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ON THE COVER



This father and daughter connect through country dance competitions.

Photo by Vanessa Polozola.

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Subscriptions are available at the rate of \$35 per year or \$3.50 per issue. Subscriptions should be sent to: NOW Magazines, P.O. Box 1071, Waxahachie, TX 75168. For advertising rates or editorial correspondence, call (817) 279-0013 or visit www.nowmagazines.com.



Editor's Note

Hello, Granbury Family and Friends!


Granddaddy represents good memories from my childhood. A big man, he carried a gentleness about him. I still envision him picking meat off fish bones for my sister and me, always protecting our small throats. He cracked pecans from his trees, letting us eat our fill. And best of all, we got to play in his wheelbarrow. Many times, I landed on the ground as my sisters and brother took a corner of the yard a bit too fast and sharp. I loved my grandfather, who passed far too early in my life — a good man everyone knew, admired and respected. Imperfect, but I learned about faith and love from him.

Is there a father or father figure who influenced you positively? I hope so. Remember that man, and be sure to say thank you this month.


Happy Father's Day!

Lisa

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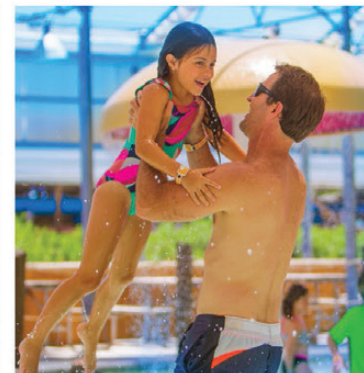


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FATHER DAUGHTER *Dance*


— By Erin McEndree

Donnie Stewart opens his arms to his daughter, Melissa Jefferies. He places his right hand in the middle of her back and loosely holds her hand with his left. When the country western music begins to play, he leads her swiftly, yet gently, moving in unison across the floor. They are part of the music, as they lively loop and flair to the fast rhythm. The red fringe on Melissa's custom-made turquoise dress bounces with the beat, while 3,500 hand set Swarovski crystals catch the light, sparkling endlessly. Melissa and her mom, Melinda, applied each one separately.

The choreography is tailor-made for this father-daughter duo. Donnie wears a black cowboy hat, black vest and red shirt that complements Melissa's fringe. The specially made dance boots scoot across the floor gracefully and concisely with each other and the music. "It is special to dance with my daughter and spend time together," Donnie said with a tear in his eye.

The country western craze began in the '80s and '90s. It started as a grassroots dance sport after a hard day's work, spreading to honky-tonks, community centers, barn dances and VFW halls. The United Country Western Dance Council began in 1989 when people across America accepted this up-and-coming sensation. The council established one set of rules to ensure quality and consistency for all participants.

Dance has been a part of the Stewart family for three generations. "I remember going to see my grandparents dance when I was young," Melissa recalled. "I began dancing when I was 3 with Gina Robinson in Granbury. I took ballet, tap and jazz for 15 years." During college, Melissa taught at the Dance Connection in Granbury. She also taught ballroom dance at Texas Christian University for a time.



"I want to be the best coach to my parents because they inspired me to begin dancing in the first place."



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Donnie and Melinda began taking dance lessons in the early '90s. "I saw a country western competition and wanted to do more than ballroom dancing," Donnie said. "I wanted to compete." There are eight dances. Four are slow and smooth dances and four get the heart pumping.

"Our dancing was taken to a whole different level when we began practicing to compete," Melinda said. They found Mike Wagner, a country western dance instructor who helped them prepare for competition. Students must be passionate, dedicated and committed to the intensity of the dance.

"I remember going to all my parents' competitions. I was mesmerized and wanted to be like them," Melissa said. "I became interested in the country western dance as I watched them." Melissa became one of Mike Wagner's amateur students at the age of 22. "When I started, I thought it would be easy, since I had ballet experience. I learned it was hard. I had to learn a whole new way. I couldn't stand on my toes, and I couldn't look like a ballerina." Mike was patient as he taught Melissa new techniques. She began dancing full time and focused on becoming a pro. She rehearsed two to three hours a day and taught students in the evenings anywhere from 10 to 30 hours per week.

While competing on the United Country Western Dance Council circuit from 2010 to 2015, Melissa moved up in the rankings, quickly winning a world championship in every division she entered for six years in a row. The last two years, she and Mike have won the highest honor by cinching the Couples Classic Masters World Championship. All four also compete with the American Country Dance Association.

After becoming an instructor, Melissa sought her own amateur students. "My dad became my first amateur student," Melissa said beaming. As Melissa and her dad won world titles, her mom worked with Mike and won world titles in different divisions. Along the way, minor injuries have resulted from repetitive stress. "We've had neck and foot injuries," Melissa said. "Once, while doing a turn with my dad, I hit his elbow and broke my hand. However, I finished every heat."

"Dancing in the WCLDSF [World Country & Line DanceSport Federation] is *similar* to the Olympics. We have to comply with the same regulations as other athletes," Melissa said. "We got gold medals, stood on the podium and sang the 'Star-Spangled Banner' as the American flag waved behind us." According to the UCWDC's website, their 2012 vision included turning all dance forms, including country western dance, into a recognized Olympic sport.



Melissa Jeffries with her parents Donnie and Melinda Stewart.

Mike and Melissa chuckled as they recalled the reality show "almost created," based on country western dancing. "We had been interviewed and signed contracts," Melissa laughed. "It would have been a great reality show, but it fell through."

Melissa confirmed there is enough drama, panic and adrenaline to make a good reality show. "However, everyone cheers for everyone," Donnie said. "We are all good friends off the floor and all go out together after the competitions. We have so many friends from around the country."

Melissa has taken some time off from competing professionally but still teaches about 10 gentlemen students in the evening, as well as her parents. She competes with these students once a month. Dancing is great exercise, and it is not unusual for her to dance 50-60 heats in a row.



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Donnie and Melissa's dancing fun never ceases.

During the day, Melissa teaches 10th grade at Trimble Tech High School. "I will probably never stop trying to improve my technique and skill. It is my passion, and it makes me a better coach and teacher," Melissa said. "I may return to professional competition someday, but for now I want to help others achieve their goals." Melissa tries to keep the weekends free to spend with her husband, Chris. He is her biggest supporter off the floor.

Donnie and Melinda would like to continue training and advance to first in the world championships as a couple. Both have won — Melissa with her dad and Melinda with Mike — but never together. "We have to dance in the advanced division against pros," Melinda said. "We are just part-time dancers. It's more like our hobby, but we are competing against full-time dancers. It is tough for us." Finding time to train is challenging since Donnie has recently started a home inspection business, and Melinda works at Texas Health Harris Methodist Hospital Southwest Fort Worth in the lab as a microbiologist.

"I want to be the best coach to my parents because they inspired me to begin dancing in the first place. It is surreal to be my parents' primary coach now," Melissa said. "Our relationship makes for a unique coaching experience. They challenge me as a teacher like no other student ever has. I also take their progress very seriously and share in their successes and failures personally." Country western dance is an art form that is always changing. It is best experienced visually at any live event. **NOW**

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ENCHANTED *Cottage*

— By Carolyn Wills

Ten years ago, Sheila Groeschel moved back to Granbury. She had been a wife and a mother for most of her life, raised four sons, lived in huge homes, on ranches, built homes and, as a Realtor, helped people buy and sell homes. “I was ready for a simpler life, and the best way to do that was simply to start,” she shared. So that’s what she did.

She had grown up in Granbury, and the time was right to reconnect with community and friends, establish her business, revisit childhood memories and, along the way, lighten her load. As a child, she recalled dreaming of her very own house and of wanting to be either a mother or a mermaid. She loved being a mother and didn’t mind not being a mermaid, yet somehow the hope of that special home still lingered.

One day, after a friend asked for her help in listing a house located in the historic town of Granbury, Sheila happily arrived to take pictures. “I said to myself, ‘Hold the phone, this is my home!’” she laughed. “When I was a little girl, my





At Home
With *Sheila*
Groeschel





friends and I would ride our bikes on this street, and I always loved this house.” The charming stone cottage, built in 1953 (interestingly, the year of Sheila’s birth) by Raymond and Nona Gibson, had been home to many over the years, and suddenly, there was Sheila.

It’s been about a year since she purchased the “Gibson House,” and while it was always cute, it is now over-the-moon enchanting. Its transformation is so special that, at less than 900 square feet, Sheila’s stunning home was welcomed into Granbury’s 2015 Candlelight Tour of Homes. “I tell clients to forget what they see when they’re looking at houses and go with imagination,” she said. She

had imagined her cottage as a jewel-box, and with the help of a talented contractor, Michael Cook, and against constraints of a shoestring budget, that’s exactly what she got. “This is my very own playhouse, and when I’m here, I’m happy,” she expressed, smiling. She wanted a feminine house, and so a lovely stone

pathway was added from the curb to the front door. She asked, too, for all exterior doors to be painted a cheerful pink.

Originally, the home opened to a tiny foyer, with the living room to the right and, behind the foyer, a short hallway to the bedroom on the left. Sheila, a 30-year student of feng shui, opted for the wall facing the front door to be removed and the living room and bedroom switched.

The effect is breathtaking. Now, the home opens to a beautifully appointed, bright and cheerful living room as brilliant as any of Sheila’s lovely floral paintings. It’s a spacious room with an exterior side door, pink of course, leading to a charming courtyard and guesthouse.




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"I like a myriad of different styles," Sheila shared. "It's fun, occasionally, to take everything down and/or move things around." Her living room is a palette of playful colors and patterns against a backdrop of light-colored walls and original hardwood floors. Not a fan of fussy, she enjoys bold Spanish "Consuela" colors mixed with softer feminine "prairie" touches, a few of her mother's and grandmother's treasures and some carefully selected antiques. Fresh pink roses, chandeliers, plantation shutters, handmade quilts, white slipcovered chairs and a beautifully upholstered sofa, cow skin rugs and floral paintings arranged for comfort and conversation are a few of her favorite things.

Her greatest joy, though, is her devoted, longhaired, 10-year-old Chihuahua, Lilly Bell Bernice Groeschel who, like a tiny white shadow, wants only to be where Sheila is. "For years, I lived on ranches where dogs were working animals and cats belonged in the barn," she said.

Perhaps the most signature item in Sheila's home is her ingenious sliding "barn" door which, thanks to the artistic talents of her nephew, Keith Grissom, is a mural replicating a Monet painting. Removing the foyer took away the separation from the bathroom entrance, which is located in the center of the home, so what more perfect solution and amazing first impression for visitors than a large, appropriately feminine, beautiful Monet?

Sheila's charming bedroom is reserved for rest and relaxation and, while Lilly Bell is always welcomed, electronics are not. "It's a no-electronics zone," she divulged, grinning. A magnificent white poster bed is dressed with quilts, chenille and giant, comfy pillows. A wonderful chandelier



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and lamp, both shaped like bouquets, complement a wicker side table, large white dresser and lovely antique vanity.

The bedroom is at the front of the home and the living room and kitchen are toward the back on either side of the bathroom. The kitchen accommodates a small dining table and two upholstered chairs. Fortunately, cabinets, counters and stainless steel appliances were in great shape, so beyond adding the dining set and a happy painting of strawberries given to Sheila by her mother by way of her grandmother, the kitchen is warm, cozy and functional.

Thanks to Sheila's creativity, a tiny, approximately 200-square-foot outbuilding offers added livable space. Exiting the side door from the living room, a one-time stand-alone garage is now a casita, serving as a guesthouse, office, meditation and media room. Its Hobbit-sized door opens to a delightful room furnished with a giant daybed, comfy chairs, textiles, pillows, candles and a most dramatic chandelier fashioned from twigs and twinkling lights. "It's a great place to be with friends, watch TV or, simply, enjoy the quiet," Sheila said. A small table and chairs on a patio fronting the casita offers fresh air seating, as well as an off-chance visit from Sheila's other beloved pet, Prince Charles the cat.

Bordering the courtyard and connecting the casita to the main cottage, a whimsical fence of cedar stands, while limbs strung with tiny white lights encompasses the most appealing and magical aspects of the home's exterior. "My brother is a scenic designer," Sheila said. "It was his house-warming gift, and I love it."

When she purchased the house, Sheila made a list of everything she wanted in a renovation. "I got it all, except heat and air conditioning," she said, grinning. "You know, though, it hasn't been a problem. Space heaters keep the house warm and two window units and ceiling fans keep it cool."

Ten years ago, Sheila found a statue of the goddess Venus in a junk store. She bought it, and today, it stands on the white dresser in the bedroom — an ideal complement to a childhood dream that waited its time and to the woman whose vision created a most enchanted cottage. **NOW**



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Life-influenced *Writing*

— By Lisa Bell

“There’s nothing like a book on a shelf. It’s just beautiful to hold one in your hands,” Tina Samples said. “I never thought I’d be a writer.”

Tina owns a book printed in 1892. Holding it, she thinks about someone penning the words over 100 years ago. In a world of e-books, she prefers sitting down with a printed copy — something she hopes never ends.

Tina didn’t grow up with dreams of writing. In fact, she never gave professional writing much thought, at least, not until one simple moment compelled her to write a story.



With a degree in music therapy, Tina worked with the Granbury and Stephenville ISDs. One of her students, a nonverbal autistic girl, walked beside her. She slipped her hand in Tina's — an uncharacteristic action — and said, "I love you too much." Tina went home overwhelmed by what happened. She wrote the girl's story and added her thoughts. "God does that with us — slips His hand in ours and says, 'I love you too much,'" Tina said.

That story launched something in Tina. Ideas surfaced, inspiring more stories. Many of her stories became part of published books. Her husband, Dave, supported her writing, encouraging her along the way. As a pastor's wife, she often taught women. They moved to Colorado, and she started a Bible study with a women's group. No stranger to a painful past, Tina saw the results of wounding in women, including herself. While visiting with four broken women, she wanted to minister healing and hope but wasn't sure what to share that might help.

One morning, she awoke at 3:00 a.m. "I know it sounds crazy, but I heard my name," she said. "Then I heard 'women in the Bible who had been wounded.'" With that concept in mind, she began studying. Never having written a book, Tina reached out to her friend, Dena Dyer. Dena loved the idea, pitched it to a friend (who happened to be the president of a literary agency) and agreed to co-author the book. Dave suggested a title, and *Wounded Women of the Bible* became reality. Dave laughingly said one day, "Now you should write about messed up men of the Bible." The topic took root, her agent loved the idea, and she and Dave wrote *Messed up Men of the Bible* together. Tina said, "To women, if you've ever been wounded and have a difficult time understanding men, read these two books."

Tina's passion as a writer and pastor's wife centers on ministering to women. She wants to bring healing, hope and recovery and longs to do that with her writing. In teaching mode, she likes writing books for



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use with women's groups and keeps a journal of book ideas.

At a writer's conference, Tina first learned about writing and started with devotionals and articles. She also learned skills from Dena and going through the entire editing process of publishing. "I'm so fortunate to have Dena because she's not only a dear friend but an editor as well," she said. While Tina isn't part of a writer's group, she likes the idea of meeting with other writers. "I'm still perfecting my skills. I have so much to learn about writing," she said. With a teachable spirit, she hopes to improve as she continues the journey.

Tina admits writing humorously doesn't come naturally. While Dave can come up with spur-of-the-moment wit and humor, she can't. Fortunately, Dena assured Tina writing with humor is a skill she can learn. In the meantime, she faces the challenges of not getting too heavy in her writing and finding the balance of fictional techniques in nonfiction books.

Tina and Dave moved back to Granbury in December 2014, and Tina suffered a heart attack in August 2015.



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Her health brought another challenge to finishing books, as she spends time traveling to doctors and regaining strength. Tina recently learned she needed a heart transplant. At some point, all she went through will appear in a book. "I'm still trying to make sense of this," she said. "Every day is new."

Writing from life experiences gives Tina a multitude of ideas for new books. "As a writer, I try to be as honest as I can," she shared. Readers connect to her transparency.

A big part of writing includes marketing after publication. While most traditional publishers and agents offer a degree of marketing assistance, authors must also put in effort. In Tina's case, she has great support from her agent and publisher for arranging events. The publisher also provided marketing tools she could use. But Tina knows she has to use those tools and promote her writing. She encourages other writers to ask their publisher for marketing aides. "If you don't ask, you don't know the publishing company will do it for you," she said.

In spite of energy issues, Tina finds time during the day to write. She isn't, and probably never will be, a person who wakes at 4:00 a.m. to write for hours before the world gets moving. Both of her sons are adults away at college in other states. "If I had small kids, I think it would be more difficult," she said.

The writing journey isn't without challenges. Like many writers, she wonders about the structure of a book, how it should look when printed, whether to use subtitles or not and how to mix biblical with modern day stories. How will she say the right words to

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women, so she draws them instead of offending and alienating them? There are so many questions, and then the dreaded writers' block rears its ugly head.

"I pray a lot, too," she said. "It always unfolds. The Lord has a way of doing that."

In spite of having won a Golden Scroll Award in 2014, Tina commented that the best part of writing comes from readers. When a woman approaches carrying a book, or an email comes, saying how the book changed her life, Tina beams.



The awards are great, but knowing she affected a life means more. "You just want to scoop them up and hug them," she said.

Currently, Tina is completing study and has written some chapters for a new book about women finding their purpose. Another book with Dena Dyer might be in the works, as well. Tina primarily writes Christian living books for women. But that doesn't mean she isn't open to something different.

"I've never written a novel, although I'd like to," she said. She also wants to write her life story as creative nonfiction. In the past, she wrote a couple of children's books. After getting beat out by Philip Yancey, she shelved those. Who knows? As an established writer, she may break ranks one day and venture to new territories. **NOW**

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Happy Happens Here

Patti's Last Resort is a place where you can have fun every day. — By Lisa Bell

More than a decade ago, Patti Carey and Olivia Baron both moved to Granbury from Michigan, but they didn't know each other. One day, both women visited a quilt store, met and became friends. A week later, they took a road trip in search of a long-arm machine for Patti. "We've been traveling together ever since," Olivia said.

In 2013, both ladies experienced caring for parents with Alzheimer's. The stress led them to host a quilting retreat at Patti's home. The event birthed the idea of Patti's Last Resort. Patti always wanted to own a business. Olivia had 12 years of shop experience. Patti took on the financial end, and Olivia came alongside as manager. Both have many years of experience in quilting and other crafts. In August 2013, they began a journey

that culminated with the opening of their new business on March 21, 2014.

Patti's Last Resort combines three crafter needs in one distinctive spot. The quilt shop carries unique fabrics, notions, books, patterns and kits — everything a quilter needs. They always look for unusual designs and love the latest sewing and quilting gadgets.

But the shop is only part of the business. The retreat center features a fully furnished three-bedroom, three-bath space they rent to groups. With a full kitchen, common area, large tables and beautiful surroundings, the center provides a wonderful place to relax with friends or family. While the shop focuses on quilting, Patti and Olivia welcome all kinds of artists to

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their spaces. Located on two acres, which Patti's husband graciously gave them, retreaters sometimes receive visits from the Careys' horses. Nearby, places of interest and restaurants give visitors plenty of opportunities to enjoy all that Granbury and Acton offer.

One of the most used and favorite places at Patti's Last Resort is the classroom. After the initial opening, they added the third space. They offer the room for rent by the day or half-day at a reasonable cost. Filled with tables, a refrigerator, microwave and coffee maker, crafters enjoy time making beautiful things. A great place for parties or groups, the atmosphere invites fun. When a bunch of women get together, you never know what will come up. "What happens at Patti's stays at Patti's," she said with a laugh.

Every Monday and most first and third Saturdays, they host a Happy Hour Sit and Sew. From 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., five dollars secures space to work, with unlimited coffee, tea and craft-minded fellowship.

The quilt shop carries unique fabrics, notions, books, patterns and kits — everything a quilter needs.

Not long after opening, the women received an email asking for help with a commemorative quilt. The mother of a police officer, gunned down in Missouri, had his T-shirts. Although it took several months, they finished a beautiful charity quilt.

The business also supports Ada Carey, an organization Patti and her husband already supported. They also support the Brazos Pregnancy Center, churches, missionary work and veterans programs. Each month they donate a gift certificate as a Quilt Guild door prize.

"Do what makes you happy. Do it now because you don't know what tomorrow holds," Patti said. "Quilts can bring great comfort to people."

"Quilting can be very comforting, very relaxing. And that's something you can pass on to other generations," Olivia added.

The two friends enjoy working together and meeting people. "When it's not fun anymore, we'll stop and rent it out," Patti said. Until then, Patti's Last Resort is the place crafters come for fun. **NOW**



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Central Vision Black Out

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

Slowly, but surely, the small fuzzy spots of visual loss grew larger and merged into one giant blind spot in the central visual field of the eye. This description is representative of the vision one sees in macular degeneration. Macular degeneration is an incurable eye disease. Another term for the disease is age-related macular degeneration, or AMD. Because of the large numbers of Americans over the age of 65, AMD is a growing problem in the populace.

It begins in the macula, which is located in the middle of the retina and affects central vision. The macula's job is to collect images and send them by the optic nerve to the brain. If the macula starts to deteriorate, the information it collects is flawed and vision is negatively impacted. The more the macula degenerates, the greater the loss of vision. This is the leading cause of vision loss in America.

There are two types of AMD — dry and wet. Dry macular degeneration is the more common of the two diseases. It progresses slowly and may take years before there is substantial central vision loss. Dry AMD can advance to wet AMD when blood vessels grow under the retina and start to leak. This is the most serious type of the disease, and vision loss could be devastatingly rapid.

The first symptom that something is wrong is your central vision starts to become blurred. Straight lines become distorted.

Color may be less intense. As the disease progresses, skills such as reading and driving may become so difficult that you are no longer able to do them. Over time, your central vision is completely eliminated. See your health care specialist or ophthalmologist as soon as you experience any of these symptoms.

Researchers have not been able to definitively say what causes macular degeneration. Some studies have suggested that heredity and environment play a part. They have found some genetic components, which point to the development of this disease. Other risk factors are being over the age of 65, being Caucasian or Chinese, smoking or being exposed to smoking. Obesity increases your chances of developing the more severe form of the disease.

Some evidence exists that some nutritional supplements or a diet rich in these elements — vitamins A, C, E, lutein and zeaxanthin — may slow progression of the disease. An occupational therapist can help with improving your quality of life. There is no cure, but you do have options — some of which are very promising, offering some hope of either slowing down the disease and/or regaining some vision. Just don't give up! **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.

June 4

Mid-Way Regional Airport Annual Pancake Breakfast Fly-In: 8:00-11:00 a.m., Mid-Way Regional Airport, Midlothian. Breakfast tickets: adults and children 8 and over, \$6; children under 8, \$3. Free parking. Public is invited. For more information, call (972) 923-0080 or visit www.mid-wayregional.com.

June 10 — 12

42nd Annual Lone Star Street Rod Assoc. State Run: 10:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Hewlett Park. Raffle drawings and awards ceremony at noon Sunday. No charge for spectators. Free tram between park and downtown. For details, visit www.visitgranbury.com/event/lone-star-street-rod-assoc-state-run/.

June 11

Acton Local Market: 8:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., 5310 Acton Hwy. Lively farmers market includes food sampling, cooking and fitness demonstrations and entertainment. Visit www.actonlocalmarket.com for details.

June 14

Tip a Cop: 5:00-9:00 p.m., Grumps, 3505 E. Hwy 377. Tips and a portion of the proceeds

benefit the Citizen's Police Academy Alumni Association.

June 17

Point Fore-ward Golf Tournament: 11:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Hidden Oaks Golf Course. Tournament benefits Lake Pointe Academy and Resource Center. For more information, visit www.lakepointegrnburry.org/golf-tournament/ or call Sally Stanfield (682) 936-4112.

DCBE – Acton VFD: 6:00 p.m. firehouse tours, 6:30 p.m. free movie. June's family friendly feature is *The Muppets*. Hot dogs and other concessions available for purchase as a fundraiser. Bring lawn chair.

June 20

The Longest Day: 7:30 a.m.-7:00 p.m., Farina's Winery & Café. Hosted by the Granbury bridge club to support the Alzheimer's Association. Play bridge, enjoy food and support a great cause. \$35 donation for participation. For more information, call (817) 578-0289 or email fitz3745@gmail.com.

Saturday Sounds on the Square: 6:00 p.m., Historic Granbury Square. Free outdoor

concert series. Bring a blanket or lawn chair and enjoy the music of Two Ton Folk. For additional information, go to www.visitgranbury.com.

June 30

Acton Celebrates America: 6:30-8:30 p.m., Acton UMC, 3433 Fall Creek Hwy. Annual concert open to any community singers and local musicians who want to participate. Free to the public. Contact Linda Hatfield (817) 326-4242 or linda@actonumc.org.

Ongoing:

Second Mondays

Lake Granbury Art Association meeting: 7:00 p.m., Shanley House. Refreshments served. Jeanette Alexander at (817) 578-3090.

Fourth Tuesdays

Texas Patriots Tea Party meeting: 7:00 p.m., Cleburne Conference Center, 1501 W. Henderson, Cleburne. www.texaspatriotsteaparty.org.

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



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In the Kitchen With Ricky Adcock

— *By Lisa Bell*

Ricky Adcock grew up in Purvis, Mississippi. He learned to cook while standing on a stool watching his adoptive mom he always called Aunt Gladys. His specialty is chicken and dumplings, but he won't share that recipe or his secret for steak and brisket. At one time, he and his wife, Melinda, sold barbecue from their roadside pit and sometimes catered events.

"I'll never forget the time I was doing chuck wagon cooking with a buddy of mine. The fly on the chuck wagon caught fire, and the fire department had to be called to put it out," Ricky said. "However, if you ask my wife, the most disastrous cooking experience was when I cooked her some good ol' turtle soup." Melinda encouraged him *not* to include that recipe either! **NOW**

Potato Salad

8 medium potatoes, peeled and boiled
5 boiled eggs, peeled and chopped
1 cup chopped purple onion
1/2 small jar dill pickle relish
Salt and pepper, to taste
1 1/2 cups Hellmann's Real Mayonnaise

1. Mash boiled potatoes with potato masher.
2. Add chopped eggs, purple onion, dill relish, salt and pepper. Stir until well mixed.
3. Add mayonnaise; mix well. Serve warm or cold.

Pineapple Sandwich

The combination sounds crazy, but it really is good.

2 slices white bread
Hellmann's Real Mayonnaise, to taste
1 pineapple ring

1. Slather both slices of bread on one side with desired amount of mayonnaise.
2. Place pineapple ring in center of one slice of bread and top with the other slice of bread and enjoy.

Tomato Gravy

1/4 cup oil
7 Tbsp. flour
1 16-oz. can diced tomatoes
1 1/2 cups cold water, more if too thick
Salt and pepper, to taste

1. Heat oil and stir in flour to thicken and brown.
2. Add tomatoes; cook for 1 minute.
3. Add cold water and stir. If too thick, add more water to reach desired consistency.
4. Add salt and pepper, to taste.
5. Spoon on top of biscuits and serve with a side of tasty baked bacon.

Baked Bacon

Bacon (2-4 slices per person, or make extra and save for later)
Flour (enough to dredge the bacon)

1. Preheat oven to 375 F. Dredge bacon in flour.
2. Place on aluminum foil-lined cookie sheet; bake for 20-25 minutes, or until brown, turning halfway through the baking time.

Southern Buttermilk Biscuits

1 1/2 cups self-rising flour
1/4 cup Crisco shortening
Pinch baking soda
1 cup buttermilk
Pinch of salt

1. Preheat oven to 425 F. Put flour in a mixing bowl; cut in shortening. Add a pinch of baking soda.
2. Add buttermilk and salt; mix until dough forms into a ball.
3. Place dough on a floured surface and roll out until about 1/2-inch thick. Cut with a biscuit cutter.
4. Place in a greased cast-iron skillet. Bake approximately 15-20 minutes until browned.

Best Snack Cracker Ever

35-40 saltine crackers, or as many as you need to fill a cookie sheet
Peanut butter, to taste
Large marshmallows, one per cracker

1. Preheat oven to 350 F.
2. Spread peanut butter on crackers to desired thickness and place on a cookie sheet.
3. Top each cracker with a marshmallow.
4. Bake until marshmallows turn light brown. (It is very important to watch closely while cooking to prevent the marshmallow from burning or catching fire.)
5. Remove from oven; let cool slightly before eating, so marshmallow does not scald your mouth.

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

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