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July 2010

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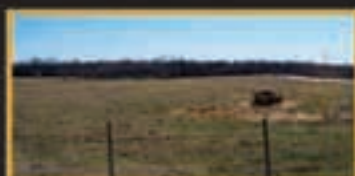
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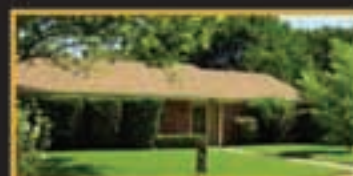
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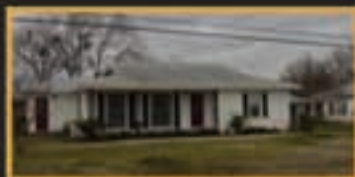
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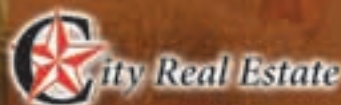
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## On The Cover

Mason Hopkins, Jacob Honza, Ian Baker and Cole Howeth are proud to be part of the Ennis Pirates U12 select baseball team.

Photo by Amy Ramirez.



# Editor's Note



*Happy Fourth of July!*

When you think about freedom, what comes to mind? The American English dictionary describes it as the condition of being free; having liberty and independence; the condition of being able to use or move about as desired. As things in this life change, thankfully one thing remains the same — our freedom, which, we enjoy all because men and women have continued to answer the call to serve.

As we celebrate our country's independence, let us not fail to remember all it has taken to keep our nation free. Think about all the lives which have been lost so we can congregate with family and friends for an afternoon of burgers cooked on the grill. Let us also keep those who are actively serving, who cannot be home to celebrate, in our thoughts and prayers. It is their unselfish dedication to service which allows us the freedom to celebrate.

Sandra Strong  
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# Babi's Pride

— By Sandra Strong

*Less than a year ago, Jake Pavelka was your regular guy living a busy, yet peaceful life in Dallas. He had a full-time job as a captain with Atlantic Southeast Airlines. He spent holidays and special occasions with his family and close friends. He had a good life, but he was lacking a partner with whom to share it. That was when a friend of his from church nominated him as a contestant on The Bachelorette. Things changed dramatically for*

*Jake and his family as he quickly became a household name.*

Flourishing as the humble gentleman on *The Bachelorette*, he gained widespread approval with Americans everywhere even though he was not the last man standing. Producers took notice of his popularity and “good-old-boy” Southern charm. They did not miss the opportunity to cast him as the star of *The Bachelor* last season. Jake’s popularity continued to grow even after he chose Vienna. Almost immediately, the announcement was made that he would be a celebrity contestant on *Dancing With the Stars*.

Jake has a very special tie to Ennis, where some of his ancestral roots are firmly planted. His grandmother was born and reared not far from her current home. “I was born on Ginn Road 93 years ago. It’s known as Creechville Road today,” Libbie Pavelka said. “Jake still calls me his *Babi*. That’s short for *Babicka*, which is Czech for grandmother.” Libbie grew up here and married her late husband, Miro, in 1941. She had two sons, Jim and Miro, and now proudly boasts of her five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

But lately, her main focus has been on Jake, Jim and Sallie’s youngest child. Sitting down at her kitchen table reminiscing with visitors is something she enjoys. “I’ve always been proud of Jake. It makes me so happy that Jake is so popular,” she said, when asked how she feels about his television appearances. “I’m looking forward to seeing Jake again.”

As she talks about Jake, Libbie cannot help but return to his childhood days. Jake may have been born and reared in Denton, but she remembers the special times they shared together at her home in Ennis. “Jake was just your regular kid. We all thought he was handsome, but he always thought he was dorky,” she admitted. “He would play so hard that if he fell down he’d fall asleep right where he fell. Many times, he was so tired when he got to the dinner table that he’d fall asleep there, too. He also liked to wear his play clothes to bed at night, so he



# Tonya Youngblood

## M.D., A.B.F.P

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*Dr. Youngblood graduated from Texas A&M University and completed her residency at University of Mississippi. She is board certified in family practice and has practiced in Ennis since 2001. Dr. Youngblood is accepting new patients of all ages.*

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wouldn't waste any time changing into them the next morning."

Other stories Libbie shared were about Jake's desire to help others and his need to stay busy. He would take his wagon up and down the street and ask the neighbors if they had any odd jobs he could do. "I remember a time after a hail storm," Libbie explained. "He went all over the neighborhood helping people pick up shingles that had blown off. He was humble then, and he's still humble today."

As Libbie was lost in her memories of the younger Jake, the phone began to ring, bringing her back to the present. When she answered, she was happy to hear Sallie's voice at the other end. Libbie



wasted no time asking her to share her thoughts about Jake's accomplishments and choices as an adult. "We're all so proud of all the steps he's taken. It's been a lot of fun, and we're all happy for him," Sallie confessed. "Even though he and Vienna are no longer a couple, we feel everything happens for a reason."

Jake's schedule this past year is proof that he is very much like his *Babi*. Their energy levels are comparable; the only difference is his activity is being aired on live television, while Libbie keeps her activities a bit closer to home. While he happily deals with fans and makes future plans, Libbie finds solace working with her flowers, cooking for her family, enjoying weekly trips to the beauty shop and spending time with friends. After months of telephone voting, she spent the last Friday night of May watching the king and queen of this year's Polka Festival get crowned. She loves the costumes and the dancing.

Yes, dancing is something Libbie misses from her younger days. She remembers making her own Czech-authentic costume as a teen. "We would dance the *beseda*, it's a circle dance," she explained. "I no longer





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have the costume. My sister borrowed it, and I never got it back,” she laughed. Libbie admitted she still loves to dance. “I love to slow dance and waltz, but I can no longer polka.”

Sallie playfully added, “It’s harder these days for her to find a dance partner.”

Libbie has also not lost her zeal for cooking. When Jake comes for his next visit, she will be fixing all of his favorites: pork roast, sauerkraut and dumplings and her prune dumplings, which he loves. “I love cooking for the family. I’ve never liked eating out,” she confessed. “There’s too much background noise. I don’t consider it a visit. It’s quiet and peaceful here at the house.”

She spent several nights for several months in what Libbie calls the boys’ bedroom. She would make herself comfortable, turn the television to Channel 8 and smile as Jake appeared before her. Mondays were spent guessing

**“I’m looking forward to seeing Jake again.”**

who would receive a rose and who he would send home. Once his final choice was made, *The Bachelor* ended, and Jake immediately put his dancing shoes on for *Dancing With the Stars*. Dancing — just one more thing he has in common with his *Babi*.

Tuesday and Wednesday became the evenings Libbie devoted to the comfy chair, the boys’ bedroom and her grandson. She sat mesmerized as he learned one new dance after another. “Me and the rest of the family voted every way we could,” she said, “and as many times as we could. No one bothered me during these times because they knew I was watching Jake. I talked to the TV just like the rest of America.” Getting voted off on April 27 was a bit of a disappointment, but it did not lessen the overwhelming pride she still has for Jake.

Libbie looks forward to Jake’s visit with excitement and anticipation. She understands his busy schedule, but as his grandmother, she just wants to hug him and tell him how well he’s worn the Pavelka name. Her words for her grandson were simple. “I’m just so proud of him.” **NOW**



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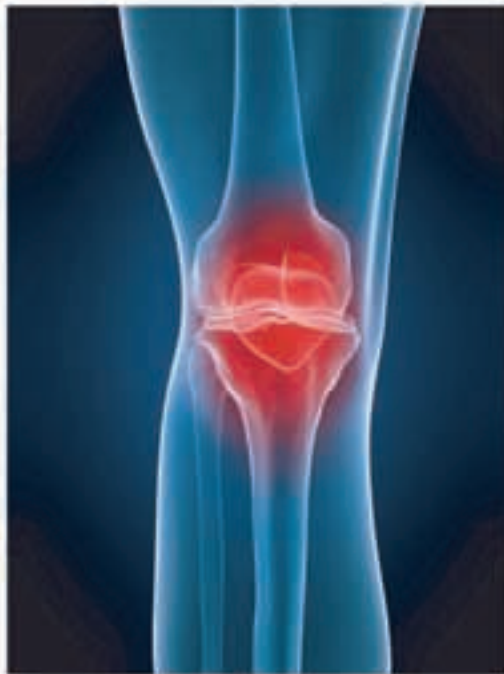
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# Opposites *Do* Attract



— By Sandra Strong

*When they first met, Cord and Donna Blankenship could not have been more different. But after 29 years of marriage, they are positive proof that opposites most definitely do attract. “We met in the Palmer High School gym at a fundraising event,” Donna remembered. “All I saw was the back of his head, but I knew he was the man I was going to marry.” When he finally did turn around, Donna knew it was love at first sight. For Cord, the wild carefree-spirited one, it took a little longer to know without a doubt that the shy and quiet Donna was the only one for him. “I was planning to go into the military,” he said, explaining that he was 18 going on 19, and Donna was 20 at that first*



*At Home With*

**Cord and Donna Blankenship**



*fateful meeting. "I was going to be a Navy SEAL, but when I met Donna things changed."*

Yes, things changed in those early years before and after the Blankenships married. Donna was working at the now defunct Safeway, while Cord was employed at Fallen's, also no longer in business. "He said he wouldn't marry me until he got a better job," Donna said. "That's when he went to work for Elk." The couple married on February 21, 1981, and life as they had known it began to change. They both agree the changes were definitely "a God thing."

The years passed quickly for the couple. Only now are they able to sit back, relax and remember the journey, which brought them to this place — one filled with a multitude of ups and downs. The trials were many at times, but the blessings along the way sustained them. After 20 years at Elk, Cord made the decision to step out in faith. He began evangelizing, while also helping to start a church from the ground up, serving as the associate pastor for seven years. "I became the senior pastor at Refiner's Fire Ministries International nine years ago, just two days before 9/11. I never wanted



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to be a pastor," he confessed, "but when God spoke, I had no choice but to listen." In that first week, Cord also officiated at his first funeral. "I never thought I'd be here," he added, "but now I can't see myself anywhere else."

Five years ago they "accidentally" fell into the two-bedroom, two-bath, Tuscan Ranch-style home they now enjoy. Linda Rudd, local Realtor, built the home for herself, but decided to put it on the market a short time later.

"We only lived a mile down the road," Cord said, "but we fell in love with this home the first time we saw it."

After a great deal of prayer, the couple made an offer. "We wanted a home for entertaining; one that was easy to keep clean with plenty of room for parties," Donna said. "We look at this home as another 'God thing.'"

When it finally came time to move, the Blankenships decided to leave all the "old" behind. All that came with them to the new home was some outdoor furniture and their personal belongings. As they reminisce, they cannot help but laugh. "We didn't really have any furniture for about a month," Donna said. "Cord sold his Harley, and we bought furniture with that money." The money went a long way toward furnishing the home. Now



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when Cord wishes he still had his Harley Davidson, Donna is quick to playfully say, "You're sitting on it."

They both readily admit that the home was Linda's creation, that all they had to do when moving in was bring their own personal style to the mix. "All we had to do to the house to make it our own was repaint the master bedroom," Cord said. They painted it a rich, deep khaki color that blends perfectly with the earthy tones found throughout the rest of the house. The beaded floor-to-ceiling curtains add the finishing touches to the room that offers solace. "Linda gets the props," he added, "but the decor belongs to Donna. She has an eye for color."

Linda also agreed to leave something extra behind — something personal that she knew the Blankenships would appreciate. "The ladder that hangs

over the tub was her gift to us," Cord explained. "The dried flowers hanging from it are keepsakes from family weddings and special occasions that Linda attended. She knew we'd take care of it." Just recently, Julie Law, known as the Painted Lady, painted a mural of an outdoor garden around the tub area. "We envisioned it just like she painted it," Donna said. "It gives the whole room a 3-D effect," Cord added.

Every square inch of the home, both inside and out, is used. New church member luncheons, ladies meetings and UFC gatherings are only a few of the events held regularly at the Blankenship home. There is plenty of room for archery targets and bow hunting practice. It is not uncommon for Cord and Donna to hop in the

car and leave for an entire day so another family can spend the day swimming in their backyard pool. "We leave and it gives them [the family] a whole day at the house," he said. "God blessed us with this home. It's not about us and what we have. It's about sharing what God has given us with others."

They are not sentimental about "things," so they do not have collections, unless cookbooks count as collectibles. "I love to try new recipes," Donna stated. "I like recipes that are quick and simple."

The home's decor is clean, simple and crisp; just like Cord and Donna like it. Old, rustic frames display family



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pictures. Donna makes changes to the decor from time-to-time, but she readily admits that 20 years from now the furniture will probably be in the same place.

The couple's favorite places to be are the living room and the back patio. Their oldest daughter, Christy, lives in Plano, but always finds time to come home to visit. Katy, the youngest, still lives at home with her parents and the newest Blankenship addition, the couple's first grandchild, Allee. "She has brought joy and new life to our home," Donna said. "I feel she's brought us all closer together."

Cord smiles as he watches his granddaughter sleep. "We really are blessed," he confessed. "She is a good baby, and Donna is just enjoying being a grandparent."

The words the family tries to live by are found in Galatians 5:22-23. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."

"If you have love," Cord said, "the others come naturally." **ENNSNOW**



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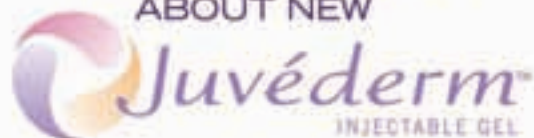




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After hours, he enjoys spending time with family, fishing, woodworking and riding his motorcycle.



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### KELLY WALKER, D.P.M.

DR. KELLY WALKER earned her Doctorate in Podiatric Medicine from Barry University School of Podiatric Medicine. She completed a Podiatric Orthopedic Residency at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Massachusetts. Next, she completed a Podiatric Surgical Residency at the Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston. She has since been in practice in Oklahoma City and Dallas. She has relocated to Ennis to open her own private practice. Away from the office, Dr. Walker enjoys spending as much time as possible with her family and friends, reading, traveling, boating, and riding horses are just one of her favorite forms of leisure.



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Polka-lovers young and old celebrate at this year's Polka Fest. From top left: Dylan Lange, 1, waits patiently for the parade to begin; Jimmy Allard's grandkids pose with his 1956 Ford; the Firehouse Grill float; the King and Queen ride in the parade; Elizabeth Collins, Abigail Collins and Olivia Rudd are full of giggles during the parade; the high school marching band makes Ennis proud as they perform; Polka Princess, Ava Glenn, waves to the crowd.



Attendees of the Ennis Public Library summer reading program wave for the camera.



The kids at GO! Academy catch fish at JC Park.



EHS Salutatorian Andrew Hejny and Valedictorian Katlyn Dolezalik.



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# Unlimited Artistry

— By Virginia Riddle



Art can take many forms, and Kendra Gunn is ready to explore different ways through which to express her creative spirit. An Ennis High School graduate who also graduated recently from The University of Texas at Austin (UT), Kendra said, “I express my creativity a little differently.” Painting, decorating rooms, special event planning, catering and taking “trash to treasure” are all avenues for exploration.

Kendra has grown up around artists who create in different ways. Her father, Scott Gunn, is a residential designer, and her uncle, Larry Gunn, does woodwork and metalwork, while her stepfather, Jimmy Whitfill, takes old things and makes them new. “He takes old stuff and creates really cool things,” Kendra remarked. Even her 6-year-old brother, Dylan, is already drawing beautifully. She credits her parents, Scott and Haley Gunn and Lisa and Jimmy Whitfill, for letting her pursue her dreams. “They always believed in me and stood by what I wanted to do,” she said. “They put their faith in me to figure things out and be successful.” Two stepbrothers, Ryan and Travis Miller, complete this Ennis hometown girl’s immediate family.

As a student at Ennis High School,

Kendra exhibited her art at Navarro College and was awarded Honorable Mention for a class project, a drawing of a duck, in the National Junior Duck Stamp Competition. Flowers, not ducks, however, were Kendra’s major artistic focus; her first Advanced Placement (AP) portfolio concentration was sunflowers.

Art was not her only interest while in high school. Kendra graduated third in the class of 2006 with honors and earned an AP Scholar Award. She had the opportunity to meet President George W. Bush while attending the Senate Youth Conference as one of two delegates chosen from Texas. Another valued experience was serving as state secretary for the Texas Association of Student Councils. Mentoring her through the election and year of office was Jim Turney, Student Council sponsor. “Nobody from Ennis had ever run for state office. It took a lot of planning and work. Mr. Turney let me take my ideas and do what I wanted with them,” Kendra explained.

While at The University of Texas at Austin (UT), Kendra’s pursuit of art took a back seat to her drive to excel in the classroom. Her experiences at UT along with living in Austin reshaped her artistic

focus. She majored in advertising with a concentration in business. “Advertising is a mix of science and art. I like to take a more creative approach to find unique ways to do creative things on a lower budget,” Kendra reflected. She served three internships, all in marketing promotions and event planning. Kirby Lane Café, the Catholic Charities of Central Texas and the UT Conference Center and Hotels gave her experience with large event planning and catering. “I was surprised at the expense and scale of Austin weddings,” Kendra acknowledged. Kendra was on the Dean’s List and graduated from UT with honors in 2009.

Following graduation, Kendra began painting again, while also searching for directions in which her creative side can work with her business side. She has been painting in oils and acrylics on canvas in two dimensions using bold, bright colors. Kendra leans toward an abstract contemporary style but is quick to add, “You can still tell what it is.”

Working for the Dallas caterer, Abacus, has given Kendra the chance to continue gaining experience in event planning while she plans other private projects. “I want to build a coffee table I have designed,” she added. She also has plans to design



and build lamps and chandeliers from salvaged items. Following her stepfather's example, she likes items that are "vintage modern," yet give out "old vibes." Kendra admitted, "I also like a modern, kind of quirky style."

In her spare time Kendra enjoys scrapbooking, cooking and traveling. Trips to Australia while serving as an International Student Volunteer and to Chicago, New York City and Washington, D.C. have given Kendra opportunities to see art within diverse mediums. She was challenged by scenes in Australia that were so beautiful they could not be replicated on canvas. The Library of Congress' ceiling, mantel work and staircases amazed her. In Chicago she marveled at homes designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and took the famed Architectural Tour through the downtown canals.

An eclectic group of artists inspire Kendra — from Kandisky, an abstract artist, to Matisse to Sixx Design, a firm



that designs homes and condos, to Richard Woods, a painter of decorative boards for the exterior of homes. Kendra has been revisiting a journal she had to keep for a creative advertising class in college. "I have to find inspiration in my ideas. I like to mix and match simple things." Another project she is proud of is the tree mural she painted for her little brother's bedroom.

In whatever medium she works, Kendra wants her designs to go "toward a person's personality." With a winning personality of her own, unleashed artistic talent, a desire to explore limitless possibilities, a business acumen and a supportive family, Kendra is finding many ways to develop her creativity. She is another hometown girl imprinting her mark on the world of today. **ArtsNOW**



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# Board the Pirate Ship

— By Virginia Riddle

This is not a tale of pirates who sail the seas and steal plunder. This is a story about a Little League team, supported by coaches, families, teachers and neighbors. Only two things are on their list to steal: bases and hearts. “What makes our team unique is that every one of these kids is the team and community’s kids,” Neil Hopkins, assistant coach remarked.

William Corbett, a team member, sums it up this way. “This team is like a family to me because we are always there for each other.”

Many residents of Ennis know about the Ennis Independent School District school bus dubbed “The Pirate Ship” used to transport members of the Ennis Pirates U 12 select baseball team from an intermediate school to an elementary campus where several of their parents work. So what is so special about this team? By choosing to compete in the Southwest Classic League with Dallas

area teams, the Pirates do not always win every game. “These kids aren’t going to remember how many games they won,” Neil remarked, “but they will remember the camaraderie and individual plays.”

Coach Jason Baker sets high expectations for the boys. “They’re all excellent students, which is a great accomplishment while staying so busy playing baseball,” Sharon Honza, a team mom, stated. Team members include: Ian Baker, William Corbett, Brett Doring, Rhett Holcomb, Jacob Honza, Mason Hopkins, Cole Howeth, Logan Lipscomb, Evan Moreno, Dylan Nors and Matthew Shorrock. “Each and every one of these boys has a desire to be a good baseball player,” Jason said. “They are respectful kids; they are very coachable kids, and they have developed a strong work ethic.”

Already the team has accumulated some memorable plays. Neil remembered the first tournament. “We won against

a pitcher, who threw 62 miles per hour, and we went on to win the championship in the last inning. It was pretty neat stuff hitting a kid that could throw like that,” Neil remembered. “The kids were so proud.”

Another great moment occurred at the Little Heroes Field in Dallas last spring. Jason recalled, “We got beat 17-2. They made us look like we didn’t know our business. We came back and beat the first seed team, then played for the championship and won a trophy. This was the turning point for the team; they were turning into baseball players. They quickly found out baseball is a disciplined, mental game. It’s all about experience.”

Experience is what Jason brings to coaching with a degree in kinesiology, and experience playing baseball at Ennis High School and college. “Jason made us realize how complex baseball is,” Neil offered. “He gives the kids a chance to grow.” However, each coach has brought skills to the team. Neil, a CPA by profession, said, “I know my role. I handle the administrative side for the team.”

Jason agreed, “Neil speaks reality when I see stars. There is a good ebb and flow between all of us.”

There should be; these coaches have been doing this job since their boys were on a team for 4-year-olds. Neil’s wife, Carrie, and daughters, Marley and Morgan, are ready to assist and cheer as are Jason’s wife, Kim and daughter, Katie. Assistant Coach Chris Shorrock completes the coaching team. All three coaches have sons on the team.

The coaches are quick to give the parents credit for the success of the team. “Parents are our biggest asset,” Neil stated. “These are good kids parented by good parents. They make Ennis proud.” Parents organize fundraisers, carpool to games, serve as officers, create the team’s Web site and offer support to each other.

“The Pirate families spend a lot of time with each other,” Robin Corbett, team mom, stated. The boys even get to cheer on their parents who formed their own baseball league team, the Night Terrors.

The Pirates attract a large following from the Ennis community at games. Teachers, neighbors, church and extended family members are often in attendance and are supportive in every way. The team



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also lists many business supporters within the community on their Web site: [www.ennispiratesu11.shutterfly.com](http://www.ennispiratesu11.shutterfly.com). "We truly are community-based," Jason said.

Having fun is important especially in the fight against burnout. The spring season's games revealed the kids were



a little rusty in their skills which gave them a rocky start. "Every kid is a darn good ballplayer. We had to teach them that the challenge gave them a greater opportunity to excel," Jason said. "The kids have worked hard. We have to develop 'muscle memory.' Everyone practices with a sense of purpose and a smile on his face. Hopefully, if these kids have a chance to play in high school, college or beyond, these skills and experiences will serve them well."

As the season matures, so do these young baseball players suited out in red and black. Team father, Chad Corbett reflected, "I think each of these boys will be able to cherish the memories of this experience when they are adults."

His son, William, said it all. "There is no better place to be on the weekend than on the baseball field." **NOW**

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*Real estate is great at Century 21 Judge Fite Company. — By Sandra Strong*

Karen Buckley, assistant manager at Century 21 Judge Fite Company, has lived in Ennis with her husband, Shaun, and their two children, Colin and Kyle, for the past 15 years. Her career in real estate began in 2002. She spent the first eight years gaining valuable experience and a reputation with another real estate company in Ellis County, which caused George French, CFO of Century 21 Judge Fite Company, to take notice. “He called and recruited me to be the assistant manager,” she said. “I remember meeting with George. Then I met Bill Stivers, the manager here and in Waxahachie.” The final phase of her interview process was to meet with the owners, Jim Fite and his sister, Jan Fite Miller.

After the three-week process was completed, Karen was offered the position. She took her place on December 1, 2009, alongside Realtors she had known for years. “I liked the

family atmosphere here,” she admitted. “Everyone welcomed me with open arms.” And it did not hurt that Century 21 Judge Fite Company is listed as the number one company in Ellis County based on information Bill receives on a regular basis from the North Texas Real Estate Information System (NTREIS).

Her reputation as one of the top producing agents in Ellis County made the transition much easier for Karen. She came to Ennis with a real estate résumé she had earned through years of hard work. In 2009, she was the president of the Ellis-Hill Association of Realtors. “This is not a position you sign up for,” she explained. “I was voted into this position by my peers in Ellis and Hill counties.” Karen also serves on the boards of the Ennis Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Ennis United Way.

One can fairly say Karen and all those who are associated with Century 21 Judge



*From left:*

Century 21 Judge Fite Company Realtors and staff members; Karen Buckley and Bill Stivers.

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Fite Company are community-minded. This past April, they hosted a community Easter egg hunt at Bluebonnet Park. They had team representation at the Relay for Life event held in April. "We enjoy giving back to the community because we live here, and we want to make it a better place," she stated. "We want people to want to move here."

With things on the uphill swing, Karen said it is still a buyer's market, "but the economy is picking up to include positive things for those selling their homes, too." Being a person who loves people has no doubt helped Karen not only to earn customer trust, but also to make many friends along the way. Today's technology has helped put her and Century 21 Judge Fite Company at the "top of their game." The company has always offered Web marketing to their extensive list of



customer offerings. "Your listing will appear on [www.C21JudgeFite.com](http://www.C21JudgeFite.com) and [www.Century21.com](http://www.Century21.com)," Karen added. "By listing with us, you also receive the added value through exposure on our advertising partner sites."

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As Century 21 Judge Fite Company continues to celebrate its 70th year in the business of real estate, Karen will continue doing what she does best — putting the customers first. Her goal is to welcome them to their new home, one friend or client at a time. **NOW**



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# History Comes Alive

— By Sandra Strong

At a very early age, Karina Jones knew she loved history. “My dad was a pilot, so we traveled a lot when I was a youngster,” she remembered. “I lived history because we visited Civil War battle sites.” As a high school student, Karina found herself struggling to decide her career choice. While in high school, she recalls a trip she took to Europe — a trip that changed her thinking forever. “The trip sealed the deal,” she said, referring to her decision to pursue a career involving history as its core. “History came alive for me on that trip. I got to see firsthand what I had been studying in my history books.”

After graduating from Ennis High School in 1986, Karina began her four-year journey at Baylor University. During her junior year of college, she finally had to declare a major. “I didn’t always want to be a teacher,” she stated. But after weighing the choices, which revolved around history, Karina’s decision

to earn her bachelor’s degree in secondary education specializing in history was really the only option remaining that would inevitably satisfy her love of history. “I ruled out being an archaeologist because of my fair skin,” she laughed. “I can’t be out in the sun for long periods of time. The other option was a museum worker. To me, that just seemed boring. Once I stepped foot into student teaching, I knew I’d found my niche.”

Graduation from Baylor in 1990 opened the door for Karina’s first position as an educator in a public school setting. After one vacation Bible school experience as a young adult, she knew without any doubt teaching younger students was not for her. “My teaching career began at Springbranch Independent School District,” she explained. “I started out as a substitute teacher in the sixth grade social studies class.” Soon thereafter, the part-time

position became full time. “It was exactly what I’d been praying for,” she confessed, “so I jumped on it.”

She taught in Springbranch for three-and-a-half years before making the decision to return home. When her daughter, Ciara, now 17, was born, the family thought it best to rear her in a small town environment instead of the rat race Houston offered. “She was a year old when we came back to Ennis,” Karina said. “We wanted her to have small-town roots.”

Luckily, once she got settled, she was able to go right back to work at Ennis Junior High, teaching resource history to sixth-, seventh- and eighth-graders. She held this position for two consecutive years. When Gwen Draper retired from eighth grade history, Steve Boon moved into the vacated spot. “This opened the door for me,” Karina explained. “I took Steve’s position as a sixth grade history teacher during the ’96-’97 school year, and I’ve been here ever since.”

Karina admitted that teaching sixth-graders is not an easy task. “I think I always knew I wanted to teach some form of history to this grade level,” she said. “The key is to get their attention. I start teaching history by looking into what happened in the past,” she added. “Once the kids have an understanding of the past, then I’m able to bring the lesson into present-day happenings.”

Sitting behind the desk and handing out worksheets has never been a teaching-style option for Karina. “I’m either teaching in front of the class or I’m up walking around the room while teaching,” she said. Oftentimes, Karina



## Education **NOW**

will use the SMART™ board, a board that allows for computer projected lessons, much like the overhead projector screens of the past. Other times, Karina will allow the students to role play whatever is being studied that day. “Sometimes a narrator will read the text,” she said. “Role playing allows the kids to get up and get involved in the lesson. It helps the kinesthetic learners, too. It keeps them moving.”

The most difficult aspect of her position as an Ennis Independent School District educator is getting the students to understand school is so much more than a social affair. “I want them to understand the importance of an education,” she said. “Since they are the next generation of adults, I want them to find excitement and joy in learning.”



**“Once the kids have an understanding of the past, then I’m able to bring the lesson into present-day happenings.”**

Some might ask what is so rewarding about teaching history to this particular grade level. “For me, it’s all about loving each student as if they are my own. Class time is a family-like atmosphere. It’s about respect and equal treatment.”

Karina is also very proud to say she gets up each morning excited about coming to school. “I can’t think of anything else I’d rather do,” she added. That was until she remembered the trip she and Ciara will be taking this summer. “We are going with an educational tour group to London, Paris and the Alps,” Karina explained. “I’m hoping this trip will do for Ciara what the trip to Europe did for me. I’m hoping to see history come alive again from my daughter’s perspective.” **NOW**

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# In The Kitchen With Debby Songy

— By Faith Browning

Debby Songy has loved to cook as far back as she can recall. “The kitchen was always our happy place in the house,” she reminisced. “I remember pushing the chair up to the stove or table and helping my parents and grandparents cook. They truly were my inspiration.”

Since Debby's children are grown, she mostly cooks for her husband and best friend, K.P. Over the past years, they

have collected cookbooks from the many places they have traveled. Debby loves Mexican, Italian and Texan cooking and K.P. loves Creole and Cajun. “We take turns cooking all our favorites. I think it is important to cook what people enjoy,” she said. “I love to spoil my guests with their favorite food and make them feel really important.” **NOW**



## EGGPLANT CASSEROLE

**3 medium eggplants**  
**1 lb. ground meat**  
**1/2 lb. ground pork**  
**1 onion, chopped**  
**1 bell pepper, chopped**  
**1/2 cup celery, chopped**  
**2 tsp. minced garlic**  
**1 can Ro\*Tel® tomatoes**  
**1/2 tsp. basil, chopped**  
**1 tsp. salt**  
**1 tsp. Tony's Creole Seasoning**  
**1 cup cooked rice**  
**1/2 cup Panko bread crumbs or corn flake crumbs**

**1.** Peel eggplant with a potato peeler. Dice into small pieces and boil in a 2-qt. pan with a tsp. of salt in the water. Cook until tender and drain.  
**2.** Brown ground meat and ground pork together in large frying pan. Add onion, bell pepper, celery and garlic. Stir-fry for 5 minutes. Add eggplant, tomatoes,

basil, salt and Creole seasoning. Cook over low heat for 10 minutes.  
**3.** Add rice and pour into a casserole dish. Sprinkle bread crumbs over the top and bake at 375 F for 30 minutes.

## SHRIMP COURTOUILLON (Pronounced ku-beon)

**1/4 cup olive oil**  
**1 onion**  
**1 bell pepper**  
**1/2 cup celery, chopped**  
**2 tsp. fresh garlic**  
**1 small can tomato paste**  
**1 can Ro\*Tel®**  
**2 cups chicken broth**  
**1 tsp. salt**  
**1/2 tsp. black pepper**  
**Creole seasoning, to taste**  
**2 lbs. shrimp, peeled and deveined**  
**2 tsp. parsley, chopped**  
**2 tsp. onion tops, chopped**

**1.** Drizzle olive oil in the bottom of an

iron skillet. Add next 3 ingredients and smother down. Add garlic for a few minutes.

**2.** Add tomato paste and Ro\*Tel. Let it cook for a few minutes to bring the flavors together (gets very thick and sticky); add broth and seasoning. Cook down for about 15 minutes over medium heat.

**3.** Add shrimp, parsley and onion tops; bring to boil and cook 5 minutes. Serve over brown or white rice.

## CAJUN RICE DRESSING

**1/2 stick butter**  
**1 lb. sliced smoked sausage**  
**8 oz. mushrooms**  
**1 bell pepper, chopped**  
**1 onion, chopped**  
**1 tsp. fresh garlic chopped or minced**  
**2 tsp. fresh parsley**  
**1/4 cup green onion tops, chopped**  
**1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce**

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**2 cups white rice**

**3 cans beef consommé**

1. Melt butter and add next 7 ingredients. Stir-fry for about 10 minutes over medium heat until your ingredients start to brown.

2. Spray 9 x 13-inch oblong dish with Pam. Add next 3 ingredients to your dish and the sausage stir-fry. Cover with foil and bake at 400 F for 45 minutes depending on your oven. The liquid should be absorbed and the rice tender.

#### **PIZZA PO-BOYS**

**32 oz. country sausage**

**24 po-boy or hoagie buns**

**1 jar pizza sauce**

**1 pkg. pepperoni**

**1 lb. shaved ham**

**1 pkg. mozzarella cheese**

1. Cook country sausage; drain well.

2. Split the buns and lay face open. Spread pizza sauce on both sides of bun. Layer the sausage, pepperoni, ham and cheese. Close the buns and wrap each individual po-boy in foil. Store in refrigerator until ready to cook.

3. Preheat oven to 375 F. Heat for 15 to 20 minutes until cheese is melted.

#### **BIG FAMILY BANANA PUDDING**

**3 small boxes instant vanilla pudding**  
(can be sugar-free)

**5 cups milk**

**1 8-oz. sour cream**

**1 12-oz. container frozen dairy topping**

**2 boxes vanilla wafers**

**12-15 bananas, sliced**

1. Blend pudding and milk with wire whisk. Add sour cream and 1/2 whipped topping. Set aside.

2. In deep glass bowl, alternate cookies, bananas and pudding mixture. Top with remainder of whipped topping. Place cookies around the edge and on the top. Refrigerate overnight.

#### **APPLE CRUCHEN**

**1/2 cup butter softened**

**1 pkg. yellow cake mix**

**1/2 cup coconut**

**1 can apple slices**

**1/2 cup sugar**

**1 tsp. cinnamon**

**1 cup sour cream**

**2 egg yolks**

1. Cut butter into yellow cake mix; add coconut. Press into a 9 x 13-inch dish. Bake for 10 minutes.

2. Arrange canned apple slices over the top. Mix sugar and cinnamon together and sprinkle over the slices.

3. Beat sour cream and egg yolks with mixer and drizzle over the cake. Bake for 25 minutes at 350 F.

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# Winning Strategies for Business Succession Planning—*Provided by Gary Hayden*



As a business owner, you've probably worked hard to build and manage a business that provides income and wealth for you and your family. In fact, most of your time, energy and finances may have been invested in your business. As a result, it has more than likely become a significant portion of your estate. Unfortunately, the business that provides for your family during your lifetime may not do so at your death. Only a small number of family businesses are actually

passed on to the next generation.

What will be the legacy of your business after your death? The business may be so dependent upon your involvement that, after your death, it may have little remaining value. In addition, attempts to pass the business on to the next generation may be thwarted by estate taxes, which may force the liquidation of the business.\* Even if your business survives, finding a buyer may not be easy. Unlike a publicly traded firm, a small, closely held business may not command its real value on the market. If a family member does not actively manage the business after your death, the dividends from the business — on which your family will depend — may be insufficient to provide for their needs.

## Planning for the Eventuality

Most owners begin succession planning by deciding whether they want to pass the business on to a family member, an associate, an employee or an outsider. The business will command its greatest value when it is running at full speed. In other words, you should find a buyer now.

The cornerstone of a good business succession plan is the buy/sell agreement — a contract between owners, or the

business itself and owners. Such an agreement is legally binding and obligates the estate of the deceased owner to sell the interest of the business defined, at a predetermined price, to the business itself, to co-partners or shareholders, or to both. It creates a market for the business interest of the deceased, sets the price and governs the orderly transition of the business.

A buy/sell agreement is only as good as the funding available to execute it. For this reason, most agreements stipulate how the purchase is to be funded. Since the agreement is triggered at your death, life insurance may be the logical and most cost-effective choice.

Selecting the best method of buy/sell can be an involved process. Certain tax, estate planning and control advantages exist with each method. The decision is almost always case-specific and should be discussed with experienced professionals. In conjunction with your attorney and accountant, your insurance professional will play a critical role in developing and executing your business continuation plans. Long-range planning is always subject to change, and your buy/sell agreement should, therefore, be reviewed periodically to help assure it continues to meet your needs. **NOW**

*\* Under current law, the estate tax is repealed December 31, 2010. Consult your Certified Public Accountant for more details.*

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# Do Not Drink the Water

— By Betty Tryon, R.N.

Those happy days of summer spent splashing in the pool without a care in the world may not be so carefree. The closing of public pools because of contamination brought Recreational Water Illnesses (RWI) to the forefront. RWIs occur when swallowing or having some contact with water that is contaminated with pathogens (germs). These pathogens may be bacteria such as shigella and E. coli, or parasites such as Cryptosporidium, Giardia or even some viruses. The most frequent symptom is diarrhea along with fever, vomiting and stomach cramps. After exposure to polluted water, skin, eye, ear and respiratory symptoms are all indicative of a possible infection.

One of the most common ways these germs are spread is from humans suffering with diarrhea entering the water. Even barring the occasional "accident," anyone with recent diarrhea will have enough germs on their bottom to easily contaminate the water supply. To lessen the probability of becoming ill from RWIs, do not swallow the water! Even a small amount can be devastating. Many people think pool water is safe because it has been treated. On the contrary, some of these pathogens can live for several days in chlorinated water. Even with a perfectly maintained pool, it is impossible to prevent all RWIs because you cannot control every circumstance of what gets into the water.

Therefore, if swimming in a public pool, please remember that it is a communal venue. If someone is ill or careless, you may not know it. It is not always evident when fecal material gets in the water. Water that is treated with chlorine is not a substitution for good personal hygiene. The CDC (Centers for Disease Control) recommends showering with soap and water before swimming. Wash your hands


after using the bathroom. Please consider others and do not swim if you are ill with diarrhea. Parents of small children need to be especially vigilant and offer frequent potty breaks to avoid accidents in the water. Clean the bottom with soap and water before entering the pool.

Swimming pools are not the only water venues susceptible to this problem. Hot tubs and Jacuzzis are particularly vulnerable to the spread of waterborne diseases because the high temperature of the water causes the chlorine to evaporate more quickly. Lakes, rivers, springs or ponds carry an even higher risk. Any number of pollutants can foul the water such as sewage, animal waste or even a heavy runoff from a recent rain. It may be inconvenient to practice due diligence when the water and good times beckon. However, being careful may not only keep others from becoming ill, it will keep you safer, too. **TRYON**

*This article is for general information only and does not constitute medical advice. Consult with your physician if you have questions regarding this topic.*



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## Third Monday

Ellis County Aggie Moms: 7:00 p.m., Waxahachie First United Methodist Church, 505 W. Marvin, Waxahachie. For more information, visit [www.elliscountyaggiemoms.org](http://www.elliscountyaggiemoms.org).

## Fourth Monday

Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis County meeting: 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the Waxahachie Bible Church, 621 Grand Avenue.

## First and Third Tuesday

Ennis Cancer Support Group meeting: 7:00 p.m., Ennis Regional Medical Center classroom. For more information, call Kathy at (972) 878-6927 or visit [www.enniscancersupport.com](http://www.enniscancersupport.com)

## Third Tuesday

Skyblazers of Waxahachie R/C Club meeting: 7:30 p.m. at the Parks and Recreation Building in downtown Waxahachie.

## First and Third Thursday

Mom's Connected meeting: 9:30-11:30 a.m., Tabernacle Baptist Church, 1200 Country Club Rd. Free fellowship for moms of all ages. For more information, contact [ennismoms@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ennismoms@sbcglobal.net).

## July 5-17

Ellis County Children's Theater will present the full length original musical production created for children ages 5-14, *Boudreaux, the Lake Dog*, from 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Final production, Saturday, July 17, at 7:00 p.m. Participation fee, \$60, includes ECCT T-shirt. For more information, visit [www.ecctheater.org](http://www.ecctheater.org).

## July 9

After Hours Improv Theater presents Dance Hall Night: 7:30 p.m.-10:30 p.m. at their location at 100 N. College St. in Waxahachie. All types

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of dance music will be featured. \$10 cover charge. B.Y.O.B. For more information, call (972) 937-9839 or visit [www.afterhoursimprov.com](http://www.afterhoursimprov.com).

### July 10

ALS Fundraiser at the home of sports newscaster Dale Hansen. For more details or to purchase tickets, contact Delores McKibbin at (972) 351-2849 or visit [www.dallasals.org](http://www.dallasals.org).

### July 10-11

Trade Days of Waxahachie at the Ellis County Expo Center, 2300 W. U.S. Hwy. 287, Waxahachie. Free parking and admission. Hours: Saturday, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Sunday, 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. For more information, visit [www.tradedaysofwaxahachie.com](http://www.tradedaysofwaxahachie.com) or call Les Clemons at (972) 617-8156, James Scott at (214) 202-1788 or Jean Davis at (972) 816-3644.

### July 16-17

Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis County will hold their annual quilt show at the Midlothian Conference Center: 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. both days. This year's theme is "Stitches Around the World." This will be a judged show where more than 100 quilts are expected to be displayed and available for judging. For more information, contact Carol Sawyer at (972) 921-8576.

### July 24

Bristol Opry Country Music Show, presented by the Bristol Cemetery Association and Caring Hands of Bristol, will be held at the Old Bristol Schoolhouse, 100 Church Street, beginning at 7:00 p.m. Admission is free, but donations are always welcomed. For more information or to be a sponsor, call Jim Gatlin at (972) 846-2211, Randall Willis at (972) 666-2151 or Roland Jones at (972) 666-2273.



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## "My husband and I were planning to start a family..."

My grandmother was a patient at Ennis Regional in 2008. She went on and on about the wonderful staff and excellent service.

Dr. Kingsley is absolutely wonderful. He is very caring and patient with my many questions, whether I am seeing him for my yearly exam or during my pregnancy."

Jonathan, Dusty & Brazos Kunkel  
[16 weeks old]  
Wortham, TX

## "My experience..."

The entire staff couldn't have been better. I just felt so at home at Ennis Regional – like family really. My nurse Jill made me feel so comfortable and really gave me a sense of peace. Our room was very quiet which was nice for the three of us to bond together as a family. Couldn't have been better; I will never forget it.

At my six week checkup, I even joked with Dr. Kingsley that I needed to hurry up and have another one. His response, "I am not going anywhere; I am going to be here for a long time."



Ennis Regional Medical Center is PROUD to offer a friendly and professional birthing center not just for the people of Ennis but all of our Ellis County and neighboring families. As we did with Jonathan, Dusty and little baby Brazos, we take immense pride in showering our mothers and babies with the care and attention they deserve. Please come visit us for our weekly child birth education classes or tour our spacious delivery rooms.

The perfect place to start your family is right here...come see us.

For a tour, call please Bebe Janiah at 469-256-2167.