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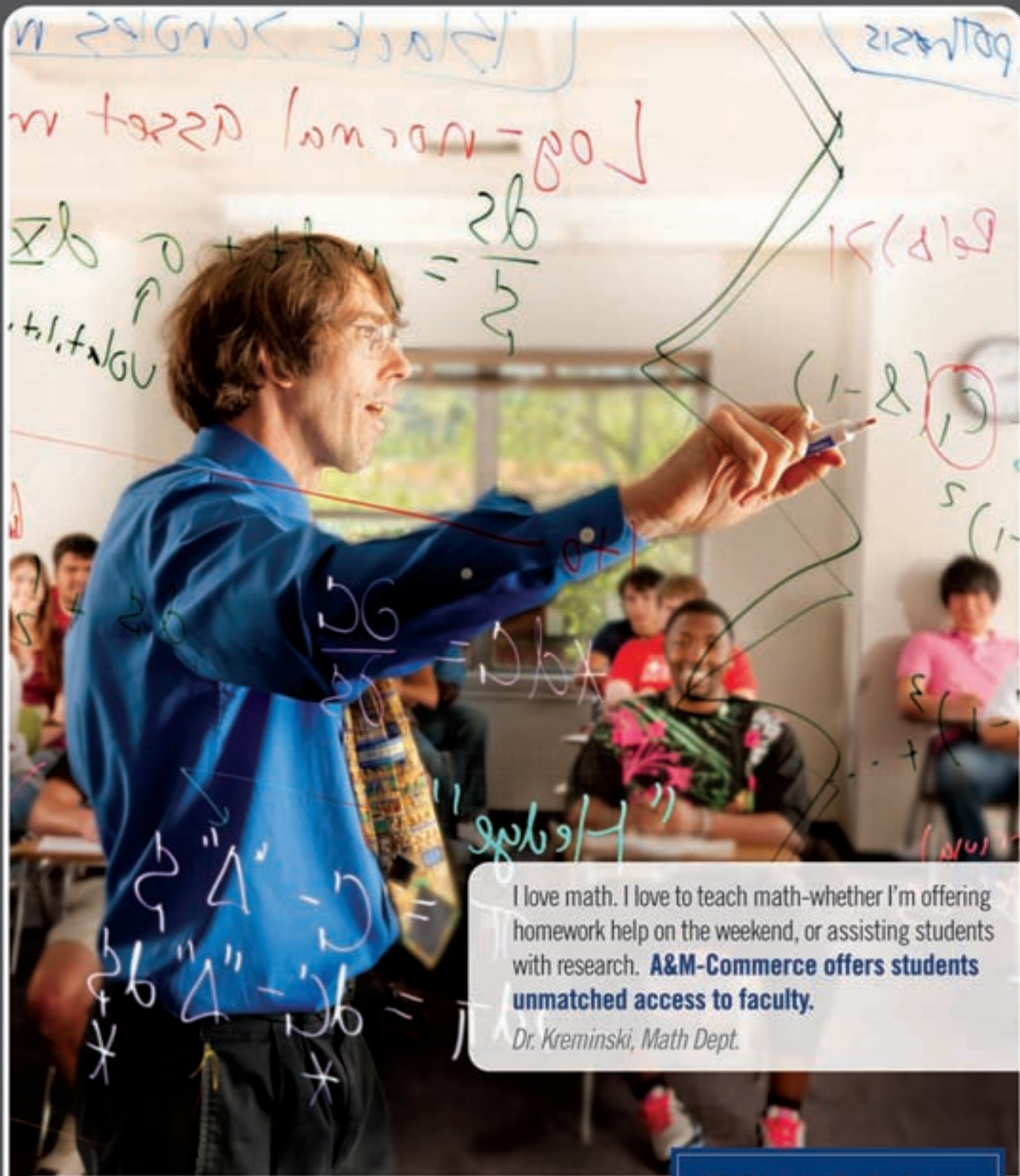
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Contents

July 2009 Volume 4, Issue 7

6



A Life of Service

10



A Master Plan

At Home With Robert and Bobbie Mason

14

ArtsNOW
Artistic
Independence

16

SportsNOW
The Game of Life

18

BusinessNOW
Life Changer

20

EducationNOW
Leaving Big
Impressions



On the Cover:
Patty Alturo's dog tags are
a testament to her love for
her country.

Photo by Natalie Busch.

22 Around TownNOW

24 Who's CookingNOW

26 FinanceNOW

28 Community Calendar

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Editor's Note

Happy July!

This month has many observances. Some are related to the summer season, like National Ice Cream and Grilling Month. Other designations deem July to be National Women's Motorcycle Month and Make a Difference to Children Month. I find this all very exciting, especially since we are featuring a few local treasures who make a difference for many. One such young lady is Christa Popham, whose mission is to be a voice for children. Enjoy getting to know her, as well as the other fascinating neighbors featured inside the pages of this month's issue.

In honor of Independence Day, let us remember the reasons for our freedom and thank those who have or are currently fighting for it. Special thanks to Patty Alturo for sharing her inspiring story — a reminder of the real meaning behind our country's Independence.

Diana Merrill Claussen
 Red OakNOW Editor



Inside the latest issue:

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"After I arrived, I was informed that I would be the first female ATC the Marine Corps had."

A Life of Service

— By Diana Merrill Claussen

Very few stories have all of the necessary elements to leave others in complete amazement and awe. Local lady, Patty Alturo's life story possesses all of the elements of a fascinating tale.

Patty was born in Richland Center, Wisconsin. "During my freshman year in high school, my father got a job transfer from the States to the Quebec province of Montreal," Patty said. At that time, Canadian schools automatically put U.S. transfer students two grades behind the U.S. level. "So, my parents gave us the choice to either enroll in a Canadian high school or go to boarding school," Patty said. She and her older brother [by one year], Tom, chose Catholic boarding schools.

"My campus was an all-girls campus in Frontenac, Minnesota, called Villa Maria. Tom attended St. Thomas which was about an hour away," Patty said. "The first year at boarding school was terrible. I remember all of our teachers were Ursuline nuns. Although they were very strict, the nuns were great because they were sympathetic to the

fact that I wasn't happy." This was the first extended time Patty had ever been away from her family. By her second year at Villa Maria, Patty was slowly starting to adjust.

"When you live together with your schoolmates, you bond and they become your friends, so by my second year there I just loved it!" Patty especially loved the fact that the school was on 150 acres of forest, complete with toboggan hills and a pond she could ice skate on during the winter.

Boarding school was a life-altering experience for Patty. "It was great because it helped teach self-confidence and discipline, poise and gave the academic backing one would need to get into almost any esteemed university," she said. A few years later, Tom graduated from St. Thomas, went to college and later was commissioned from the ROTC into the Army. Patty missed her brother and used his enlistment as a catalyst to help her decide her future.

"My dad went to Duke University, and I always wanted to go there as well,"

she said. So after high school graduation Patty went back to Wisconsin and enrolled in Milton Junior College, "In order to bring my GPA up." After she achieved her goal she enrolled at Duke and received her bachelor's in psychology with a minor in criminology. At one point, "I had decided that I wanted to be a great philosopher or work at CPS [Child Protective Services] to help others," Patty shared.

By the time she graduated from Duke, fate had other plans for Patty. "During that time, the Vietnam War was vamping up; I saw a lot of my brother's friends being drafted," she said. Seeing this made Patty want to step up and help out. When she went home and discussed her military plans with her family, "My dad told me to go into the Marine Corps," she said. Although the Marines were her last choice, Patty and Tom decided to follow



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a flashy-dressed Marine recruiter straight into his office the very next day. "He was dressed perfectly and looked so hot," she smiled. "I thought to myself, I want to be perfect like that." The recruiter's uniform was quite a contrast to the miniskirt and tights Patty was wearing along with her nicely coiffed, long blond hair.

Within an hour of their meeting, Patty was ready to sign on the dotted line when, "The recruiter suggested I go into the military as an officer since I was degreed," she said. Patty declined and informed the recruiter, "I want to go into the service and experience what 90 percent of the recruits experience, since 90 percent of them are enlisted." The recruiter relented and Patty had her enlistment papers completed and submitted that very day.

"When I went home and told my mom what I had done, she just about died," Patty exclaimed. It was a long three weeks between the time she enlisted and the time she left for boot camp in Paris Island, South Carolina. Although there were a few hiccups at first, "The military wasn't hard for me to get into sync with because of my boarding school background. I was used to rules, regulations and the idea of keeping your mouth shut."

During boot camp, Patty was required to do just about everything the men were. At only 4 feet 11 inches tall, "I carried my rifle and 25 pounds of gear," she said. When Patty first arrived at her boot camp unit there were 62 new female recruits fresh out of high school. By graduation, "only 29 of them were in my class."

After boot camp graduation, "I took a lot of aptitude and psychological testing," Patty said. She then received her orders. "I had been assigned to attend air traffic control school in Glencoe, Georgia," she said. She was pretty bummed. "None of the other girls in my class were assigned to become an air traffic controller." Patty soon found out the reason her friends were not sent to Glencoe. "After I arrived, I was informed that I would

be the first female ATC the Marine Corps had," she said.

Besides attending ATC school Patty also became a PR rep for the military. She went to school and worked 24 hours on and 24 hours off duty. "I was also featured in *LIFE* magazine all

"I carried my rifle and 25 pounds of gear."

between working, school, receiving my pilot's license and being featured in recruiting films," she said.

After her special training was complete, Patty received orders to go to Saigon. "The services were losing a lot of guys — that was in 1969," she reflected. Due to the lack of housing for females, the ladies stayed at the U.S. embassy in Saigon. Patty arrived at the embassy the day it was bombed. There were a few occasions when Patty was personally affected by the war. The hardest part of the war for her happened after her third month in Saigon.

One day when, "My brother was flying MedEvac in the area; he was bringing back wounded from Marble Mountain when his helicopter was shot down." Patty was notified within four hours of the event that Tom had died. Hearing the news was, of course, difficult for Patty. Not being able to tell her parents until they were officially notified was even harder. Her superiors allowed Patty the opportunity to travel back to the States with her brother's coffin. "After the funeral, I received a letter stating that I would not be going back to Vietnam," she said

After finishing her four-year commitment, Patty decided to work at a civilian job and help in her community. One way she does this is by being involved in programs which send care packages and encouragement to troops. "You've got to support the military; no support from the public equals low troop morale, which can be devastating to those who serve. If we have learned anything from wars, it's to take care of the troops while they serve and when they get back," Patty said. **NOW**

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— By Jaime Ruark

A Master Plan

When the Masons first moved into their home, there was no landscaping. Now, over 750 varieties of irises, each carefully labeled by Bobbie, surround the Mason home, as well as numerous other plants and flowers. Rosemary, salvias, daises, roses, sunflowers, bluebonnets, coneflowers, poppies, daylilies, zinnias and larkspur all flourish beside the riot of iris blooms. “I have so many friends in my garden; it’s hard to remember them all, so I take pictures for future reference,” she said with a smile. “I have a master plan that I keep — very important. You have to have a master plan, so you know exactly what is where in your garden.”

While she is careful to log and label her flora, Bobbie’s garden, a chaotic mix of color, flows organically from the side of her house to the back. Her gardening motto is: “A weed is only something you didn’t plant.” A lover of nature, her backyard is actually a certified wildlife habitat, with a creek running through the lush trees. “We have squirrels and hawks, a family of possums, rabbits, lizards, even some skunks, though we’re not too crazy about them,” she smiled.

Each of Bobbie’s irises has its own special name: Moonlit Seas, Cause for Pause, Dance Recital, Stand in Awe, Teacup, Glowing Smiles, Lingering Love, Applause and Victoria Falls, to name a few. “I love the names. They’re so descriptive. Take this little one named Ming. She’s one of my new ones

Snuggled in a quiet Red Oak neighborhood is the home and garden of Robert and Bobbie Mason, currently a favorite stop on the Spring Iris Garden Tour for those in the gardening world. The vivacious Bobbie knows no strangers, welcoming all who have an eye for beauty into her home, where inside and out, the delicate, yet majestic, iris reigns.

Welcoming guests to the home are two flags, symbolizing what Bobbie holds dear: the American flag, always proudly flying, and a fleur-de-lis flag, with its three iris petals held together by an encircling band. The four-bedroom, two-bath house is decked out in Western style. Three rocking horses in the living room are a testament to three generations of cowboys, including a stuffed one belonging to the youngest cowboy-in-training, the Masons’ 2-year-old grandson, Malachi. “You’ll find John Wayne stuff everywhere, because, of course, we love John Wayne,” Bobbie pointed out.

Bobbie’s iris collection is sprinkled throughout the home. In the kitchen, two stained glass, blue irises brighten a window, a globe on the dining table holds an exquisite iris inside its glass dome and a unique porcelain, three-dimensional picture hangs over the table. “This is one of my pride and joys. I found it at the Salvation Army and I only paid \$45 for it. I saw the same type of picture in a furniture store for \$500,” Bobbie said. Also hanging in the kitchen is another collection of cast iron. “I started cleaning my cast iron one day and realized I had 56 pieces,” she laughed.

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and she's just so sweet, all yellow and white and delicate," she said proudly as she walked through her garden, speaking of each plant as an old and dear friend. "Look at Dazzling Sarah. I just love her. She's ruffly and poetic and tall — she's dazzling."

While some irises are named descriptively, others have even more special names. "I have an iris named Zachary, for my grandson. It was bred about 17 years ago by my grandchildren's great-grandfather in Kansas, where I got my



start and where I fell in love with them. It was bred just for him. He weighed 3 pounds, two ounces when he was born, so his great-grandfather went out and found the smallest, sweetest, but still masculine-looking iris," she said. "Here's my Racheal, named after my granddaughter. Her great-grandfather picked the sweetest, yellow-pink, feminine-looking one for her, and it's just like my granddaughter — persnickety! She blooms when she wants to and not every year, and don't you try to move her!"

Robert, Bobbie's "Chief Weeder" for the past 43 years of their marriage, also enjoys taking part in all the iris action. His pride and joy, Los Coyotes, has bright yellow standards (three upright petals) with red falls (three lower petals). "It has just bloomed and bloomed this year. It looks like a giant bumblebee in the garden," Bobbie said. "He loves daylilies. All the daylilies you see belong to him. My daughter, Claudia, loves the roses, so those are all hers, and then I have a little vegetable garden that I say is my grandson's."

Each year, the American Iris Society (AIS) gives out a variety of awards for each specific classification type. The

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Dykes Medal is the Nobel Prize of the iris world; plants given this highest distinction are famous for generations. "An HM, for Honorable Mention, is wonderful to see after a name, but a DM, the Dykes Medal, is what we're all striving for," Bobbie explained. "The American Iris Society votes on this, and it's quite the honor." Bobbie's garden is home to many AIS medal winners, including: Heartbreak (HM), with little purple horns; Jesse's Song (DM), deeply ruffled with violet tips; Edith Wolford (DM), canary yellow



with blue-violet falls; and Frost and Flame (DM), an old-fashioned white with an orange beard (the fuzzy part of the flower found at the base of the falls).

As the president of the Ovilla Garden Club, Bobbie is known as "The Instigator" and "The Finder of Things." Many of Bobbie's plants and flowers were rescues — some found dying in stores and some by the side of the road, such as the lovely willow tree now growing beside the house. "I put him in here as a little stick. He was a rescue. I'm a side-of-the-road digger, a scrounger. That's where a lot of my decorations have come from, like my mobile," she said, pointing out her cowboy-inspired, metal artwork made



from a harness rack, hub cap, stirrups, shovels, horseshoes and saddle girth. "My husband and I belong to the Cowboy Churches, and I've done the landscaping and decorations for a lot of them.

"For me, gardening's an addiction," she admitted. "Most people start out with five or six varieties, but I started out with about 1,250. I'm a bloomin' idiot! People say I have 10 green thumbs and no fingers. I love my yard, and I love for people to be in my yard. I love to share my flowers. It's my passion. Irises are the flower of the Trinity, three petals up and three petals down. I just put things here, and God makes them live." **NOW**

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Artistic Independence

— By Diana Merrill Claussen

to the races.” Literally. “By the time I was 18 I had a brand new fully loaded red Ford Torino convertible.” Playing for pay was a dream come true for Steve.

As he progressed, Steve decided to buy an electric guitar. “I bought it from a mail order catalog,” he said. His third guitar is “the one” he will never forget. “It was a great guitar,” Steve said. “I wish I still had it because it was a ’64 Stratocaster and would be worth about \$75,000 today.” Electric is Steve’s favorite type of guitar, but, “I also love intimate acoustic music,” he said.

The varied types of intimate guitar sounds can be found in many different genres. “My favorites are rock ’n’ roll, rhythm and blues and light blues influence mixed with intimate acoustic.” With many different music influences,

Steve’s passion for music not only grew, but his desire to play major performances flourished.

When your heart is what leads, the rest of your being has no choice but to follow. That is exactly what happened to Steve. During the ’70s, he really followed the lives, likes and sounds of many musical “greats” such as James Burton, Eric Clapton and Al Hirt, (the famous Dixieland trombone player). However, it was not until a friend of his raved about attending a John Denver concert that Steve’s life changed forever. “My friend had come over for dinner and told me how much he enjoyed the concert,” Steve said. He also told Steve that John did not have a lead guitar player. So, in hopes of being discovered by Denver, “I soon decided to move to Aspen,” Steve said. “I figured I’d play in Aspen and eventually John would discover me. I knew I was ready to try out for the big leagues and needed to hear myself on the radio.”

As chance would have it, all of Steve’s dreams eventually came true. “Turns out friends of John’s had heard me play and kept mentioning my name to him. One day, the phone

When local musician, Steve Weisberg, was in second grade he knew he wanted to be involved in music. Little did he realize just how involved in it he would become. “I remember one day when I arrived home from school, I begged my parents to let me take violin lessons,” Steve said. His parents refused his heartfelt request.

By the next day, Steve decided he would beg his folks to allow him to take piano lessons and they said, “Yes.” That was the beginning of a lifelong journey which helped Steve grow in skill and, later, fame. You could say this happened one year and one instrument at a time. “The second instrument I learned how to play was the trombone,” Steve said. “I was in the third grade and this is where music really grabbed a hold of me.”

“My parents knew I was passionate about music when I’d pick practicing trombone instead of playing with the neighborhood kids,” Steve said. Little did the Weisbergs realize they did not have a prodigal son, but a musical prodigy. Lessons later led to school classes and classes led to playing in bands and later playing public ‘gigs.’

“I had my first paying gig when I was 16,” Steve said. He was hired by [now] Grammy winner Mark Benno and paid \$50 for his musical performance. During Steve’s teen years, he found, “There wasn’t much use for the trombone in the new world of rock ’n’ roll. I bought my first guitar in the seventh grade for \$20 at a garage sale. From there, I was off



rang; I picked up the phone and the caller asked, 'Is this Steve Weisberg?' 'Yes.' The caller then introduced himself as John Denver." Denver told Steve he had heard great things about Steve, told him he needed a lead guitarist and asked if Steve would be interested in auditioning. After three auditions, Steve was hired and played in Denver's band from 1973-1977, "John's biggest years."

Steve learned a lot about performing during his years in the band, especially when their audience grew. "We went from audiences of 3,500 when I started with John, to performing four back-to-back shows at Madison Square



Steve Weisberg posing with John Denver.

Garden totaling over 100,000 people in two nights." Steve has performed, and still continues to perform, at some of the most prestigious venues in the world with some of the "greats" in the music industry. One of his more recent performances was sponsored by Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). "I played at the Red Rocks Amphitheatre in Morrison, Colorado, for the PBS special commemorating 20 years since John Denver's last performance at this astounding venue," Steve shared.

When Steve is not on the road, he has a weekly gig in the Red Oak Lonestar Cowboy Church's worship band. "Even during my little Sunday gigs, I look out at the audience and I know that I am reaching them," Steve said. "That is ultimately what musicians need to feel like they are doing, connecting with their audience." **ARTS NOW**



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The Game of Life

— By Diana Merrill Claussen

Christa Popham has had many experiences in her 22 years. Some of her fondest memories revolve around the sport of soccer. “My older sister used to play soccer, and so my parents asked me if I wanted to play it, too,” she said. Since most young children want to be like their older siblings, “I wanted to do everything my older sister, Tanya, did.” As a result, Christa has been playing soccer since she was 7 years old.

“I started playing defense in city leagues,” she said of her first involvement in the sport. That is when Christa noticed she had a little bit more of an advantage than her fellow players. “I was taller than the rest of the kids, so I was always put in the defensive positions. I guess they thought I could kick harder and farther,” she said. “I could definitely kick the ball the farthest,” she added. Christa even had a nickname given to her by her teammates. “They called me ‘Bigfoot.’”

Later in junior high, Christa played

on a club team. “It was in DeSoto, and I played with them for four years until I became a sophomore in high school,” she said. DeSoto High School accepted Christa into their soccer program, and they soon realized they had made a great choice. “I played as the captain of the junior varsity team when I was a freshman and varsity as a sophomore. In my junior year, I transferred to Duncanville High School and played on the varsity team. I even got my letter jacket,” she smiled.

During her senior year, Christa faced a few bumps in the road of her athletic success. “I had difficulties with the coach,” she admitted. Although she faced an obstacle with one coach, she credits many coaches as being her heroes and mentors. “Two of my club and school coaches were awesome,” she said. “They were always very encouraging and always helped us to reach our potential. That was really cool!”

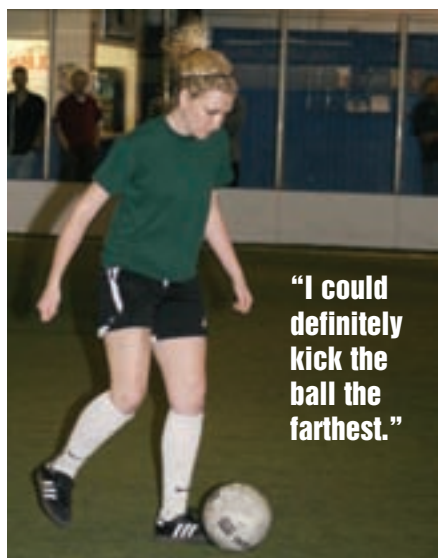
Christa has learned a lot about life through the positive examples of her

mentors. She has applied these lessons and still continues to grow because of them. Her growth, positive outlook and perseverance have helped her excel both on and off of the field.

“After high school, I played on other teams,” she said. By 2006, Christa was going to college full time and playing on four different leagues. “One team was coed and the other three were women’s,” she explained. During this time, Christa played soccer four nights a week while attending Cedar Valley College and working part time. Being able to juggle such responsibility is not easy, but those who know her were not surprised.

Christa is a goal-setter who not only meets her goals, but exceeds them. She attends college full time — even in the summers — and has always maintained at least a 3.2 GPA in her college studies. “I have been ready to get it [school] done,” she exclaimed. In August, Christa will receive her bachelor’s in social work and then plans on pursuing her master’s degree at Southwestern Assemblies of God University.

Christa also works full time as a volunteer supervisor for CASA [guardian ad litem program] of Ellis County. Through her work with CASA, she is making a difference in the lives of children, not only in Red Oak, but all over Ellis County. Needless to say, Christa’s heart and plate are both full. In fact, her schedule this semester only allowed her to play for two teams. One is an outdoor women’s league and the other is a coed team, which plays out of Apex Indoor Sports Center in Mansfield. The ladies’ team is located in Cedar Hill at Lake Ridge Park. “Both leagues are just as competitive,” Christa said. “I haven’t been able to play a whole lot this semester, because I am interning in the victims assistance unit at Arlington Police Department. I miss my games this semester because that’s my workout. I enjoy getting out there and getting



"I could definitely kick the ball the farthest."



away from the everyday."

Christa started playing at the indoor field in March 2007. "I like indoor soccer because it's fast-paced and more intense, because everything [and everybody] is bouncing off of the walls," she said. "Just to get out there and run for 45 minutes really releases some negative energy that builds up. You gotta let your stress out somehow!"

Through soccer, Christa has gained both valuable insights and relationships. "I have a lot of friends that play on my teams," she said. Whether she is working on the field or within her community, Christa puts her all into everything she does. "I would not feel productive if I didn't have soccer, so I plan on playing as long as I can," she commented.

As far as following her dreams, "Whatever you can do to help people [in the game of life], and in your community is better than not doing anything at all. Nothing is as rewarding as helping others," she said. **NOW**



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Life Changer

— By Diana Merrill
Claussen



Life changes are not always easy, but they can work out for the best. Just ask local fitness facility owner, Bubba Walker, how he came to live in Red Oak.

"I moved here in October 2008," Bubba said. The reasons for his physical and residential move are compelling. Hailing from Louisiana, Bubba worked for Blue Bell for 10 years. "My first five years [at Blue Bell] caused me to put on 35 pounds," he said. That is when he decided he wanted to lead a healthier lifestyle. "I started a fitness regimen while I was working at Blue Bell.

"I got into being a personal trainer because everywhere I went, people would ask me what I did/do to stay in shape," he said. So, Bubba decided to become a personal trainer at Anytime Fitness. He also became certified through NASM, (National Association of Sports Medicine).

During this time, a few unexpected events impacted Bubba, such as the multiple hurricanes that destroyed his hometown of Slydell. The storms led to Bubba's relocation to Texas. "I am here because of Hurricane Gustav," he said. "I ... decided to evacuate to McKinney. While there, I had inquired about

an Anytime Fitness franchise and found out that location was already sold." Then, after his return to Louisiana, Bubba was informed about an opportunity here in Red Oak.

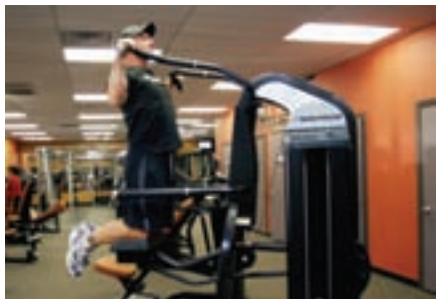
"I was told there was an Anytime Fitness built and ready to open right here in Red Oak that needed an owner," he said. Bubba's Anytime Fitness location opened its doors in December 2008, and he is thankful for the opportunity to fulfill his dreams of helping others. "My goal is to change people's lives; this is what I love."

Bubba starts each session with his clients by, "helping them to focus on nutrition. I basically tell them that not eating right cancels out going to the gym. Going to the gym one hour a day out of 24 is also the easiest thing they can do," he shared. Bubba's wise tips are words he lives by, even when he must indulge in his favorite Cajun dishes.

"You should eat five to six small meals a day," he said. "Feed your body on a regular basis and when grocery shopping, stick to shopping on the outside aisles, [fruits, meats and dairy] areas only." Once your diet and workouts improve, there is room to celebrate. "When you earn a treat, you can

have a treat [in moderation of course],” Bubba advised. “I love Cajun pizza and étouffée!” he shared.

Getting active is another key component in gaining physical independence from an unhealthy lifestyle. “I always tell people that



proper nutrition, cardio and weight training are all necessary because you can’t do one without the other,” Bubba said, elaborating that you need each of these three aspects to create a whole fitness program.

Anytime Fitness features many amenities to help their clients reach their goals. “We offer cardio machines such as ellipticals, stair climbers and treadmills which are all equipped with TVs. Anytime Fitness also has over a dozen circuit machines, which work all major body parts, free-weights and changing rooms complete with showers, personal trainers and 24-hour, seven-day-a-week access.

“Since we never close, we are sure to offer a safe and secure environment,” Bubba said. Their skilled trainers also ensure a safe workout experience. “Anytime Fitness offers all aspects of training from sport-specific to just getting into shape,” Bubba said. Accomplish your fitness goals through a variety of membership plans. “When you join one Anytime Fitness club, you have the opportunity to use any of the 1,000 franchises located throughout the country,” Bubba said.

If you are ready for a positive life change, call Anytime Fitness at (972) 576-1121. They are located at 132 East Ovilla Rd. in Red Oak. **NOW**

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Teacher in Role — By Kate A. McClendon

For many people, it takes a lifetime to discover what they are really meant to do. Candace Cockerham, however, realized her true calling at a young age and now shares her passion with everyone she meets. Candace, who has lived in Texas all her life, grew up in the Red Oak area. Though she would love to live in the city one day, she enjoys her life in the country. “I’m a city girl, who appreciates the country,” Candace said. “I like that my family is here; it’s really cool to have them close. I also have a lot of memories here.”

Her family and her job at The Oaks Fellowship are the main reasons Candace stays in Red Oak, even though she goes to school full time in Denton at the University of North Texas (UNT). Candace is a senior theater major at UNT and is involved in every facet of production. “As theater majors, we have to spend 60 hours helping with

the production; we get to touch every aspect,” she said. This fall, Candace will be acting in her first play, *The Misanthrope*, by Molière, and she is excited for the chance to do something a little more than help with the production.

Candace discovered her love of all things related to theater a few years ago. “I had a defining moment in high school. I was putting a lot of extra work into a production. My friends saw me working a lot and said I should think about directing,” Candace said. “I loved the behind-the-scenes aspect — just putting every little detail together. I knew I wanted to do it. I was a little nervous. I didn’t want to take risks or speak up, but then I thought, *Maybe I should speak up; maybe I should study it.*”

She enjoys everything about putting on, acting in and watching a production. “I just love the opportunity to be

creative, there are no limitations. The sky really *is* the limit,” she said.

“Theater is a place where people can relate to it [the play], be inspired and be educated. I can’t see myself not doing it.”

Candace also felt a calling to work with high school and junior high school students. She works with the student ministry, Seven Student Ministries, as the production director/Fine Arts director. With Fine Arts, Candace gets to blend her love of students with her love of theater. She coordinates the rehearsals for the national youth competition, which showcases 94 students competing in anything from photography to acting to writing. “A few of them advanced to the national level for the upcoming August competition,” she said.

Candace is able to teach her students much of what she learns as a student herself. She has held a few workshops, and has worked one-on-one with some students to apply many of the techniques she learned through movement and acting classes. “It’s been really fun,” she said. “I’m pretty much copying and pasting what I learn in school and applying it to them.”

Candace is not new to Fine Arts; she actually participated in the program when she was younger. “I got into the arts as a student myself. I discovered my gifts and talents and now I’ve made it full circle,” she said. “The program really does create lifelong friendships. My best friend is the one who got me into it.” As the director of the Fine Arts ministry, Candace takes a hands-on approach. She has to be the disciplinarian, but she also helps with ideas, watches the productions to make sure they go smoothly and helps write the drama scripts.

In August, 76 students and 10 coaches will be heading to Orlando, Florida, for the national Fine Arts competition. The students are working

really hard to be ready for the competition, rehearsing as many as three times per week. "They're learning, being disciplined and discovering their creativity," she said of the students who are participating in the program. It takes a lot of work to prepare students for this tough competition, and Candace said she depends heavily on the 25 college students who volunteer



as coaches. "They support kids through their problems, deal with conflict resolution and they have mentoring relationships," she said. "It really goes smoothly with all the help I have. It's amazing how the other coaches love the students. I couldn't do it without them." Some of the coaches also help pay for some of the students who cannot afford to go to the national competition, even though money may be tight for them, too.

Candace enjoys transferring her production knowledge to these students who are discovering their creativity. She loves the way it affects some of their lives. "It's really turned some kids around," she said. "I tell the students that I know they're in high school, but I'm going to hold them to a professional level. It's amazing to see what they can do when they push themselves." **NOW**

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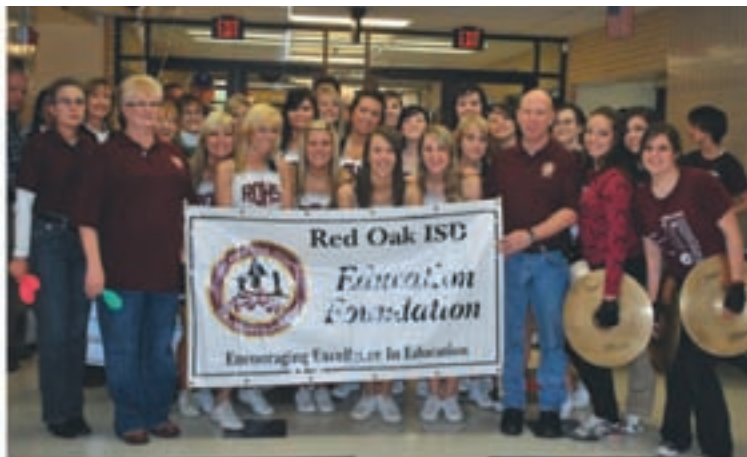
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• Wooden Elementary first-graders, top left, recently went on a field trip to Log Cabin Village in Fort Worth. • ROISD Education Foundation awarded over \$39,000 in grants, top right, throughout the district during their famous Prize Parade. • Participants, bottom left, warmed up for the Education Foundation's annual walk/run for education at the Red Oak City Park. • Maurissa Rendon, bottom center, was recently crowned as Red Oak's "Today's Girl" during a pageant event. • During the Kinder Rodeo at Eastridge Elementary, second row right, Mrs. Goodwin's students enjoyed a little water play at the water trough. • Rich Isbell, bottom right, made some new friends around town.

SURVIVING A FINANCIAL CRISIS: A CHECKLIST

During the past few months, the news has been almost incomprehensible. It's hard to make sense of the failure of major Wall Street firms and large banks. And all of this makes it hard for investors to remain calm.

Consider the following checklist for surviving a financial crisis:

- ☑ **Close your ears - but open your eyes.** Look for opportunities. Stock prices are down, but they won't always be.
- ☑ **Focus on things you can control.** You can control your emotions so don't panic.
- ☑ **Review and rebalance your portfolio.** Meet with your financial advisor.
- ☑ **Look for quality investments.** When you buy stocks, look for those companies with strong balance sheets.
- ☑ **Be patient.**



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Look Who's Cooking

— By Faith Browning

IN THE KITCHEN WITH MARY ANN ROLAND

ASIAN COLESLAW SALAD

1/2 head iceberg lettuce, shredded (about 2 cups)
1 small pkg. shredded cabbage
1 bunch green onions, sliced in 1/2-inch slices
1/2 cup carrots, shredded
1 bottle Newman's low-fat Asian Sesame Ginger salad dressing
2 cups chicken, cooked, pulled apart
1/2 cups peanuts
1 1/2 cups canned Chinese noodles
(can be warmed in oven)

Combine lettuce, cabbage, onions, carrots and dressing. Garnish with chicken, peanuts and noodles.

CAPRESE SALAD

small leaf lettuce
3 nice-sized tomatoes, sliced in 1/4-inch slices
1 lb. mozzarella, sliced in 1/4-inch slices
20-30 leaves fresh basil
2 avocados, sliced lengthwise
extra-virgin olive oil
capers (optional)

Layer 1 leaf lettuce, 1 slice tomato, one slice cheese, several basil leaves here and there and end up with 1 slice avocado. Continue with more layers if you wish. Drizzle with oil. Capers can be sprinkled on the oil.

HAMBURGER STROGANOFF

1 lb. very lean hamburger
1 large onion, chopped
6 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 10.5-oz. can cream of mushroom soup
1 10.5-oz. can cream of chicken soup
1/2 cup water
1 large container fresh mushrooms, sliced
16-oz. sour cream
egg noodles or rice, prepared

Brown hamburger, onion and garlic. Add both cans of soup and water; add mushrooms. Cover and cook for 10 minutes, until mushrooms are done. Turn heat off; add sour cream. Serve over noodles or rice.

SOUTH INDIAN SHRIMP CURRY

2 Tbsp. oil
1 onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, chopped
1 tsp. ginger, grated
2 tsp. cumin
1 1/2 tsp. turmeric
1 tsp. paprika
1/2 tsp. chili powder
1 cup canned tomatoes, chopped
1 cup coconut milk
1 tsp. salt

Growing up with a father who traveled the world has given Mary Ann Roland an abundance of information with which to build dreams. "My father brought home recipes, spices and stories. This gave me excitement to try new things," she recalled. "Now I like foreign recipes the best. I do not like to bake a lot, but I do like to make foreign breads."

Currently, Mary Ann enjoys spending quality time with her four grandchildren, teaching reading one day a week at Eastridge Elementary School and learning more about cooking with her home-gourmet cooking group from The Oaks Fellowship. "My favorite recipes always include curry and shrimp," she said. "The young people in my gourmet group are my biggest fans. They are willing to try anything!" **NOW**

To view more of your neighbors' recipes, visit our archives at www.nowmagazines.com.

16 large shrimp, uncooked, peeled, deveined
(can used precooked; add at last minute)
2 Tbsp. fresh cilantro, chopped
(coriander can be substituted)
2 Tbsp. lemon juice
1 cup basmati rice, prepared per package directions

Heat oil over medium heat in large saucepan; cook onion for one minute. Add garlic, ginger, cumin, turmeric, paprika and chili powder; stir one minute. Add tomatoes, coconut milk and salt; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium; simmer 8 minutes. Add shrimp and cilantro; cover and simmer 4 minutes. Stir in lemon juice. Serve over rice.

CRANBERRY APPLE CRUNCH

4 cups apples, peeled, chopped
8 B(use canned if you like)
16-oz. can whole cranberry sauce
1 cup uncooked oats
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup pecans, chopped
1/2 cup butter or margarine, melted

Mix apples and cranberries together; pour into 13 x 9-inch baking dish sprayed with cooking oil. Combine oats, sugar, nuts and butter; sprinkle over fruit. Bake for 30 minutes at 350 F. Serves 8-10. Can be used for breakfast or served with ice cream for dessert.

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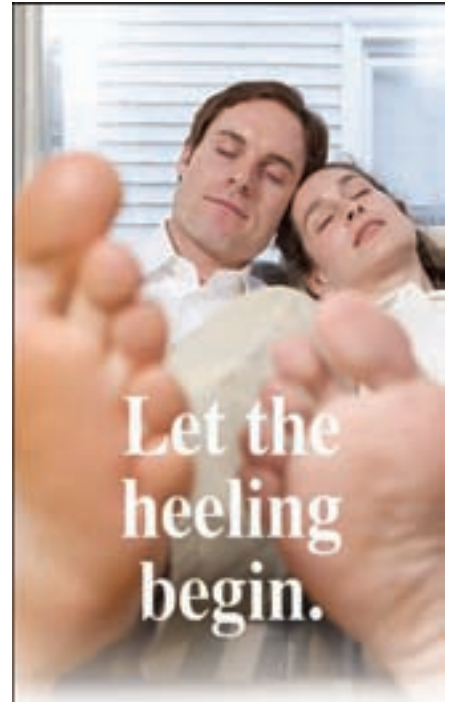


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What Kind of an Investor Are You?

— By Andrea Walton

If you are investing money or planning on doing so, there is one very important question you should ask yourself: What kind of investor am I? Knowing if you are an aggressive or conservative investor is the first step to knowing how you should invest your money.

Determine your risk tolerance

First you need to determine your risk tolerance level. Risk is the amount of volatility and uncertainty you're willing to accept from an investment in seeking your financial goals, like planning for retirement or a college education.

Some investments carry a higher level of risk than others. Generally, the higher the risk of an investment, the greater its potential returns. However, there is also a greater potential to lose your initial investment.

The lower the risk, the less likely it is for that investment to generate a higher rate of return. When you invest your assets in financial products that assume little or no risk, your money may not have the opportunity to grow as fast as you would like.

To help determine your risk level, ask yourself, "How comfortable will I be watching my investment go up and down in value?" The more comfortable you are with price volatility, the greater the risk you are probably willing to assume.

Consider time

The next step in the process of determining your profile as an investor is to identify your time horizon, the amount of time between now and when you hope to reach your stated goal. Generally, the more time you have, the more risk you can afford to assume. The reasoning is: the longer your time horizon, the more time you have to ride out the market's ups and downs in pursuit of your financial goals.

Knowing what level of risk you are comfortable with can help you determine whether you are a conservative investor, an aggressive investor or somewhere in-between. This is an

important first step because then you can focus on investments that provide you with the levels of risks and potential returns with which you are comfortable.

To find out more about the type of investor you are or the different types of investments that

are available, contact a financial services professional. There is no assurance that any investment will achieve its investment objectives. Investment return and principal value will fluctuate and the investment, when redeemed, may be worth more or less than its original cost. **NOW**

Andrea Walton is a State Farm agent based in Red Oak.



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July 2009 Community Calendar

Every Monday

Celebrate Recovery meeting: First Baptist Church, 103 West Red Oak Rd. (972) 617-3591. www.redoakcelebraterecovery.com.

First Tuesday

PrimeTimers Senior Group meeting: 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Oaks Fellowship, 777 S. I-35 E. Fun, food and fellowship. Call to attend. (214) 376-8208.

Tuesdays and Thursdays

Alcoholics Anonymous meeting: 7:00 p.m., First United Methodist Church, 600 Red Oak Rd. (972) 617-9100.

Every Wednesday

Family Story Time: 10:30-11:30 a.m., Red Oak Public Library, 200 Lakeview Pkwy. All ages welcome. (469) 218-1230. www.redoakpubliclibrary.org.

Wednesdays and Thursdays

Senior Citizens Club meeting: 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., 207 West Red Oak Rd. Games, exercise and activities. (972) 576-2777.

Third Thursday

American Business Women's Association meeting. www.abwa-empoweringwomen.org.

First Friday

Worship Jam: 6:30 p.m., Bubba Que BBQ's front porch.

First Saturday

Red Oak Fire Rescue CPR classes: 9:00 a.m. Call early to register. (469) 218-7713.

Second Saturday

Lonestar Cowboy Church Motorcycle group ride: 1011 E. Ovilla Rd. (972) 576-0900.

Throughout July

Ellis County SPCA is in need of pet food donations and drivers to deliver pet food for the pets of Meals on Wheels clients. (972) 935-0756.

July 3

H-E-B Fireworks Display and tailgate party. Location: parking lot of Lumpkins Stadium, Waxahachie. Gates open at 6:00 p.m. Bring lawn chairs and BBQ grills for cook out. "The Cannons" perform at 7:00 p.m. KBEC-AM (1390) will broadcast patriotic music during the fireworks at 9:00 p.m. For more information, contact Waxahachie Chamber of Commerce at (972) 937-2390.

July 4

O'Reilly Bracket Series #7. Location: Texas Motorplex (no fireworks). For more information, call (972) 878-2641 or visit www.texasmotorplex.com.

July 10

Benefit concert and art auction event for Kenya, Africa: 7:00 p.m., Oaks Fellowship. Featuring Sixpence None

the Richer and Jars of Clay. Cost is by donation only. (214) 376-8208.

July 11, 12

Trade Days of Waxahachie: Saturday: 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. and Sunday: 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Trade Days will offer a "Christmas in July" promotion, so bring your gift list and shop early. The two-day event will also offer unique arts and crafts, commercial items, produce and more. Admission is free. For more information, e-mail tradedaywaxahachie@sbcglobal.net, or call (972) 617-8156.

July 15

Ellis County Christian Women's luncheon. (972) 937-2807.

July 20-24

Vacation Bible school: 10:00 a.m.-noon at Ovilla Road Baptist Church, 3251 Ovilla Rd., Ovilla. Call (972) 617-8544 for details.

July 22

Red Oak Area Chamber luncheon: noon, Red Oak Municipal Center. \$12 in advance or \$15 at the door. Contact Shelley Oglesby at admin@redoakareachamber.org for details.

For more community events, visit our online calendar at www.nowmagazines.com.



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