Sunday school at Oak Crest Baptist Church. Clark loves Midlothian and Ellis County for its blend of rural and big city attractions and wouldn't want to be anywhere else.

In particular, he thanks the staff of the Midlothian High School library and the Nicholas P. Sims Library in Waxahachie for their help during his research.

"Most importantly, I thank God for His providence, even in such an awful tragedy as the Second World War," Clark said.

"Researching this book, I continually saw how in the midst of suffering He was at work." **NOW**

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Legacy TO SERVE

— By Alex Allred

What does a firefighter, a dog, love of country and college have in common? Jakob Vitullo.

Jakob grew up in a home where there had always been dogs, and his mother is a professional dog trainer. He was familiar with the standard basic obedience aspect of training, but the idea that a dog could open a refrigerator and take out a bottle of water on command was intriguing to him. "What impressed me," Jakob said, "was how much training went into these dogs, and that they were giving them away for free. That really impressed me."

From watching his own mother, Jakob knows the amount of time, patience, energy and money that goes into training a great dog. But, when he learned that specialty dogs — dogs trained to turn on lights, open doors, press panic buttons and call for help — can cost up to \$250,000, "to give them away for free is amazing."

Specifically, the dogs are given to men and women, typically in the armed services, who have served their country. While Robin's firefighter friend was an exception, he was still honored by Patriot Paws, a nonprofit organization in Rockwall, Texas, for his service to his community. "I think Jakob saw the connection of what goes on in our lives and what Patriot Paws was doing," Robin said.

When Robin began dog training, she used her own dog, Allie, a Shepherd/Husky mix, as a therapy dog for children who suffered from both physical and emotional problems. Jakob saw firsthand what a well-trained dog could do for a person. He also has a strong connection to the military and returning veterans, as Jakob comes from an impressive line of servicemen.





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“Both my grandfathers, my dad, some cousins,” Jakob said, “have all served.” In fact, his paternal grandfather served in WWII, Korea and Vietnam, starting his career as a private and retiring as a major. Jakob’s father, Roland, was an aviator in the U.S. Army. “So, I’ve always thought about serving my country,” Jakob said. “My dad always tells me that you don’t know how good you’ve got it until you see how bad other countries have it,” he shared. “It makes you appreciate things a little more. I have always wanted to be a part of that — serving my country, that is.”

In listening to the men in his family speak of personal sacrifice and commitment, Jakob is especially sensitive to the treatment of our returning soldiers. “Jakob’s father is always talking about respecting our soldiers and people who lay their lives on the line,” Robin said. “Roland is always telling Jakob how we need to honor our soldiers, so when Jakob saw what a dog could do for a soldier who lost a limb or couldn’t walk or speak, he knew he wanted to do something more.”

Long before Jakob even heard of Patriot Paws, he had decided he wanted to go into the Corps of Cadets at Texas A&M University. He joined a wrestling team and was becoming more focused on academics and athletics to prepare




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for the Corps, but he suddenly had a new project. After learning what Patriot Paws was doing for veterans, "I knew I wanted to help," he said. "I could raise money at the Midlothian Fall Festival so I contacted Patriot Paws."

As expected, Patriot Paws Executive Director Lory Stevens was thrilled and sent Jakob banners, T-shirts and information packets to be handed out. He studied the organization's history,

so when he was asked questions about how and where the dogs were trained, who was selected to have a dog and how they were trained, he knew the answers. But it wasn't until Jakob saw the dogs up close and personal that he realized what they could do for a person. It was this realization that impressed him the most.

"He had a huge grin on his face," Robin said. "You know its one thing to hear what these dogs can do, but to see it is something else!"

As the dogs pulled clothing from a dryer into a laundry basket, and turned on lamps and closed doors, Jakob was encouraged all the more. At the conclusion of the 2011 Fall Festival, Jakob handed over \$400 in donations from Midlothian residents, with additional funds donated by the Midlothian High School's National Honor Society (NHS).

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us," Jakob said, noting that he intends to participate in the 2012 Fall Festival, this time with a Patriot Paws ambassador, a fully trained Labrador Retriever.

Though not surprised by their son's new interest, Robin and Roland are certainly proud. "He just set his mind on going to Texas A&M and studying for his SATs. He knows what he wants, and he's going to get it," Robin smiled. "I am very proud of how respectful he is."

"We do a newsletter," said Lori Beth Barajas, the finance manager at Patriot Paws. "We had just discussed doing a spotlight on this generation of kids. A lot of people are down on this generation, but kids like Jakob are surprising us. The fact that he has taken raising funds and awareness for our veterans upon himself is so impressive. The money he raised is used for our vets, even to purchase a new dog." Between the expense of quality dogs and a tough economy, people like Jakob Vitullo, who support such nonprofit organizations, are literal partners in helping to save lives. But Jakob is quick to wave off such compliments.

"There is an obvious link between the Corps of Cadets and Patriot Paws," Jakob said. While he dreams of becoming a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army with a major in finance and economics, his own family history, his mother's dog training and the needs of others have opened his eyes as he sets out into the world. "It's about helping vets come home," Jakob said. Truly, it is about a new generation giving back, and for Jakob, serving his county is not just a family history but also his own legacy. **NOW**

Editor's Note: For more information about Patriot Paws, visit their Web site at www.patriotpaws.org.

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A Marriage and Business That Work

Julie McKeever with RE/MAX Suburban South and Allan McKeever with McKeever Custom Homes both aim for customer satisfaction.

— By Betty Tryon

As a married couple, Allan and Julie McKeever make perfect business sense. They are longtime Midlothian residents whose childhood friendship blossomed into a marriage of 30 years. Her business as a Realtor with Suburban South is a smooth complement to his business, McKeever Custom Homes.

Their venture into real estate began with Allan, who was a builder's helper in high school before starting out on his own. "He would always get someone else to list his homes for him," Julie said. "He suggested I get my real estate license, so I could list his homes. That is how I got started in the real estate business, and it took off from there. Now I list everybody's homes, including Allan's."

Allan's business, McKeever Custom Homes, specializes in

kitchens and bathrooms. "Remodeling is in high demand right now," he said. "We do whatever the customer wants. I have about 200 subcontractors from landscapers to granite top guys. We really try to use local contractors and patronize the area."

While Allan is busy making homes more beautiful, Julie is busy selling them. "I have homes in Mansfield, Arlington and Midlothian," she explained. "Because I've lived here so long, I know the area. I just feel like I know how to guide people. If someone says they want a certain amount of acreage, I automatically know the perfect subdivision for that. I've seen everything grow from pastureland to all of the different subdivisions. We have a lot of repeat customers."

Julie's business relationship with RE/MAX Suburban South has

paid off, as she received the Executive and 100% Club awards for the year 2011. "A lot of it is being blessed by the Lord," she stated. "We have both been very blessed."

Allan explained how their work is more than just a business. "This job gives us opportunities every day to witness to people, to help them and to minister to the community. We take that very seriously."

In keeping with their professional standards, Julie and Allan take many continuing education classes. Most of Julie's classes are in technology and finances because of the many changes in mortgage requirements, and most of Allan's classes are through The Dallas Homebuilder's Association, with emphasis on their building science. "People are demanding high-efficiency homes," Allan stated. "No one wants a \$500 electric bill."

The classes help them give their best to the customer. "I know this sounds cliché, but we do it right the first time," Allan said. "We're not done until the customer is satisfied. If I walk into your kitchen and I say it will cost \$3,200, that's what it

"This job gives us opportunities every day to witness to people, to help them and to minister to the community. We take that very seriously."

will cost. We cut our deal up front. We are very honorable. We end up doing a lot of work for free because we try to honor that bid. We shoot for customer satisfaction."

"The same thing goes for me," Julie added. "What makes me enjoy my job is when they are satisfied with the service they got. I've always enjoyed looking at homes. I enjoy people and getting to know them. It is a good mixture for me of everything I enjoy." As a team, Julie and Allan add up to a complete package for customer satisfaction. **NOW**



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Sickle-shaped Trouble

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

The young African-American male was thin and quiet with an air of seriousness about him. As one of the student workers at the college library, he seemed to be just another student. His absences from school became more frequent until one day he no longer came. His sister informed the school he had died from sickle cell anemia.

Sickle cell anemia is a disease that causes the red blood cells of the body to develop abnormally. Normal red blood cells are round with a concaved center and live about 120 days. They are very flexible and designed to flow through the tiniest blood vessels without difficulty. Sickle cells resemble the shape of the crescent moon. These sickle cells are sticky and stiff. They tend to clump together, which interferes with normal blood flow. Sickle cells are fragile and live 10-20 days. This leads to anemia.

Sickle cell anemia is not a disease that is communicable or caught from other people. It is a genetic disposition with autosomal recessive inheritance. This means both parents must have the sickle cell trait before the child has sickle cell anemia. This gene is found primarily in African-Americans, but also in Hispanics and people of Mediterranean and Middle Eastern descent. It has been estimated that one in 12 African-Americans carry the sickle cell trait, but the trait does not turn into the disease. You must be *born* with sickle cell

anemia after inheriting the trait from *both* parents.

Two of the most prevailing symptoms from this condition are anemia and pain. The anemia comes from not enough normal red blood cells, because the sickle ones die early and are not healthy enough to perform adequately for the body's needs. When the sickle cells clump together and block flow to parts of the body, such as the bones, joints and organs, the pain can be severe. This is called a sickle cell crisis. If the crisis is prolonged or repeated too frequently, organ damage can occur.

It is so incredibly important for someone with this disease to stay well-hydrated and avoid infections. Specific treatment will depend on the area of the body affected. Blood transfusions may be given on a regular basis. The only possibility for a cure lies with receiving a bone marrow or stem cell transplant. However, only a few patients receive this treatment because of the difficulty in finding a donor and the health risks associated with those procedures. Medical research has advanced greatly in this area, and with proper management of symptoms, patients are living longer with a better quality of life. **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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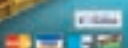
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June 2

Mid-Way Regional Airport Annual Pancake Breakfast Fly-in: 8:00-11:00 a.m. Event and parking are free. Breakfast tickets: \$6 for ages 8 and above; \$3 for ages 3 to 7; 2 and younger are free. Classic airplanes/fighters, helicopter rides, Remote Control Model Flyers, Midlothian Classic Wheels, Gold Wing Road Riders, The Classic Swing Band, kids' trackless train and face painting. Call Tammy at (972) 923-0080.

June 2 and 3

44th Annual Gingerbread Trail Home Tour and Arts & Crafts Fair: **Saturday only:** Downtown Farmers Market, Midlothian Classic Wheels Benefit Car Show. **Saturday and Sunday:** Tour of Homes, Arts & Crafts Fair in Getzendaner Park, Plein aire painting and art show, historic courthouse tours, activities for all ages in Getzendaner Park. **Sunday only:** Several shops and restaurants will be open. Call the Waxahachie Chamber of Commerce at (972) 937-2390 or the Ellis County Museum at (972) 937-0681.

June 3

Midlothian Church of Christ Summer Bash 2012: 4:00 p.m., 5241 Plainview Road. Enjoy

free barbecue, fish fry, swimming and a giant water slide. (972) 775-3026.

June 2, June 16, June 30

Farmers Market: 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Heritage Park.

June 9

Hazardous Household Chemical Waste Disposal Event: 9:00-11:00 a.m., Public Works Service Center, 1050 Highway 67. Cost: Voucher for resident, \$20; voucher for nonresident, \$47. (972) 775-1083.

Movies in the Park: dusk, Hawkins Spring Park. Bring your blankets and lawn chairs to enjoy *The Muppets*. Concessions are available.

June 11-15

Midlothian Bible Church VBX: 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., for kindergarten through sixth grade. Activities: lunch, large group games, Bible teaching and crafts. Cost: \$55 before **May 31**; \$65 for late registration. Price includes lunch, T-shirts and all activities. Scholarships are available. Online registration required. Register at www.midlothianbible.org. (972) 723-0002.

June 18-20

Midlothian Church of Christ Mission OBEY Vacation Bible School: 9:00 a.m.-noon for ages 3 years-fifth grade. (972) 775-3026.

Calvary Baptist VBS, SKY VBS: 6:30-8:30 p.m., Calvary Baptist Church, 1591 South 9th Street. Free for children age 3 (potty trained) through fifth grade (exiting). Register online at www.midlothiancbc.net or call (972) 775-8722.

Ongoing:

Midlothian ISD Head Start enrollment: They are looking to enroll kids from age 3 to 4 as of September 1, 2012. They accept all children that meet the federal income guidelines for the program including: foster children, non-English speaking, children with disabilities and children from homeless families. Contact April Pickney at (972) 775-4361.

Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your event details to btryon.nowmag@sbglobal.net.

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In The Kitchen With Chelsea Goodman

— By Betty Tryon

One of Chelsea Goodman's favorite holiday memories was insisting her grandmother wake her up at 5:00 a.m. to help cook. "Everything about cooking fascinated me," she stated. It is so much a part of who Chelsea is as an individual that she is preparing herself for a future in cooking. "When I started high school, I immediately got into the culinary program at MHS [Midlothian High School]. I plan on becoming a culinary teacher. I love to teach people things about cooking. I don't know where I got this passion for cooking. It had to be my grandmother or my dad. (It skipped my mom.) Cooking is not just about good food. It's a way of life." **NOW**

Strawberry Milkshake

Serving size: 2 large or 4 small milkshakes (about 32 oz.)

- 1/2 lb. fresh strawberries, plus extra to garnish
- 2 Tbsp. white sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 3/4 to 1 cup whole milk
- 1 Tbsp. malted milk powder or regular powdered milk (optional)
- 1 pint strawberry ice cream

1. Hull and slice strawberries; sprinkle with sugar and stir in vanilla. Put strawberries in freezer for about an hour. Put two pint glasses (or four smaller glasses) in the freezer to chill.
2. After strawberries have frozen solid, place them in a blender with 3/4 cup milk. Make sure you scrape in all the syrupy juice that has accumulated at the bottom of the bowl. Blend strawberries until no big chunks remain.
3. Add malted milk powder and blend. (Note: Malted milk powder gives just a bit of

extra depth and a hint of malty flavor without turning the shake into a true malt. If you opt to use regular powdered milk, this also will add a bit of richness and creaminess.)

4. Remove blender jar from motor. Add entire pint of ice cream. Stir by hand into the milk and strawberries. Put jar back on motor and blend thoroughly. If it doesn't blend well or gets stuck, carefully add additional milk, up to 1/4 cup. Stir or shake, if necessary.
5. Pour milkshake into the chilled glasses and garnish with strawberries. Slurp immediately!

Green Enchiladas

- 1 pkg. boneless, skinless chicken breast
- 2 jalapeños
- 1 clove garlic
- 2 tsp. chili powder
- 1 tsp. onion powder
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 2 10 3/4-oz. cans cream of mushroom soup
- 10-12 corn tortillas
- 2 cups mozzarella cheese, grated

1. Boil chicken breast until done. Add jalapeños and garlic to same water as chicken and boil a few minutes. Remove chicken from water; shred and season with chili powder, onion powder, salt and pepper.
2. Remove seeds from jalapeños and blend with garlic in one cup of hot water. (You can use some of the water from boiling the chicken.) Pour blended liquid into a pot with cream of mushroom soup and cook on medium-high heat.
3. Warm the tortillas. Place a spoonful of chicken in each tortilla, roll and place in a casserole dish. Pour jalapeño sauce on top of enchiladas and top with the grated cheese. Bake at 350 F until cheese is melted.

A Better Broccoli Cheese Casserole

- 1 10.8-oz. Chicken Rice-A-Roni
- 1 10 3/4-oz. can Campbell's Cream of Chicken soup
- 1 10 3/4-oz. can Campbell's Cream of Mushroom soup
- 1 12-oz. can evaporated milk
- 1 20-oz. bag frozen chopped broccoli
- 1 1/2 lbs. Velveeta cheese, diced

1. Cook Chicken Rice-A-Roni as directed on box.
2. Add soups and milk to chicken rice mixture.
3. Cook broccoli. Add cheese and broccoli to mixture and place in a 13-x 9-inch glass casserole dish.
4. Bake at 350 F for 30 minutes.

GiGi's Pink Stuff

- 1 21-oz. can cherry pie filling
- 1 14-oz. can Eagle brand condensed milk
- 1 20-oz. can crushed pineapple, drained
- 1 16-oz. container Cool Whip

1. Combine all ingredients together and chill. You may also add pecans or marshmallows, if you like.

To view recipes from current and previous issues, visit www.nowmagazines.com.



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