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GRAPHICS AND DESIGN Creative Director, Chris McCalla Artists, Julie Carpenter . Casey Henson Martha Macias . Felipe Ruiz Arlene Honza . Brande Morgan Shannon Pfaff

PHOTOGRAPHY Photography Director, Jill Rose Photographer, Opaque Visuals

ADVERTISING

Advertising Representatives, Rick Ausmus . Teresa Banks . Linda Dean Laura Fira . Bryan Frye . Melissa McCoy Vicki Meeks . Lisa Miller . Carolyn Mixon Jami Navarro . Lori O'Connell . John Powell Steve Randle . Linda Roberson . Judy Trivett

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On THE COVER



Mary Ellen Lanoue's home tells the story of her life.

Photo by Opaque Visuals.

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Editor's Note

Hello, Midlothian!

My dad, the late Reverend Robert R. Williams, was a great man to me. I was asked why I felt that way. It was how he made me feel. Daddy was the symbol of authority, security and protection in our home. He was not overly demonstrative in his affections, but I knew we were loved.

My brother had a paper route as a child. Plagued by a ferocious dog on one street, his solution was to avoid that street. When Daddy found out about the

undelivered papers, my brother was disciplined for not doing his job. The following morning, Daddy went with him to deliver papers. When the dog threatened them both, our dad scared him away, and the dog never returned. Tough but kind, he was always our protector. The world really needs strong dads today.

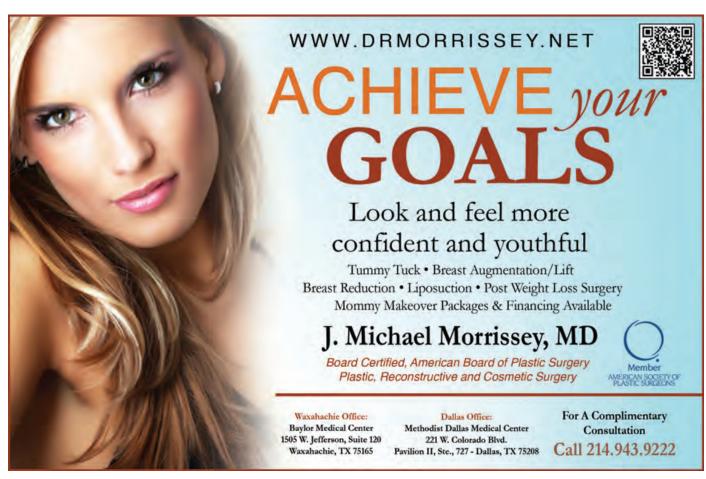
Happy Father's Day to all Midlothian dads! You deserve it!

Betty

Betty Tryon

MidlothianNOW Editor
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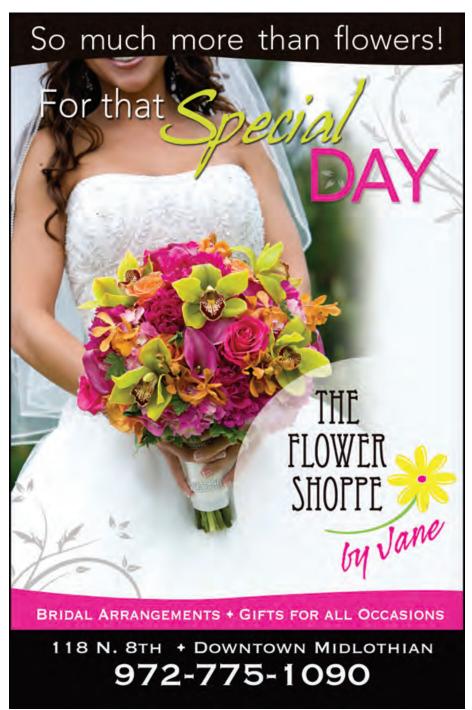
Unaware that her fragile life was about to play a part in changing history, Kate McCasland showed as much spirit and grit as her 1 pound, 7 ounce miniature body could muster. Late one night, she began to express perhaps a little too much spirit and went into distress. One of the nurses on duty that night in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Harris Methodist Hospital called Kate's mom, Jane, to the rescue. This was the first time Jane received permission to try a new method of infant care called kangaroo care, although it was not allowed in the NICU. After snuggling the delicate infant on her chest, Kate's heart rate went from 200 beats a minute to 155. From restlessness, she was able to fall sound asleep, and the biggie — she gained a whole ounce overnight! The nurse who allowed the unconventional method without the doctors' approval had to face unpleasant consequences the next day. However, when the doctors discovered Kate gained an ounce overnight, they took another look at the technique. Today, kangaroo care is considered standard practice.

Jane learned of kangaroo care while watching a program about a Third World country. "I couldn't sleep," she said. "I saw a mom holding her baby kangaroo style. Babies in that country had a higher survival rate than we did. I started asking and asking to try it with Kate but was always told no. I made a pest of myself! The nurse called me that night, because she thought it would help. With kangaroo care, the most important thing was skin to skin contact with a blanket over Kate. She could only be held for an hour, because she was too fragile to be handled for long. My husband and I switched off days. Kate was in the hospital for three-and-a-half months and came home on her due date, March 14, 1995."

That night the wheels of change began, and with a new perspective, the physicians changed the policy to allow kangaroo care in NICU. As a symbol of the technique's success, Harris Methodist Hospital hosted a celebration for Kate on her 18th birthday with the medical and nursing team that took care of her in the NICU. "It was like, *Oh my gosh!* Some of them hadn't seen me since I left the unit," she enthused. "I think one of the sweetest things was my dad's dad went up to the doctor and said, 'I've waited 18 years to say this, but I want to thank you.' I looked out of the corner of my eye, and he was tearing up, even dad was, too!"







explained. "That procedure caused a paralyzed vocal cord. When you're talking about an adult, that nerve would be bruised. When you are talking about a baby the size of a Barbie doll, it becomes paralyzed." PDA is a corrective procedure necessary when the ductus arteriosus, which is part of the baby's circulatory system before birth, does not close after birth. If left untreated, it can lead to serious complications.

Kate received vocal cord implant surgery at age 16 to correct the paralyzed vocal cord. "Her voice before the surgery was whispery and hoarse, sort of a cross between Marilyn Monroe and Lauren Bacall," Jane smiled. Today, Kate's voice still has a soft whispery quality to it that she uses with a rapid fire delivery.

As a Girl Scout looking for a project to earn her a Bronze Award, Kate chose to give premature babies something special, just as her mom did so long ago. She started making preemie hats for the infants in NICU. She made the hats with the same design, but in different colors. Her goal was to make a knitted hat for every day she was in the unit as a baby. She ended with 114 knitted hats.





When working toward her Girl Scout Silver Award, Kate wrote a program that taught Girl Scouts in different states how to make the preemie hats, so they in turn could teach others to make the hats for their local hospitals. To receive the honor of her Gold Award, Kate taught senior











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citizens how to make caps for NICU. She called her project Special Beginnings. "To receive the Gold Award, the project has to be for something other than Girl Scouts," Jane said. "In the 15 months she worked for the gold, they made 8,700 hats. It takes about three hours to make one hat. Last count a year ago, it was over 10,000 hats."

"After I distributed the hats to nine hospitals, we had 1,600 caps left over," Kate stated. "We got notice that a friend of the family was doing a mission trip overseas called Save the Children, and she asked if we had any hats left. I said, 'Oh boy, do we!' And now the hats are all over the world!"

For her efforts, Kate received a Visionary Award from The Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services. She is the only person under the age of 18 to ever receive the award.

Kate had to stop knitting baby hats because of the growing demands of school, however, her effort continues in senior citizens centers and in the Girl Scouts organization. Her future plans are to spend two years at Navarro College in Waxahachie to pursue her goal of becoming a NICU nurse. After that, she plans to transfer to Tarleton State University or The University of Texas at Arlington. When she finishes nursing school, Kate will have made the complete journey from being part of a groundbreaking practice to being a nurse and introducing other mothers to the same technique. NOW





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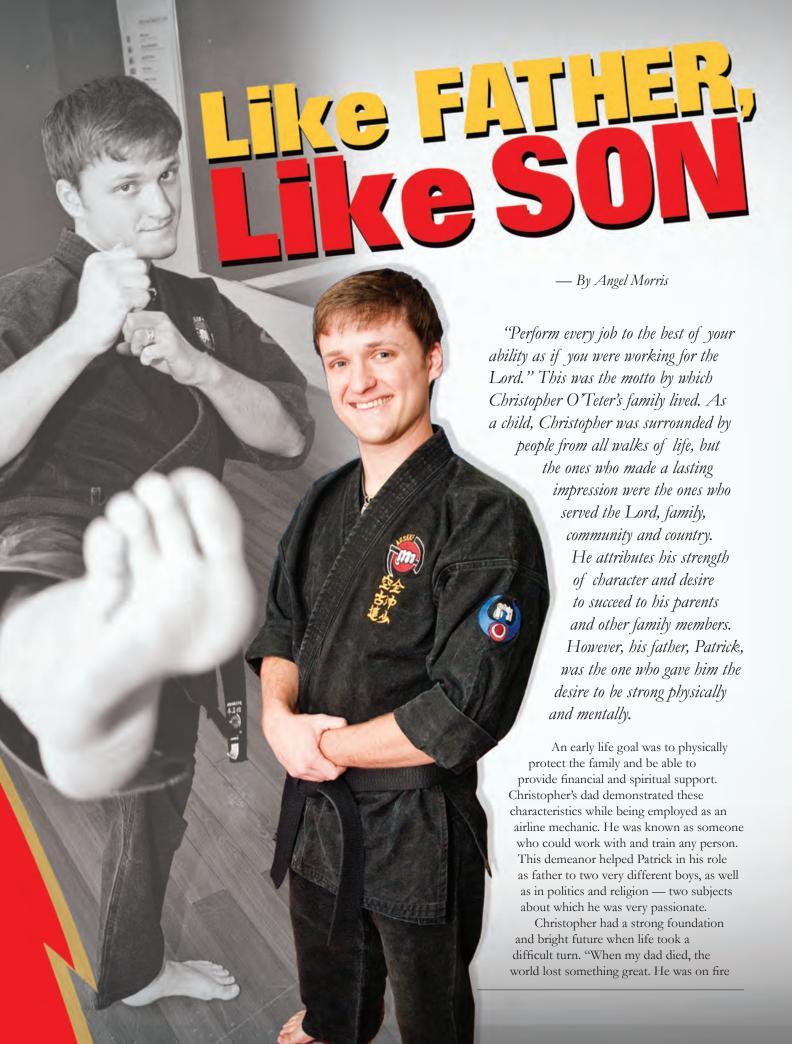
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about politics and was proud to be an American," Christopher said. Patrick's unexpected death left 18-year-old Christopher feeling lost.

While struggling to find himself, to find meaning in life and to become a self-sufficient man, Christopher decided to leave home. He took a restaurant job "sweeping and mopping floors," working his way up to wait staff and training other employees. Even working full time and overtime, he found himself in a continuum of struggle and desperation to make ends meet and find purpose.

Christopher began attending a nondenominational church. Being no stranger to religion, he embraced the





opportunity to counsel church youth. "Here I was suffering from the loss of my dad, and I was in front of kids even more lost than me," Christopher said. "I started visiting their houses, and what I discovered was moms who were intoxicated or in abusive relationships or both. I was compelled to witness to these kids. I wanted to show them there was a better way."

While Christopher had floundered for a couple of years after the death of his father, one area of his life was



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"Ever since I was little, I had a passion to be strong like my dad," Christopher said. He began studying Shorinryu when his father was still alive, showing such skill that his parents enrolled him with renowned Athens, Texas, sensei, John Shipes.



"During

my first year of training with Sensei Shipes, he invited me to a camp where black belts from around the world trained," Christopher recalled. At camp, Christopher would meet Grandmaster Fusei Kise, founder of the largest karate federation in Okinawa.

"I trained with Fusei Kise a couple of times on his trips to America and was even invited to train in Japan when I was



17. I was preparing to go — then my dad died, and I had to back out to support my family," Christopher said. "I continued to train but refused to rank up from brown belt, in part because of depression and in part because that was the last belt my dad had seen me achieve." Pushed by Sensei Shipes and the memory of his

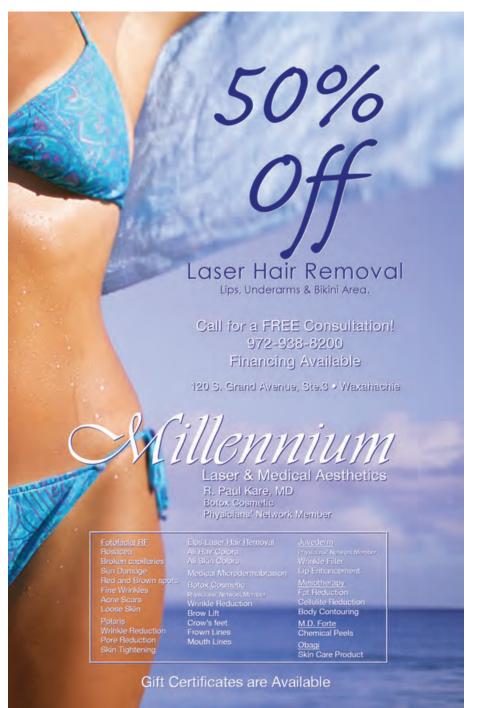
> dad's pride and courage, Christopher eventually tested and acquired his black belt.

"It would normally take someone about three years to earn their black belt if they were consistently training and ranking up. It took me five, not because I wasn't good, but because I sought Hanshi Shipes' black belt, so my test had to be flawless," Christopher noted. Christopher, being

financially challenged, did odd jobs and taught classes at the dojo to afford to train and test for his black belt. "I blew the audience away during my belt test. Even Grandmaster Fusei Kise complimented my performance. I felt like I not only made Sensei Shipes proud, but my father, mother and brother, as well. It was an inspiration to many."

Even though Christopher was working, continuing karate, going to church and counseling youth, he never heard God's









call. "Then, all of a sudden, God was telling me, "Seven days," Christopher recalled. Within the week, Christopher moved back in with his mother, received a vehicle and different college opportunities.

"I enrolled in Navarro Community
College and began studying in Corsicana.
My family decided to move back to
Midlothian. Before we could find
somewhere to live, my aunt and uncle
graciously offered for me to move in with
their family," Christopher recalled. This
allowed him to begin the new semester
at Navarro College's Midlothian campus.
"Moving back to Midlothian and being

"Ever since I was little, I had a PASSION to be strong like my DAD."

surrounded by a family support system was the beginning of my healing. And all of a sudden, my life seemed to be back on track."

One of Christopher's dreams is to open his own dojo. In the meantime, he began volunteering as a karate trainer at Main Street Gym while studying business administration at Navarro. Influenced by his dad's political interests, Christopher successfully developed the Navarro College Republican Club, the first club to form on the Midlothian campus, and has also been invited to speak during various political events. Ultimately, he hopes to pursue a law degree and somehow put his patriotism to work.

"I want to honor my dad by helping Americans work together toward a common goal. Maybe that will be through law, maybe karate. But, let it be done by my heart's passion that was passed down from him to me," Christopher, now 22, said. "Mostly, I just want to help people. I know what it's like for your whole world to fall apart and to fight back from the bottom. If I can do it, anybody can. And if I can help someone do it — even better."

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Expect Miracle

– By Zachary R. Urquhart

People often love to tell stories about their houses. Occasionally, houses will tell the story of the people inside. With rooms that weave a fascinating narrative, Mary Ellen Lanoue's home tells her story, one miracle at a time.

Mary Ellen grew up in New York as one of nine children. She met her husband as a child in an interesting way. "My father was a radio repairman, and Don's dad would bring his radios in to be fixed," she recalled. "So, we met and were married in

1957. I was only 17."

Don enlisted in the Air Force, and they moved several times. After Don retired from the service, he and Mary Ellen moved to Texas. "He decided on Southwestern Assemblies of God University (SAGU) in Waxahachie for college, so we ended up here," she said. Don and Mary Ellen had five children, four of whom still live in the area.

Don passed away in 1992, and it was then that Mary Ellen went back to school. "I attended SAGU and then seminary at Texas Christian University," she explained.





"I always had a heart for ministry, and I felt called to minister God's Word." After losing everything financially when Don passed away, she began her career as a Methodist preacher, moving to Florida in 1993. She served at five Methodist churches during her 14-year career. But a few years ago, Mary Ellen began having trouble hearing, and she thought she might never preach again.

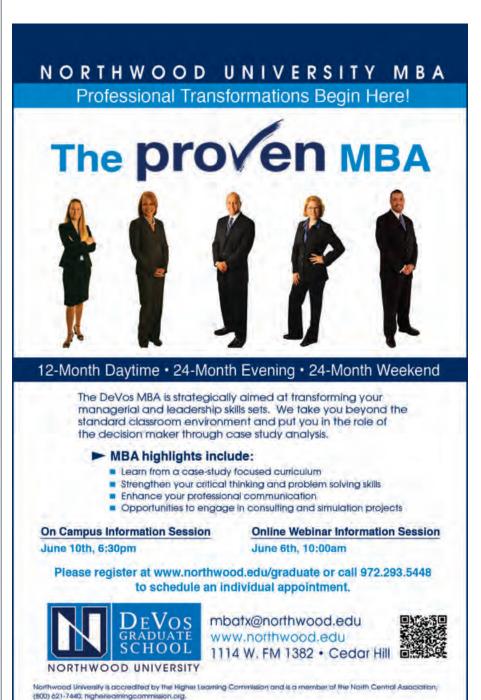
In 2009, Mary Ellen's hearing had gotten so bad she was forced to retire. "I got depressed when I had to retire,"



she recounted. "I was living in a world without hearing, all of a sudden. It was more than I could handle. I ended up in the hospital, but the doctors couldn't find anything wrong. I just had to turn to God for strength while I went through a tough time." With most of her family here, she decided to move back home to Texas.

Like most Methodist ministers, Mary Ellen lived in a parsonage while she was serving in her churches. When she retired, she had no home and not much retirement built up. At a time of need, though, members from her church intervened. "One couple offered to buy me a house," she said. "So the wife and I came to Texas to look, and they bought this place for me — insurance, taxes, everything." Mary Ellen knows that having a house purchased for you is nothing short of a miracle. "I always quote the Scripture, Matthew 19:26: 'With God, all things are possible.' That's why I always tell people to expect a miracle."









The front porch of her home is something from a movie. It's just a simple space with rocking chairs and a few decorations, but it immediately welcomes all who may gather. Moving through her beautiful home, the rooms tell stories of more blessings and miracles. To the side of the front entryway, Mary Ellen has her formal dining room. "The last church I served had me pick out a dining room suite for the parsonage," she admitted. "When I announced I was leaving, they told me to take it with me as a gift. I probably wouldn't have anything quite this nice in here if it were not for them."

Moving into the heart of the home, Mary Ellen has a quaint living room, complete with a touch of her flair. "I used to want to be a cowgirl," she admitted, "so I have horses all over the house in decorations — angels, crosses and horses." Even the living room tells of the way people whom Mary Ellen has touched over the years have in turn blessed her. "A few years ago, one of the ladies from my church sent me a birthday card and a check she said was for furniture. The check was for \$12,000."

Mary Ellen has two guest rooms, one of which is clearly meant to be the kids' room. She has a few pictures done by the grandkids, as well as toys she keeps on hand for their visits. The other guest room is slightly more formal but is

decorated with a few things from Mary Ellen's past. "The old accordion was my dad's," she recalled. "He played at the dance halls until he was saved, and then he started playing it on the street corners while he and his friends witnessed." The accordion is an example of the simple and tasteful ways Mary Ellen has chosen to decorate her home.

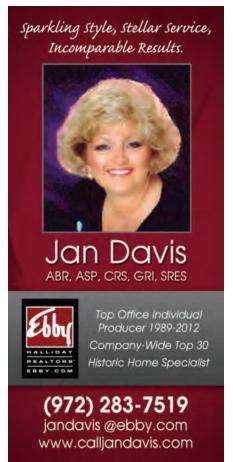
In her garage, there sits one more story of miraculous blessing in Mary Ellen's life. "I used to take some of the older ladies at my church out to dinner during the week, but they had a hard time getting into my pickup truck," she explained. "I would go to their house and drive them in their own cars to make it

















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easier. One lady used to ask me if I liked her car."

Mary Ellen did not know what the woman had in mind when she agreed to take her to the dealership to get her car serviced. "I was planning on looking into selling my truck for something they could ride in, but the woman ended up buying a brand new car that day. A month later,



she gave me the title to her Cadillac that only had 38,000 miles on it. I had prayed about getting something the women could ride in, and that was a huge blessing!"

One of the biggest blessings in her life, however, was not of the material variety at all. Shortly after spending time

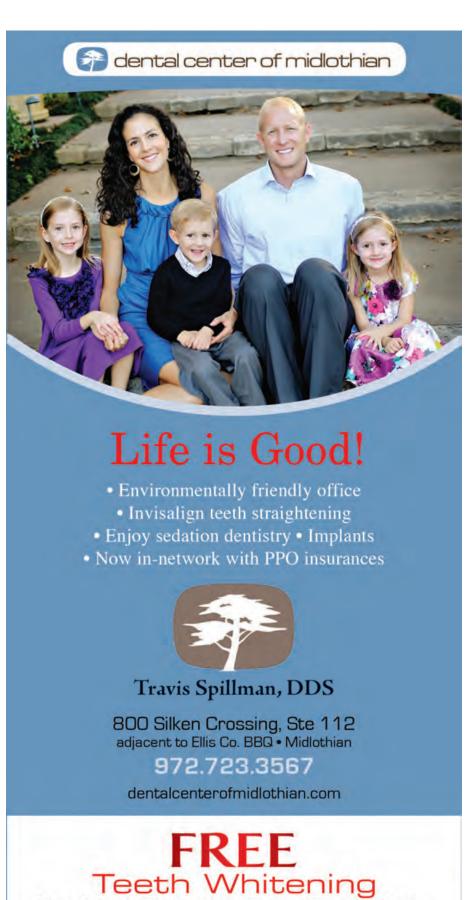


in the hospital with her depression, Mary Ellen heard about a seminar on cochlear implants. Her daughter took her, and it turned out she was a candidate for the implants. "It had been so hard being in a deaf world, all of a sudden, so to find out that I could get these implants and my insurance was going to cover them,



it was amazing," she confessed. "I was trusting God to help me, looking for sign language classes and things like that, and I was blessed to come back to a world where I could hear again."

Now that she has regained her hearing, Mary Ellen has even started preaching and teaching Sunday school, from time to time. "I attend a couple of churches but am not really looking to get back into full-time ministry, unless God wants me to do that," she shared. "I'll do whatever He asks me to do." For now, though, she is happy in her charming home, where she is daily reminded of all of her blessings. It only goes to reinforce her motto: Expect a miracle. NOW



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Jae Go, Valedictorian

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Rebecca Kahl, Salutatorian She will attend the University of Texas at Arlington and major in environmental engineering.





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Congratulations to the MISD 7th graders who qualified for Duke Talent Identification Program and received State Recognition

Frank Seale Middle School students are Rachel Keener, Aubrey Walton, Ethan Tupper, Reese Alexander, (top photo); Walnut Grove Middle School students are Mashayla Marler, Carson Lansdowne, Hunter Elgin, (bottom photo).

Carson also earned National Grand Recognition because

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The Panther Pride Newspaper staff returned from the state journalism convention winning a Silver Star for the MHS school newspaper, making the publication one of the top newspapers in the state.



Good luck to the MHS Family, Career and Community Leaders of America competitive teams that will advance to the **FCCLA National Leadership** Conference in Nashville, TN this summer.



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Oct. 28-Jan. 17	Sept. 30-Nov. 1
Jan. 21-Mar. 28	Nov. 4-Dec. 20
Mar. 31-June 6	Jan. 7-Feb. 21
	Feb. 24-Apr. 18
	Apr. 21-June 6

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HOLIDAYS Sept. 2 Oct. 14 Fair Day Thanksgiving Break Winter Break Nov 25-29 Dec. 23-Jan. 3 Mar. 10-14

BAD WEATHER/MAKE-UP DAYS Apr. 18 & May 23

EARLY RELEASE DAYS Sept. 27 (Homecoming), Dec. 19, 20 & June 5, 6 (Graduation)

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| Secondary Grading Period Ends |
| Staff Development (No School) |
| Staff Work Day

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MISD Welcomes New Leadership



KayLynn Day Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources & Student Services



Krista Tipton Principal High School #2



Shannon Thompson Principal J.R. Irvin Elementary



Coy Tipton Principal Frank Seale Middle School





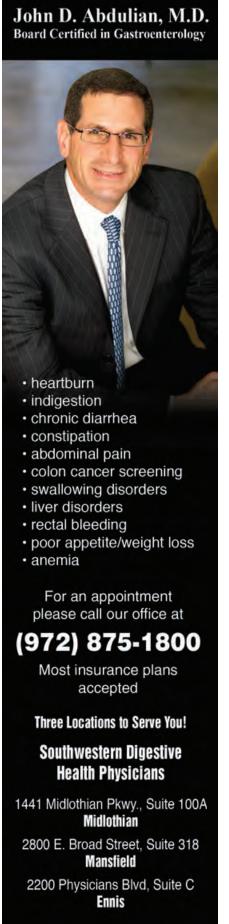








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By Sydni Thomas

Outside of family, church and work, Corine Ramsey had little time for leisure activities. As a successful real estate broker, she logged many hours trying to help people find homes. In March 1987, Corine began going with her friend, Mary Proffitt, to her

oil painting class in

Ennis once a week. Mary's husband, and the builder of Corine's home, had just passed away, and Corine worried about Mary making the weekly trek alone. Corine had no intention of learning how to paint, but Mary's teacher had other plans. Since then, Corine has gone on to paint dozens of pieces and sees the world in a much different light.

Corine attended Crozier Technical High School in Dallas where she studied photography. She was hopeful that being a photographer was what she would do with the rest of her life, but after graduating, she took a job at the phone company, and photography took a backseat. Corine did not have any experience with painting or drawing and believed it was something she couldn't do, that was until she met Louise Howell. Louise, a tall, elegant woman, taught Mary's

"Once
you begin
painting, you
see the world in
a different way.
I'll never look at
it the old way
again."

llothianNOW Jun

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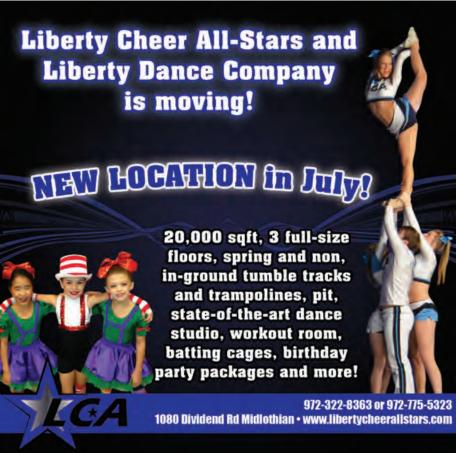
class and was known as "The Rose Lady" for her beautiful rose paintings. Corine admired the roses and knew they were what she wanted to paint more than anything else.

"I told Mary that I asked Ms. Howell to teach me how to paint roses like she does," Corine said. "Mary told me that maybe I should wait until I had taken the class a little while because roses were difficult. During the next class, I didn't say anything about it to Ms. Howell and got ready to paint something else. She walked up to me and said that she thought I wanted to paint roses that day. When I told her how difficult they were and that I should wait. she said in her elegant voice, You said you wanted to paint roses, and today we are going to

Corine has been painting roses ever since. Mary and Corine traveled to their class for a year. During their time together, Mary had a rule that this was their time — no work calls, no work talk and no working while they were together and at class. Painting became Corine's time of relaxation and her journey back to the art world. Most of her paintings are of flowers, nature and buildings, the places and things she finds beautiful. With each painting, Corine began seeing the world differently. She could now see shade and light in everything.

paint roses.""

"We learned a lot about shading and light during those classes," Corine said. "That's what makes a painting realistic. After learning about lighting and shading I began to notice it everywhere. A tree wasn't just a tree anymore. It had depth to it."













Finding subjects to paint is not a difficult task for Corine. Each morning she goes outside and is surrounded by 50 acres of inspiration. From the pond out back to the cattle that once roamed her land. Corine never runs out of ideas. Putting her previous photography skills to use, Corine will take her camera around with her and capture the scenes that inspire her so she can paint them later. "I wake up each morning and go outside to see what God has painted for us today," she said. "That is what I think He does. It never looks the same and the view is always a masterpiece. I come back in and try to recreate it just the way He did."

Corine and her late husband, Weston, moved to Midlothian in 1981. They were living in Dallas and had been searching for the perfect piece of land. While Weston was away on a business trip, Corine found their future piece of Midlothian land, and after just one look at the pond, the fisherman inside of her knew it was the perfect place for their family. Moving to the country promised a slower way of living, but Corine learned that this was a myth. After her oldest daughter, Janet Calvert, graduated from college, she convinced Corine to become a real estate agent. Corine's business took off, and she convinced Janet to move to Midlothian to help her. After graduating with a degree in construction management, Corine's youngest daughter, Keri Turner, came to work with the family, too.

In 2007, Corine semiretired from the real estate business but wasn't quite ready

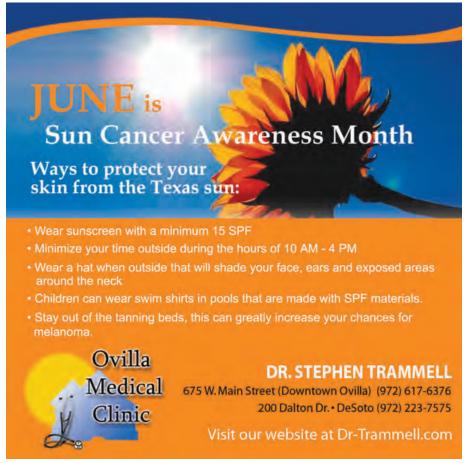




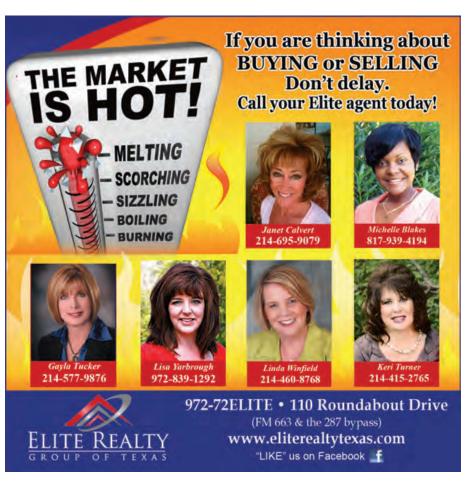
to give up her broker's license. She had worked for most of her life and always said that she would never retire. Even though she is semiretired, Corine's life is far from slower. She has taken a few painting classes, dances with other senior citizens and attends a circuit of musical dinner parties. Activities at her church, Oak Crest Baptist, kept her calendar full. "I told everyone I was only semiretiring," Corine said. "If I decide that I want to go back to work, then I am going



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to go back. I love working, but honestly, I think I'll just retire. I have found it so rewarding and great fun. If you stay busy, your retirement can be a special phase in your life.

Corine took time off from painting for a while and is getting back into doing it regularly again. A painting can take two to three days or more to complete, but now that she is no longer managing a full-time job, she's learning it's OK to take her time. When she is finished, Corine gives her paintings to friends and family.

Friends are what got her into oil painting in the first place. Several pieces of Mary's work hang in Corine's entryway as a reminder of friendship and trying new things. Once she pushed all of the doubts about painting out of her mind, Corine mastered the brush and has brought God's paintings to life on canvas. "You do not have to know how to draw to be a painter," Corine said. "I want everyone to know that they can do it, too. Once you begin painting, you see the world in a different way. I'll never look at it the old way again."

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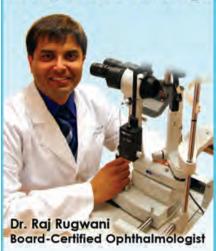
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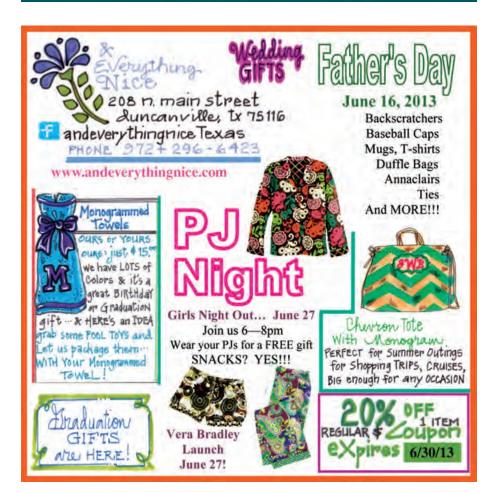
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After returning to Texas, Karyn enrolled at Navarro College in Waxahachie to pursue her nursing degree. Her passion for bodybuilding continued, and she found a personal trainer and a posing coach to help her train. But, Karyn's goal of competition was thwarted again when she became pregnant with her first child. Her focus shifted to her new baby and school. She earned an associate degree in nursing and continued working out. "I truly have a passion for this," she smiled. "I enjoy lifting iron and weights. I'm in my element. I don't know why, but God gave it to me, and I appreciate it. I want to be a light in the world of bodybuilding. On the back of my jacket, I have the Scripture Matthew 5:16, which is about being a light in the world. I want to glorify God. He could easily take it all away."

Bodybuilding, particularly competing in the sport, is not for the faint of heart. About six to eight weeks before competition, Karyn's schedule for working out was somewhat restricted. She didn't get to work out as much as she wanted to because of her work schedule and her family responsibilities. She did cardio workouts once a day, five to six days a week for 45 to 60 minutes and weight trained three to four times a week for an hour. Her diet became increasingly more regimented and exact as the competition day drew nearer. When she first started training, her calories were at 2,000 per day, with an exact percentage breakdown — 20 percent carbs, 40 percent protein and 40 percent good fats. All of that eventually went to 1,200





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calories per day with 10 percent carbs, approximately 50 percent protein and 30 percent fat. A week before competition, there was even more manipulation of her diet and water intake.

With the stringent requirements of exercise and diet, Karyn acknowledged that the biggest component of bodybuilding is mental. "If you can get your focus, you'll be amazed at what you can do and what you can lift. People forever underestimate their potential, because they don't push themselves. I think a trainer is very necessary, if you have a goal and want to get to the next level. You need them to help you push past the hard



part. There is something I'd like to clear up for all women. I lift heavy, but I've not ever gotten heavy or masculine looking. You'll never look like a man, unless you take steroid substances, so women who are afraid to lift heavy need not fear. It's actually good for you!"

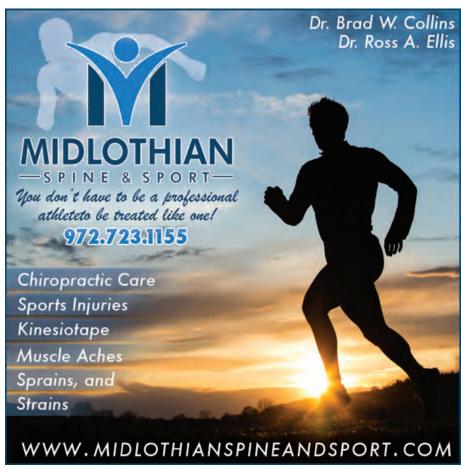
Karyn competed for the first time



at age 33 in the NPC Lone Star Classic in the figure division. Bodybuilding competitions are divided into several categories: novice, which is for first timers; amateur; professional; and open, which is for anyone who wants to compete. There is also a teen division and a masters division, which is for anyone over the age of 35. The various categories have four divisions in which women display different body types: bodybuilding, figure, bikini and physique. Competitors are divided into height

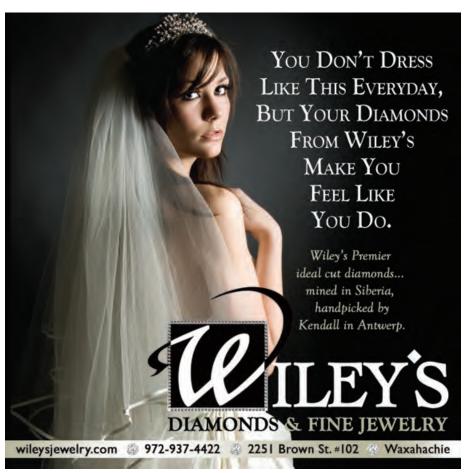


groups for the figure competition. Karyn, who competed in the figure division said, "In figure, they want broad, rounded, almost hypertrophied shoulder muscles, slender waists, some hips, good musculature in the legs, nice rounded glutes and good muscle definition in the back. For figure bodybuilding, I do not have the genetics to build what they are looking for in that arena. My body type would be more successful in physique muscle building, because I can build muscle well. I have a hard time getting lean. I'm stockier."













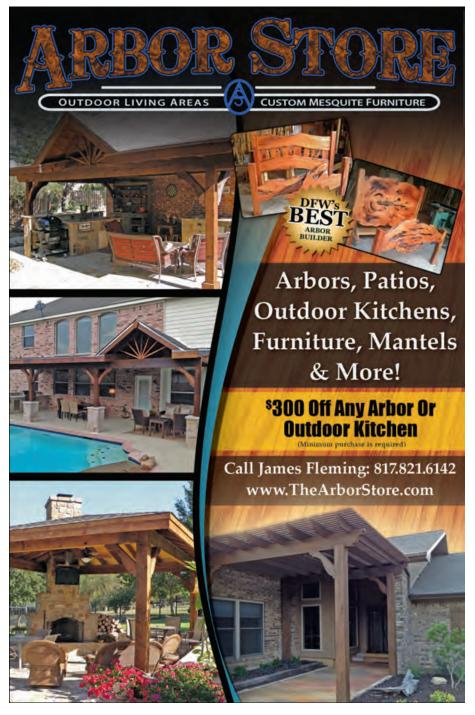




Karyn's first venture into competition for bodybuilding did not go as well as she hoped. She planned on entering again, but her plans were once again derailed — this time due to a car accident. On January 30, 2012, she was hit by a drunk driver. Her injuries were very severe, and she was immobile for two months. She was unable to walk for four months, "I had to keep my foot elevated 24/7," she explained. "My heel was shattered, and a big chunk of my bone and tendon was ripped out. I broke my fibula and tibia. During surgery, I had a plate, nine screws and a pin put in. It is by far the most painful experience I have ever had. After the wreck, I've had to get my mind back into focus, because I felt so defeated. I can't run and jump like I could before. Normally, I'm a very optimistic and positive person, but it took the wind out of my sail, and I had to push past it. Once I started to see progress, then it was easier to get back into focus. I think most people give up too early. On the days I don't feel like going, I tell myself that if I can just get to the gym, walk in and start doing it, then before I know it, I'm done."

Karyn still has not given up on the possibility of competing again and wants to do so with her sister, who is now her training partner. "I would like to compete again in the future, Lord willing and only if my husband, Candon, is on board," she confessed. "I thank Candon for supporting me during my first competition. Training to compete and bodybuilding is an amazing journey. Anyone can do it. Family support is important, because you have to have razor-sharp focus all the time. I praise God for giving me the opportunity and the passion." NOW







Business NOW







John Houston Custom Homes

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Monday-Saturday: 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Models are open.

Sunday: 1:00-6:00 p.m. Models are open. Some communities and homes are available by appointment.



Rob Poole and John Houston look over building plans. John Houston proudly stands in front of one of the many houses built by John Houston Custom Homes.

FAITH WORKS

John Houston Custom Homes builds houses and lifelong friendships.

— By Betty Tryon

To understand John Houston and his approach to his business, you have to understand his heart for God and his desire to incorporate opportunities to share his faith and build friendships into his business. John Houston Homes is a faith-based company. "Our philosophy is we have to earn the right to be in people's lives," he explained. "You don't get that opportunity just because you say you are a believer. We try to deliver an excellent product at a fair price and deliver excellent customer service. In our opinion, that gives us the right to be able to share the Gospel if someone asks us to; if not, then we at least know we've represented Christ in the right way. It doesn't mean we're perfect, but it does mean we do the

best we can to get there."

John grew up with the benefit of generations of family members in the construction business. He has worked in the business since his high school years. "I knew God was calling me to do something, so I went to Southwestern Assemblies of God University (SAGU) and got a bachelor's degree in general business and a specialization in administration and went to work for an investment company," he shared. "That's where I learned budgets, project management and schedules. Construction is customer service, having a blueprint and a road map to get the project completed on time and in budget. So, all the things I learned there were invaluable."

Business NOW

With decades of experience in construction, the education at SAGU gave John the foundation of putting his faith in action every day during the eight years he has owned his own business. John Houston Custom Homes has grown into a very successful business with over 2,000 homes built, and it has been the recipient of multiple McSAM

"IT'S NOT JUST
ABOUT THE SALE.

IT'S ABOUT THE
RELATIONSHIP."

awards. McSAM is an industry award for "significant and creative contribution in residential marketing through specific achievements." John made the switch to home building because of his belief that God was leading him in that direction. "We know what we're called to do in this business," he shared. "We have a specific purpose to reach people for Christ and give to the kingdom. That's why we do what we do."

In order to accomplish this, John has a 60-touch point plan that everyone follows. "We train our staff and teach them the 60 opportunities we have from sales to construction to the office to closing. When we deliver on those touch points with excellence, integrity and righteousness, it gives us the chance to talk to customers about Christ. We can tell people we are believers all day long, but if we are not acting that way, and if we are not being men and women of integrity and living a righteous life to the best of our ability, then why would anyone want to be a believer? We don't get that opportunity with everyone, and we don't force it on anybody. It's just how we live life with people. We want to build lifelong relationships with them. For us, it's not just about the sale. It's about the relationship." NOW



Around Town NOW



Covenant Acres Ranch Ministries offers pony rides at Spring Fling.



Head Start friends, Kaidi, Cathryn and Lucas, go on a nature walk.



Billy and Renee McElheney kid around with a giant Etch-A-Sketch.



Second graders enjoy using the map the LaRue Miller Elementary PTO made for the campus.



Sue Ballard purchases a gift from Paula Lowe at The Flower Shoppe By Jane.



Midlothian's Pritul Sarker explains to classmates that he wants to be a doctor when he grows up during Career Day at Canterbury Episcopal School.



Nicole, Jaycee, Jarren and Jerimiah Welding enjoy lunch at Jimmy's Pizza Pasta & Subs.



D.J. Chapman of DJ's Window Cleaning washes storefront windows for downtown businesses.



The Gryphons Motorcycle Club donates to the Midlothian Senior Activity Center.



Culinary students from Midlothian High School bake several cakes for Midlothian's 125th Birthday Bash.

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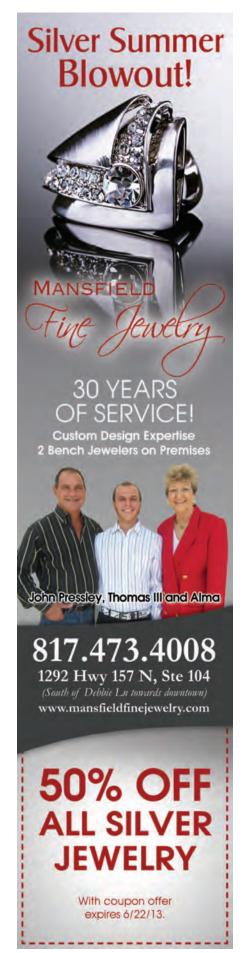
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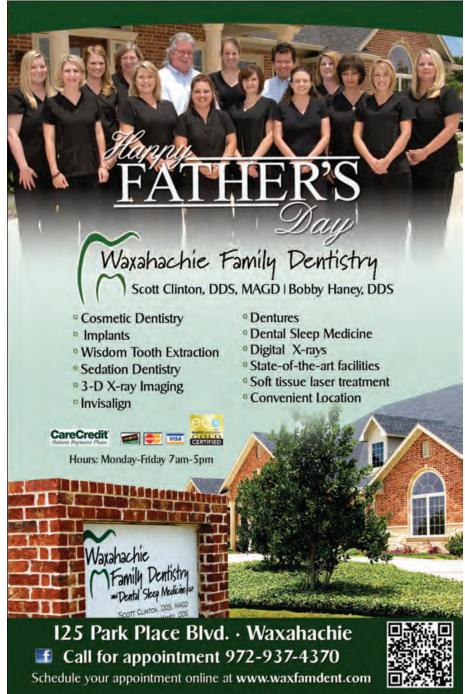
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How to Recover From a Back Injury

Back pain is something you don't want to repeat. Recovering properly from a back injury and taking preventive measures can help you reduce your risk of going through it again.

Note your symptoms

Minor back pain often resolves itself within a day or two. If your pain persists, however, talk to an orthopedic surgeon or your family doctor. He or she will examine you, note how your body moves, determine whether you have any pain down your legs and take a medical history.

Make sure you mention all your symptoms to your doctor, such as whether a fever or nausea accompanied your back pain. The pain may be secondary to another condition. Many back problems are caused by a muscle pull or strain. The usual treatment includes taking pain relievers and/or muscle relaxants and, perhaps, limiting certain activities until the muscle heals.

Consider your options

"For more serious back injuries, such as a herniated or ruptured disk or a pinched nerve, surgery may be necessary. But, surprisingly, most disk injuries heal themselves without surgery. The only reason to have emergency back surgery is when the pain is accompanied by severe or progressive motor weakness or involves bowel or bladder problems. In these cases, it's crucial to relieve pressure from the nerves in order to

retain their function. If your pain is severe and persistent, your doctor may suggest diagnostic tests, such as an MRI or CT scan.

Recover carefully

If you have surgery, your recovery regimen begins with wound healing, which takes about two weeks. During that time, you need to be careful. After that, ask your doctor about beginning a progressive walking program to promote muscle strength.

Walk short distances initially and make sure you don't walk so far you can't get home safely if you get tired. As your strength increases, your physician or physical therapist will suggest you supplement your walks with gentle back exercises.

Talk to your doctor if intense pain recurs. When a disk is removed, pieces of it may remain in the back and cause problems. For the first couple of months after surgery, it's important not to lift, twist or bend, all of which could re-injure your back.

Back to exercise

The best predictor for future back pain is previous back pain, so once you're on the road to recovery, the best way to ensure a healthy back is to approach activity sensibly. **NOW**

Matthew Berchuck, MD, is an orthopedic spine surgeon on the medical staff at Baylor Medical Center at Waxahachie.







June 1

Annual Pancake Breakfast Fly-in: 8:00-11:00 a.m., Mid-Way Regional Airport. Event includes classic airplanes and fighters; helicopter, open cockpit bi-plane and DC-3 rides; full motion simulator instructional flights; skydivers; fly-overs; Midlothian Classic Wheels; Gold Wing Road Riders; live music and activities for the children. Breakfast tickets: 8 and over \$7, 7 and under \$3. Parking is free. For more information, call (972) 923-0080 or visit www.mid-wayregional.com.

Waxahachie Downtown Farmers Market: 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., 410 S. Rogers St. Fresh farm raised fruit, vegetables, eggs and plants. Also a wide assortment of jewelry, clothing, art and other gift ideas. www.facebook.com/ DowntownWaxahachieFarmersMarket.

June 1 — July 31

Desoto Art League Annual Art Show: City Center, City of DeSoto, 211 E. Pleasant Run Rd., DeSoto. Artwork will be exhibited in the atrium during regular business hours. Open to all artists. Visit www.desotoartleague.com for further details on the types of artwork accepted or contact Bryan Reynolds at (469) 337-8367 or at dalspringshow@gmail.com.

June 2

Graduate Baccalaureate: 8:00 p.m., Midlothian High School Auditorium.

June 3

Wildflower & Bird Walk: 9:00-11:00 a.m., Mockingbird Nature Park, 1361 Onward Rd. Indian Trail Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Program. Please bring drinking water and binoculars. If it rains, the free event will be canceled. Contact (972) 775-7177 for more information.

June 6

Wells Fargo Small Business Appreciation Day: 5:00-7:00 p.m., Wells Fargo/Midlothian, 1177 N. 9th St., wellsfargo.com/biz.

June 7

MHS Graduation: 8:00 p.m., MISD Multi-Purpose Stadium.

June 17

Wildflower & Bird Walk: 9:00-11:00 a.m., Mockingbird Nature Park, 1361 Onward Rd. Indian Trail Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Program. Please bring drinking water and binoculars. If it rains, the free event will be canceled. Contact (972) 775-7177 for more information.

June 21

Launch of the 5th Annual 100th G.R.E.E.N. (Golfers Rallying to Erase the Effects of Neglect) Marathon: Noon, Thorntree Country Club, 825 W. Wintergreen Rd., DeSoto. Event will include a free lunch for prospective golfers, introduction of the organizations sponsored by the marathon, explanation and distribution of promotional materials and suggestions on fundraising, prize for bringing the most golfers and free Florida golf scramble with a 2:00 p.m. shotgun start.

June 22

Sand Volleyball Tournament: 7:00 a.m., Midlothian Sports Complex, 1400 S. 14th St. 1st Sand Volleyball Tournament benefiting the Momentum Youth Track Club. Awards will be given to the top three teams. Come to play or just to watch. There will be a raffle, food, drinks and vendor booths. Cost \$125 entry per team. Call (972) 825-7961 for more information.

Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your event details to betty.tryon@nowmagazines.com.





Cooking NOW



In the Kitchen With Paula Binford

— By Betty Tryon

Growing up in Arkansas, preparing food by frying was the norm for Paula Binford. Once when she was baking, a masterpiece went terribly wrong when a perfect cherry pie was dropped on the floor before serving! Today a different type of food is on the menu. "I had a gastric bypass, so I don't bake too much anymore. We stick to healthier cooking styles and foods."

Paula does not usually invent recipes, but she made one of her mother's recipes for enchiladas more user friendly. She shares that recipe with the readers. Their family tradition is to bless their meal before eating — "even if we are eating out."

Enchilada Casserole

Serves 4.

Pam Cooking Spray I can Old El Paso Enchilada Sauce,

- I can Campbell's tomato soup
- 6 corn tortillas, crumbled
- 1/2 cup onion, finely chopped (optional)
- 1 lb. lean ground beef
- 1/2 small can sliced black olives (optional)
- 8 oz. Mexican blend cheese, grated (plus additional for topping)
- **1.** Preheat oven to 350 F. Spray 8x8-inch casserole dish with Pam.
- **2.** Mix enchilada sauce and soup in large bowl. Stir in crumbled tortillas and let set.
- **3.** Soften onions in skillet. Add ground beef and brown.
- **4.** Spread 1/2 tortilla mixture into casserole

dish. Top with browned ground beef/onion mixture and black olives. Cover with cheese. Spread rest of tortilla mixture on top. Top with a little more cheese.

5. Cook uncovered for 30 minutes or until golden brown.

Crock-Pot Chicken With Black Beans and Cream Cheese

- 4-5 frozen boneless chicken breasts (for better results, use a bag of tenders)
- 1 15.5-oz. can black beans, drained
- 1 15-oz. can corn, drained
- 1 15-oz. jar salsa, any kind (Roasted adds a great flavor!)
- 1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese
- 1. Put chicken breasts into Crock-Pot.
- **2.** Add black beans, corn and salsa; cook on high for 4-5 hours, or until chicken is cooked.

3. Add cream cheese. (Just throw it on top!) Let sit for about 1/2 hour before serving.

Pineapple Cranberry Relish *Serves 6.*

20 oz. can crushed pineapple in its own juice

6 cups fresh or frozen cranberries

1 1/4 cups sugar

I cup walnuts, chopped

1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice

1/4 tsp. ground cloves

- **1.** Thoroughly drain the pineapple using a strainer (one made from a nonreactive material, such as stainless steel) set over a large measuring cup. Save juice.
- **2.** Add enough water to the juice to measure 2 cups of liquid. (Orange juice is an alternative to the water.)
- **3.** Pour the liquid into a large nonreactive saucepan. Add the cranberries and sugar. Stir mixture over high heat until sugar dissolves and liquid comes to a boil. Continue cooking it at a boil, stirring occasionally, until most of the berries pop open and the mixture is thick, about 10 minutes. Remove pan from heat
- **4.** Mix in the pineapple, walnuts, lemon juice and cloves; transfer relish to a serving bowl and refrigerate uncovered until cold, about 2 hours.
- **5.** Cover the relish until you're ready to serve it.

Sunday Sour Cream Chicken Serves 8.

Pam Cooking Spray

1 4-oz. jar dried beef

8 slices bacon

8 large chicken breasts, boneless

- 1 10.5-oz. can mushroom soup, undiluted
- 1 pint sour cream
- **1.** Spray 8x12-inch baking dish with Pam; cover bottom of dish with dried beef.
- **2.** Wrap a slice of bacon around each chicken breast. Place on top of dried beef.
- **3.** Mix together soup and sour cream; pour over chicken breasts.
- **4.** Refrigerate 2 hours. Bake uncovered for 2 1/2 to 3 hours in a 275 F oven. Note: Do not add salt. For more gravy, double soup and sour cream. Serve with peas and mashed potatoes!

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graduate studies in General Practice Residency at Tufts University School of Dental Medicine in 2006 where she concentrated her training in special needs and medically compromised

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