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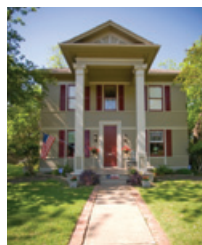
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ON THE COVER



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Photo by Amy Ramirez.

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Editor's Note

Enjoy Your Freedom!

Although it's composed of only seven simple letters, freedom is such a powerful word. It's the long-awaited day of independence for those who have been held captive. It's the liberty to speak openly and honestly without fear of punishment. It's the unrestricted boldness to be who we were created to be.

My thoughts on freedom:

F – allows me the opportunity to forgive.

R – stands strong for my religious beliefs.

E – gives me the choice to fully enjoy life.

E – lets me have lots of "Easton" time.

D – represents the times I "play dumb."

O – opens the door for the occasional outburst.

M – gives me the liberty to just be myself.

Enjoy your freedom, but remember it continues to come at a great cost for so many, and it's something we must never take for granted.

Sandra

Sandra Strong
WaxahachieNOW Editor
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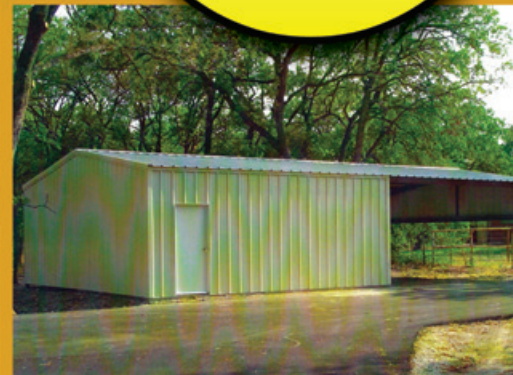
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SWIMMING

— By Sydni Thomas

AGAINST the ODDS

Underdogs of the 2012 swim season, the Waxahachie YMCA youth swim team caught everyone's attention with their record-breaking season. Not only were they a small team of less than 50 participants, but they had only practiced for two months, unlike most of their competitors who have the ability to swim all year long. After a year of success, the YMCA swim team is now on a mission to bring year-round swimming to Ellis County, but is looking to the community for support.

Brothers Brandon and Joseph Gilliland were two members of the successful 2012 team. The brothers joined the team six years ago because their dad, Sonny, did not want them sleeping in during the summer. "They are hard workers," Sonny admitted. "They never complain about the times and hours they put into swimming. It's important to give kids a productive activity in the summer that keeps them moving."

Since joining, Brandon and Joseph have each collected more than 150 ribbons and medals from their competitions. Joseph took first place in state for his age division at the 2012 Lonestar Competition in Frisco. Despite their talent and desire to improve, the Gilliland brothers only swim for two months of the year in support of their local YMCA. Other natatoriums offer yearlong swimming, which are not in Ellis County, but Sonny and their



Joseph (L) and Brandon (R) Gilliland love competitive swimming.

“It’s important to give kids a productive activity in the summer that keeps them moving.”



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Irene and Sonny Gilliland are proud of their sons.

mother, Irene, believe in building this local program. "While I want my sons to have the opportunity to swim year-round, we believe in supporting our YMCA," Sonny said. "We know we can get this program to become year-round with community support and more students joining the team."

With only swimming in June and July each year, the team has to pack in as much work as they can. In May, the team begins land practices where they work on endurance, strength and conditioning. Once June arrives and the pool is warm, the team can begin their pool practices. Advanced swimmers are in the pool by 6:30 each morning, five days a week. The newer and younger swimmers begin their practice by 7:30 each morning. During the day they can participate in free swims without the team. While swimming is mostly an individual sport, they do coexist in a team spirit during practice and meets, each teammate encouraging the other to push harder. "We are up by 5:45 each morning during the summer," Brandon said. "It's still cold when we get in the pool, but it doesn't stay that way for long. We jump in head first and get to work."

Five years ago, the YMCA turned off the heaters in the pool, making it available for only a few months out of the year. At the time, people thought it was closed due to maintenance, but it had more to do with the lack of participation in the facility's water program. The swim team may have suffered the most consequences in this situation. Many of



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the participants began traveling out of Ellis County to meet their year-round swimming needs. Those who chose to stay were finding it more difficult to keep up with competitors. However, in the last two years, the team has seen resurgent interest. During 2012, the team grew to have 40-50 members. This year, if last year's team recommitments and all of those who have shown interest sign up, the team will have close to 70 members. "The team was almost dead," Coach Shannon Crain said. "Something happened, and now we are experiencing a great time of growth. If we offer year-round services, we can keep those kids here, plus get many of the local kids traveling elsewhere back."

One of the biggest reasons the team has been able to keep up with their toughest competitors is because of Coach Shannon's teaching methods. While speed is important for winning races, she believes more in teaching proper technique first, with speed following naturally. She evaluates each member of the swim team and meets them at their level. The age ranges of those on the team are as young as 5 and all the way up to 20. However, one does not have to be 5 to join the team as a beginner. The team has seen students in high school join with little to no experience in swimming. They had a desire to participate in athletic competition, but were unable to find their place in events such as football, basketball, track or softball. A sense



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of embarrassment may follow some of the new, older students, especially when they are diving for the first time, but Coach Shannon and her team of coaches make everyone comfortable no matter what their level. If a swimmer is struggling during practice, they are able to meet up with Coach Shannon during the free swim to improve their technique. One of Coach Shannon's mottos is anyone with the ability to get in a pool and move his arms and legs, has the ability to learn how to swim. Age, size and shape do not matter.

"Coach Shannon has taught them so much about technique in only a couple months out of the year," Sonny said. "Just think about what could happen if our team could train with her year round."

Jon McLaughlin, the new YMCA director, has acknowledged the benefits of a pool open year-round are not limited to the children and youth on the YMCA swim team. Adults of all ages, those with special needs, people suffering from exercise-limiting injuries and schools in the area would all be able to use the pool year-round. When approached about this possibility, Jon and his new aquatics director, Chelsea Hayes, are excited about the opportunity to open the pool

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year-round. Swimming throughout the year will also help children and adults who are battling obesity by giving them a form of physical activity that does not impact the bones and joints like running and walking. Local schools, parents and children could also use the facility for water safety classes that would help prevent accidents in home pools, lakes and rivers.



“The benefit of having the pool open to members throughout the year is limitless,” Shannon said. “Year-round natatoriums are never empty. From team practices and swim lessons to classes on water safety and free swims, something is always going on. This opportunity could bring so much to this community and county.” **NOW**

Editor's Note: Contact the YMCA at (972) 937-9622 to join the team or to become a swim team sponsor.

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Waxahachie Faith Family Academy located at 701 Ovilla Road in Waxahachie, broke ground on a major expansion and facilities improvement project this May. The expansion will eventually include a new state of the art cafeteria, gymnasium, classroom building, and sports complex. WFFA expects completion of phase 1 of the project in the fall of 2013.

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Her Gifted HAND

— By Carolyn Wills

On May 23, 1943, Jesse Earl Pannill, had graduated from Waxahachie High School in a class of 85 seniors. Seventy years later on June 7, 2013, and by the grace of a timely twist, Victoria Elizabeth Pannill reached for her diploma from the same high school, proudly wearing her grandfather's ring. She graduated 13th in a class of 384 seniors. "He died when I was 12," she said. "To have his ring is very special."





Not only is the connection to her grandfather (Pop) special, but Victoria's mom, Rene, explained had it not been for Pop, Victoria would not have a high



school ring. "Her classmates began ordering their rings in their sophomore year," she explained. "When Victoria saw the cost could easily exceed \$700, she decided to forgo the expense."

"My letter jacket will always be a memory of high school," Victoria said. "Eventually, I will have a college ring." However, it seemed her grandfather was watching over her and had another idea.

"I'm good at hiding things from myself," Rene smiled. "One day last fall, I 'rediscovered' one of the few items we had from Victoria's grandparents' estate — a little black bag filled with Pop's

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rings." Remarkably, one of the rings from the velvet bag was Pop's Waxahachie High School class ring. "We didn't know it existed," she shared. "This has turned out to be a cool history lesson for us."

Today, choices in senior rings are as plentiful as students, including sizes and



designs, varieties of jewels and colors. "In 1943, there was only one choice," Rene explained. "Boys and girls wore the same design, and because it was wartime and gemstones were in short supply, the gold-toned Waxahachie rings are jewel-less. Instead, they're etched with an Indian head in the center, an Indian village on one side and a cotton field on the other."

"I've been wearing Pop's ring since September 2011," Victoria smiled. "It was a little too big and had to be downsized,

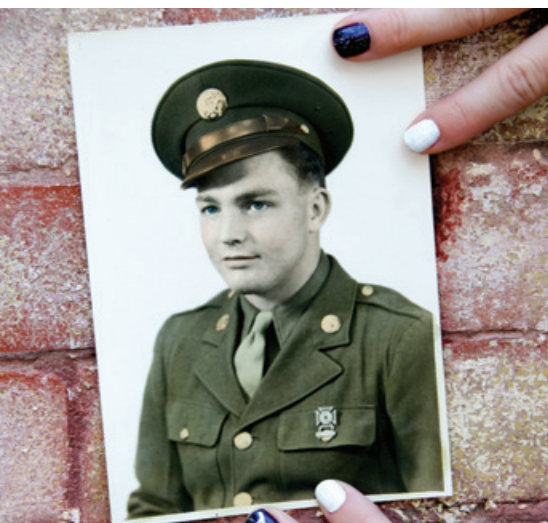


but the design is intact,” she added. “My friends like it because it’s different and doesn’t have a stone. I love it. I think it’s beautiful because it’s so unique.”

The class ring was not the only thing special about Victoria’s senior year. “My mom and her friends made my prom dress,” she smiled. “One of mom’s friends is a talented dress designer. I told her the kind of dress I would love to have, and she made the perfect midnight blue, shimmering, high/low gown.” When the 5-foot- 5-inch “Lady Indian” joined her friends at the prom, she was one of the many belles of the ball.

“The rule in our family is no dating until after high school,” Rene said.

“I really never had the time anyway,” Victoria added. “I was so busy with school, church, sports, babysitting and friends. Right now, I’m researching colleges. I’ve narrowed it to five and hope to major in pre-med.”



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Ask any teenage girl these days, including Victoria, what her favorite movie is and she's likely to answer *The Hunger Games*. In Victoria's case, the choice is especially easy to understand for when it comes to sharp instincts, survival skills and strength of character, this young woman has it all.

"She's an old soul," Rene explained. "Her brother, Jesse, is only 14 months younger. From the beginning, Victoria has been like a second mother, best



friend and sister to him." For the past year, Jesse has been in school in Germany on a Rotarian Exchange Program. "It's the longest they've ever been apart, but they stay in touch electronically," she said. "Even with the time difference, they talk on a regular basis."

Victoria's father, Mark, is part of three generations of Pannills to have grown up in Waxahachie. He and Rene divorced when Victoria and Jesse were very young, but each has continued to live in Waxahachie. "The kids were especially close to Mark's parents," Rene said. "Until they passed away, Jesse Earl and Marcia Elizabeth — Pop and Gran — as we knew them, were involved in the children's lives. Education was important to them, and when the kids entered school, they put each of them into private schools and set up Tomorrow Funds to ensure they could go to college."



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As in the case of the senior ring, Pop's and Gran's influences live on, particularly in Victoria's life. "I love vintage clothing," she smiled. "I wore Gran's mink jacket in one of my senior pictures."

Aunts, uncles and cousins from both sides of Victoria's family live in and around Waxahachie. "She's especially close to her 3-year-old second cousin, Autumn Grace," Rene said. "For the most part, though, Victoria has grown up in a single-parent home." Rene is a phlebotomist at Baylor Medical Center. "I've worked nights and weekends for the past 15 years," she explained. "I love my job, and from the time that she was little, Victoria has been a favorite among my co-workers."

By the age of 11, Victoria was sought after as a babysitter. Before she turned 16, she had saved \$4,000 toward the purchase of her first car. Rene had promised to match up to \$2,000 so, when the time came, Victoria had earned enough to pay cash for her car. "It's a yellow 2005 Chevy Aveo," she smiled.

When it comes to having fun, Victoria counts the times she spends with children, her brother and her two Chihuahuas, Bebe and Dax. "I love kids," she said. "I work in the nursery at First Baptist Church in Waxahachie, and sometimes we have as many as 13 2-year-olds!"

For the past four summers, she's attended a week-long leadership training camp at Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene. "I'm excited to be going again," she said. She's also gone on mission trips. "So far, they've all been inside the United States but, after college, I hope to go to Africa. In the eighth grade, I read a book called *Gifted Hands: The Ben Carson Story*, and it helped inspire my interest in medicine and missionary work."

Victoria lettered in high school varsity softball. "I played first base," she smiled. "Athletics are important, but I've decided to try something new in college. Instead of sports, I'm interested in learning all aspects of theater."

For now, though, this new Waxahachie graduate is looking forward to another significant family connection. "My mom and I are going on a cruise to Jamaica, Cayman Islands and Cozumel," she grinned. "It's a 10-day cruise and a graduation gift from my mom. I'm so blessed!" **NOW**

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A Spirited History

— By Randy Bigham

Lynn Fontenot fell in love with Waxahachie the first time he visited the Gingerbread City. The professional builder and craftsman, who owns Father and Son Restoration, was immediately attracted to the Victorian architecture and the quaint village atmosphere pervading the town. From the historic square to the countryside's winding roads, Lynn was enchanted. "I came to Waxahachie for the first time with my former wife to attend the Chautauqua," he recalled. "This city is a wonderful place and the people here are wonderful. And I have come full circle now, because since then, I've done extensive remodeling work on the Chautauqua Auditorium."



AT HOME
WITH

Lynn Fontenot



In addition to revamping homes and businesses, Lynn restores lives as pastor of Forreton Baptist Church. But he insisted his congregation has helped heal him as well. "After my divorce two years ago, it was difficult," he reflected, "but my family and friends, and in particular the members of my church, were so supportive. Forreton Baptist is very close to my heart."



Lynn also loves his home. The Louisiana-born minister bought the Federal-style manor when he moved to Waxahachie seven years ago. The 3,200-square-foot, two-story house fronts one of the most desirable residential streets in the city. Its pillars recall the antebellum plantations of his youth on the bayous, and an alleged ghost that haunts the upstairs hallway adds a special, spirited charm. "There's supposed to be a lady ghost who flits from room to room," Lynn laughed. "Well, who knows what it is. But just in case, there's always an open Bible laying on a table right there in the hall!"

Lynn knows little about his home's history, except that it was built in 1906, and that in the 1940s it was a boarding house. But that's enough to inspire him as he acquires furniture and adds decorative touches. At estate and garage sales, auctions, flea markets and antiques stores, Lynn has bought most of the furniture and artwork that fill his house. "I like the Victorian period," he said. "But my taste is eclectic. Still, anything old is good, and if I can get a nice deal on it, that's even better."

One of the perks of having the house to himself is collecting what he loves to his heart's content. He collects clocks, some of them ornately decorated and all fairly large and heavy, many dating to

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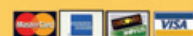
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the Victorian period he so enjoys. Lynn has also amassed a beautiful variety of stained glass panels that he's affixed to windows throughout the house. Other collections to be found are both interesting and diverse. From an array of hurricane lamps to a selection of cookie jars to no less than nine antique phonographs, Lynn buys what he likes. "I'm always picking stuff up," he admitted. "Arrowheads, old handmade duck calls, you name it."

But his unabashed passion is Vaseline

glass, which he displays on a buffet and in a china cabinet in his dining room. The latter holds a total of 400 glasses, goblets, plates, jars and other dishware, all of Vaseline glass. Made from uranium, the pieces Lynn likes best are green and yellow in color. "I started collecting the glass after I saw my first piece in 1985 in Mississippi where I was preaching a revival," Lynn recalled. "I just liked the color."

Although his decorating sense isn't traditional, he has an eye for arranging his

favorite items in a compelling way. For instance, on the walls of the formal living room, Lynn has combined old French engravings of biblical scenes, elegantly framed, with a modern oil painting depicting a country preacher baptizing people in a creek.

Lynn also has a knack for spotting the rare and unusual. He bought two



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huge floor fans that once stood in the lobby of the Ginocchio Hotel in Marshall. Dating to the early 1910s, the old fans still work after 100 years. "They're probably some of my favorite things," Lynn estimated, "just because you'll seldom ever see anything like them." Another favorite item is an oil lamp that hangs in the living room. With a patent date of 1863, the lamp came with its 150-year-old bill of sale, confirming its crystal trim is both authentic and original to the piece.



In his reputedly haunted, second-floor hall, Lynn has assigned pride of place to an especially intriguing piece of artwork. This late 19th century portrait in oils of a distinguished gentleman shows a particularly lavish ring on the sitter's hand. "The man was a well-known jeweler in Ohio," Lynn explained. "And when I bought the picture I was able to also buy the ring." That ring is now encased in a shadow box beneath the portrait of its former wearer.

Of all his treasured possessions, Lynn confessed the most cherished of all is a weathered old jug that he found as a boy of 12 in the woods of his native

Louisiana. "It was my first find," he smiled. "I was playing hide and seek with my brothers when I saw it. The handle is broken, and it's scuffed up, but I don't care. It's just a great reminder of my youth."

Luck plays a part in some of Lynn's estate sale and thrift store finds. On a recent shopping adventure with a girlfriend, combing the popular Antique Alley trail, he spotted a battered, old model of a sailing ship in a resident's front yard. He knew at once the intricately carved old vessel was valuable so he was surprised when the owner told him he could have it for \$5. "We better grab it fast," he laughed to his companion. The model boat, now spruced up with its red sails flying, sits atop a sideboard in front of Lynn's dining room window.

Another instance of luck happened about a decade ago when Lynn was



helping one of his sons clear out a property he had purchased. "In the attic of this old place was some stuff we just took out and left in the yard while we finished our work," he remembered. "One of the things was a bent-up, five gallon bucket holding a bunch of nails. We didn't think anything about it until later when we looked under the nails and found 10, 100-ounce bars of silver!"

Luck or no luck, one thing Lynn is sure of. "I'm blessed," he said. "I'm at a great place in my life. My business is doing better than ever, and most important of all, I have a wonderful church family that I love. I'm happier than I've ever been, and feel like I'm exactly where I'm supposed to be." **NOW**

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— By Sandra Strong





abuse or they have witnessed a crime. Rather than spending time in the local police station with its locked doors and a squad room filled with several different conversations all taking place at the same time, children can retell their story — their most personal secrets — to a person without badge, gun or handcuffs who meets them at the door with a smile.

Choosing this calmer scenario means choosing The Gingerbread House, a center that opened its doors in December 1999 and named John Wyckoff as its executive director in May 2001. Children visit the home after a member of the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) contacts The Gingerbread House to schedule a forensic interview. The MDT consists

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share their
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of Law Enforcement, Child Protective Services, Ellis County and District Attorney's office and Ellis County Juvenile Probation. "The team works very well together," John said. "The nice thing about it is the protocol we have in place works. We meet every July to revise the protocol based on what the team members believe will be needed for the coming year. The people in each field may come and go, but the process remains the same because it works."

"These children describe the abuse they've endured and/or the traumatizing

events they've witnessed in detail," said Teresa Evans, forensic interviewer at The Gingerbread House in reference to the many children from Ellis County who find a safe haven under her wing. "As the forensic interviewer, I speak one-on-one with these young children at The Gingerbread House. We talk in a child-friendly room, allowing the child to feel more comfortable in sharing their most personal secrets, abuse they have endured or crimes they have witnessed."

Many of the children, ranging in age from 0 to 17, and sometimes older depending on the individual situation, do not realize the abuse they've experienced is abnormal. These same children do not understand the abuse or the



incidents are crimes against them or even that they've witnessed a crime. "These children are allowed to talk about what a day is like for them in their home," Teresa explained. "They get to share their secrets in a nonthreatening, comfortable environment."

As Teresa and the child converse, The Gingerbread House has the law enforcement officer and/or Child Protective Services caseworker; the assistant district attorney and the district attorney investigator, Marlena Pendley, seated in another room

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observing via television to ensure all details are obtained. "Allowing the child to talk about the incident or incidents in their own words and in their own time allows the investigators to hear from the mouths of the children what they have seen, heard, smelled, felt and experienced during this incident or many incidents depending on the case," Teresa said, explaining in detail that each case is different. "A forensic interview with a child could be a very crucial part of their investigation."

And having a representative from each agency present in another room gives them the opportunity to hear the interview as it is taking place, while also ensuring the child only has to talk about the secrets, abuse or incident one time. "They don't have to relive it over and over again for each agency," Teresa added.

There is no set pattern to a forensic interview. In most cases, Teresa takes her lead from the child. "I have to make sure the child understands the differences in a truth and a lie, and doing right or wrong," Teresa said. "I find the answers to these terms in the simplest way possible by asking open-ended, nonleading questions."

Once the interview is complete, the child is returned to their caregiver in the same safe, comfortable atmosphere where

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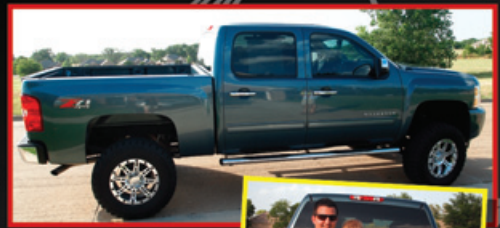
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the visit began. Each child who comes to The Gingerbread House is given a stuffed animal of their choice at the conclusion of the interview — something they can take home with them.

Twelve board members complete the team of caring individuals at The Gingerbread House, with the newest member hailing from Maypearl. Three high schools in Ellis County — Ennis, Ferris and Red Oak — also participate. As stated on their Web site, the center's goal is to optimize the investigative and prosecution process; provide quality legal, psychological, social and medical services to abused children and heighten community awareness. "I want the facility to run smooth at all times," John admitted. "Although board members do not interact with the children, they are a very important part of the overall team."

Two founding members, Mike Navarro and Carol Bush, have made the heart commitment needed when it comes to serving on the board at The Gingerbread House. Although the job at hand is not easy, it is a job that is warranted based on the ever-growing number of child abuse cases. "We're a necessity because of today's world," John explained. "Child abuse will never disappear. So many things have attributed to the increase."

"I am very proud of how we are able to help the children of Ellis County," said Brad Shotts, board president. "It's unfortunate that children advocacy centers have to exist, but the numbers warrant the need. Without The Gingerbread House, the process a child goes through once an outcry is made would be much more difficult. Our center is designed to take the burden off the victim, while at the same time help the process of seeing justice served in a timely manner."

The wonderful, highly trained and deeply caring team makes each child feel at ease. That's what it's all about — giving the smallest victims a safe haven where they are not afraid to tell their story. But, it's also a place where the children and their non-offending caregivers can find counseling services. The child is not the only one in need of counseling. A crime against a child really does affect the whole family, but The Gingerbread House is truly where the healing begins. **NOW**

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Luxurious Detail

Chuck Cole finds joy in watching homes come to life.

— By Sandra Strong

Chuck Cole is carrying on the legacy his grandfather, J.C. Cole, started in the late '40s. As a third-generation luxury homebuilder, Chuck smiles as he remembers his childhood. "I grew up around the construction business. I didn't know anything different," he explained. "I was working at construction sites as soon as I could walk."

After two heart attacks, J.C. decided it was time to retire, leaving the business to Chuck's dad, Tommy Cole. Chuck joined his dad, and they worked in partnership for 20 years before Tommy retired, leaving Chuck as the sole owner of Cole Luxury Homes. "This is definitely a roller coaster

business," Chuck said, referring to the last 10 years as he's worked without a partner, "but it was my choice to follow in their footsteps." Chuck's grandfather and dad never pressured Chuck into the business. They, no doubt, would have been proud of him no matter what career path he chose.

After 30 years in the luxury home business with at least 200 new homes to his credit, Chuck may not remember the first home he built, but he'll never forget the economy. "It was horrible," he shared. "When I started in the early '80s, we were going door-to-door just to see if anyone needed their homes painted."

Business **NOW**

Cole Luxury Homes offers an increased attention to detail. The world of new homebuilding is ever-changing, and Chuck takes pride in always being one step ahead of those changes. "I've seen it all," Chuck stated. "As a luxury homebuilder, you have to stay ahead of the changes to be successful."

Top-notch customer service and a sensitive, yet informed, listening ear is also important to Chuck and Mark Duncan, Cole Luxury Homes' salesperson and first point of contact. "A big part of the business is listening to what the customer has to say — what they want and don't want — and making sure to follow through," he explained. "Ninety-five percent of any new home is built on the specifications of the buyer. Most customers have a fairly good idea of what they want. In the end, they are the ones writing the check."

Cole Luxury Homes can have anywhere from five to 15 houses in construction at any given time. The newest trend Chuck is seeing is in the overall square footage. "Floor plans and layouts change when the trends change," Chuck emphasized. "Most people are downsizing. They want better quality, closer attention to detail and energy efficiency. In the past, we were building homes in excess of 7,000 square feet. These days, the customer is looking at 4,000-5,000 square feet. There's no longer the need for the huge Texas homes from the past."

Some new homes can take two years to complete, while others may take six months. The main reason for the big time difference in completion is due to the wants and desires of the customer, as well as the home's overall size. "Some customers want details that can only be found abroad," Chuck said. "Those requests take time."

Chuck is proud of having Cole Luxury Homes featured numerous times in *Southern Living Custom Home Builder* magazine. Currently, it's a builder's market, but Chuck knows full well change can happen at any given time, but his joy still comes in watching the homes come to life. **NOW**



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Instructor, Blaise Dzudie of Cornerstone Home Health (2nd from left), has the dancing class at the Senior Center stop for a picture.



Several of Wedgeworth Elementary School kindergarten students tour the Waxahachie Fire Station.



The Parks Family – James, Liam, Chastity and Jordan – enjoy a bite to eat at Straight From Philly.



Jim Dockins, Billy Cranford and Walker Watts smile for the camera after selling a jar of hot sauce to a hungry customer.



This fun group enjoys an afternoon at the Scarborough Renaissance Festival.



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Have you noticed how fast the price of gasoline is rising? Last time gas prices started getting this high, lots of people traded their vehicles for something more efficient. If you're thinking about doing that, here are five things to consider before you sign the paperwork and drive off the lot.

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It's a question few of us really like to ask, but it is so important. If your whole purpose in buying a vehicle is to save money, you want to be sure your payments fit your current budget. Remember to factor in whatever maintenance you do to your existing vehicle that won't be needed on a new vehicle. Don't forget to find out how much insurance will be on the new vehicle, as that could be a deal breaker.

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Do the math. Figure out how much you'll save by driving a more efficient vehicle. A year ago, my sister traded in a 1990-something Suburban for a brand new VW Passat. While she was not crazy about having a monthly loan payment again, she realized her payment would be less than the amount she was spending on gas in the SUV. It paid for itself, and she still ended up ahead.

Can You Get a Loan?

How is your credit? Can you get a vehicle loan without spending a small fortune on interest? Remember to do your research on rates and don't overlook financing opportunities with community banks and credit unions in

your neighborhood. If your credit needs work, there are some lenders who will give you the loan but charge you an outrageously high rate. Do not take that loan. At some point, it could cause you to owe more money on the car than what the car is worth. It's better to drive your gas guzzler for another year while you patch up your credit.

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Your vehicle loses value the minute you drive it off the lot. Why pay \$20,000 for something that will be worth less within 30 minutes of signing your loan paperwork? If you can get a pre-owned vehicle that's as good as new, you'll be saving yourself money.

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The dealership won't always give you what you want for your vehicle, but selling your vehicle independently could end up costing you more money. When you trade in your vehicle, you get a sales tax credit. Let's say you are purchasing a vehicle for \$20,000 and you get \$5,000 for your trade-in. Instead of paying sales tax on \$20,000, you'll pay tax on \$15,000. That's a savings of more than \$300.

Don't be talked into something you don't want or need. There are various online calculators available to help you determine the best options for your budget. **NOW**

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Drought-proof Your Lawn

Did your lawn suffer last winter as mine did? The construction we did on our drive didn't help, but my lawn is still struggling. Several things can be done to help it along. If you have to replant, choose the correct type of grass. St. Augustine and Zoysia both do well in our alkaline clay, if they are placed in a sunny and partly shady spot. Both of these types of grass require a bit more water than Bermuda grass. Bermuda and Buffalo grasses both do very well in full sun, alkaline clay and dry areas, taking 20 inches and 10 inches of water respectively as compared to 30 inches and 25 inches per year for St. Augustine and Zoysia.

If you are working with an existing lawn like I am, then it is time to look carefully at what can be done. First, get a rain gauge! If your gauge registers 1 inch or over from rainfall, turn off your sprinklers for at least a week to 10 days! If you see footprints in your grass, it is probably lacking water. Put out small flat cans, and check your watering schedule. A weekly application of 1/2 to 1 inch should work well if it soaks in. Water twice a week: 1/2 inch each night in two or three settings (1:00 a.m., 3:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m.) for a total of 1 inch during the week. This should assure sufficient soaking. Check to make sure you are not watering the street or the sidewalk.

Cracks in the ground are nature's way of helping get moisture and air down to gasping roots. Aeration is a good way to give your lawn an added boost. You can rent an aerator or take a turning fork and put a bunch of holes in your lawn. They don't have to be deep. Stick the fork in the lawn, jiggle it a little and pull it out. If you are using an aerator, don't worry about the little divots that come up. Leave them to compost right where they are, just as you do your lawn clippings. (You do not catch grass clippings, do you?) Let them make good stuff right on the lawn. They will help your lawn hold the water also.

One last thing you can do is to fertilize wisely. In my established lawn with 11 years of clippings, I add nitrogen early in the spring, and that's all. I mow the early weeds very short in the spring (no scalping for St. Augustine!) and then watch the nitrogen make them "grow themselves to death." Once the temperatures hit the 90s, I move my mower up a notch and up another notch when we start to hit the 100s. Time and patience are hard to come by, but they do result in a great lawn. **NOW**

Nancy Fenton is a Master Gardener. Contact the Ellis County Master Gardeners at the AgriLife office at (972) 825-5175 or stop by the Waxahachie Farmers' Market and visit there.

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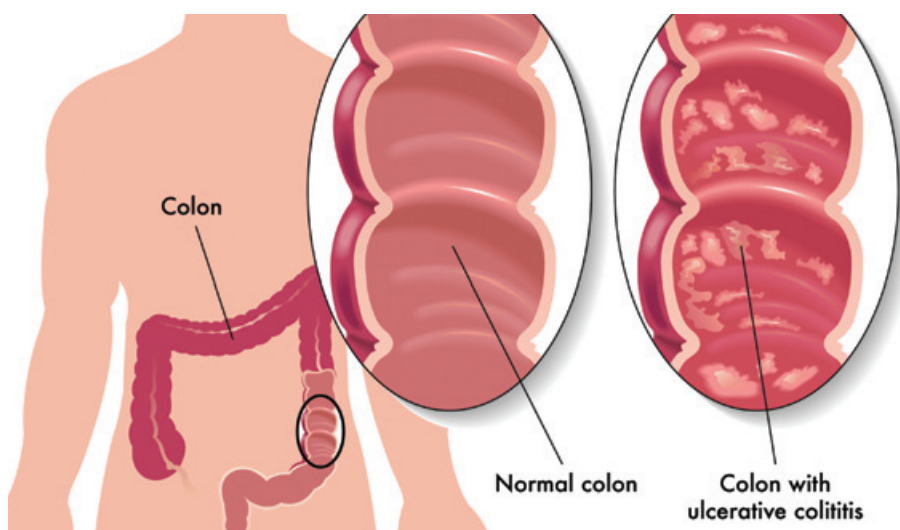
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Understanding Ulcerative Colitis

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

After going to the bathroom for four to 10 times a day for the second straight week with painful bloody stools, the afflicted person may wonder if they will ever get their life back. They suffer from the disease ulcerative colitis (UC). There are two states of being with this illness — flare-ups and remission. Flare-ups are when symptoms are present and the disease is active, and remission is when there are few to no symptoms. UC is a chronic disease that is classified as being one of the forms of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). The other form is Crohn's disease. With many of the same symptoms, the most defining difference between Crohn's disease and UC is that the latter primarily affects the lining of the large intestine (colon). It becomes inflamed and develops ulcers or sores.

Symptoms may become severe in about half of those afflicted with UC. The condition may at times require hospitalization, or it may go into remission for a time. The most common symptoms of abdominal cramping, persistent and urgent diarrhea containing blood and/or pus should be monitored by your doctor. During flare-ups, too much blood loss can lead to anemia and weakness. Some patients must receive blood transfusions, because they have lost so much blood from the colon area. The constant diarrhea with the loss of many valuable nutrients and fluids leads to fatigue. Loss of appetite and weight loss are common.

UC has no definitive cause, but research has

yielded a few theories. Although no clear line of inheritance exists, there is a distinct familial tendency for developing UC. Some discussion has taken place regarding the role bacteria and viruses may play in this. Another possibility is the immune system may be functioning abnormally. While stress does not cause UC, stress will aggravate the situation.

A varied range of treatment modalities for UC are available depending upon the severity of the illness. The goal is to reduce symptoms and aim for remission. Medications are prescribed to help reduce inflammation and improve the immune system. Diet and good nutrition play an important role. Although certain foods do not cause UC, there are some that might trigger symptoms, such as spicy food, raw veggies, popcorn, caffeine and alcohol. Dietary counsel and awareness of what you eat is necessary. If conservative treatment does not work, surgery may be necessary with the removal of the colon. The type of surgery will depend upon many factors your surgeon will discuss with you. UC can affect every area of your life. For your emotional health and coping strategies, support groups can be a great resource, as is receiving encouragement from family and friends. **NOW**

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

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Waxahachie Farmer's Market: 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., historic downtown Waxahachie, 410 S. Rogers. For more information, contact Anita Williamson at (972) 938-2102, ext. 198.

July 3

Crape Myrtle Festival & Fireworks: 5:00 p.m., gates open; 6:00 p.m., live music; 9:15 p.m., fireworks; Waxahachie Sports Complex. Evening will include Ranch Radio's Battle of the Bands play-off, food vendors and activities for children. For more information, call (972) 937-2390.

July 4

Annual July 4th & Crape Myrtle Parade: 10:00 a.m. Parade starts on College St., going south on College, turns right on Main St., continues west on Main, turns left on Grand Ave., ending at Getzendaner Park. Call (972) 937-2390 for further details.

July 6

Annual Covenant Place Independence Day Pool Party: 10:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m., 401 Solon Rd. Residents, families, staff and friends

are welcome to come celebrate. Event includes live entertainment, games for all ages, door prizes, food and fun. For more information, call (972) 923-9911.

July 13

Summer Moonlight Movie – *The Blind Side*: 9:00-11:00 p.m., 100 block of E. Franklin St. Free to the public. Bring a blanket or lawn chair. Concessions on site. For more information, call (469) 309-4111.

July 25

Lunch & Learn – Taking Social Media to the Next Level: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Waxahachie Chamber of Commerce, 102 YMCA Dr. Seating is limited to first 50 who respond. Lunch is \$10 per person and reservations are required. Tea and water will be provided. For more information, call (972) 937-2390 or e-mail Karen Maxwell at kmaxwell@waxahachiechamber.com.

July 26 — 28

Waxahachie Community Theatre's Showcase for Kids – *The Mysterious Case of the Missing Ring*: **Friday** and **Saturday**, 7:30 p.m.; **Sunday**, 2:30 p.m.; McCafferty Hall,

SAGU campus, 1200 Sycamore St. Visit www.waxahachiecommunitytheatre.com for more details or to order tickets.

July 27

Benefit Golf Tournament honoring Kyson Daniel and Karter Henley Montelongo: 8:30 a.m., Old Brickyard, Ferris. Four-man scramble, \$75 per person. Contact Linda Bruton at (972) 351-4521 or Dusty Montelongo at (972) 268-1954 for more information.

September 20

5th Annual 100th G.R.E.E.N. (Golfers Rallying to Erase the Effects of Neglect) Marathon: 6:30 a.m., registration; 7:30 a.m., shotgun start, Old Brickyard Golf Course, Ferris. Free golf all day with the objective to play 100 holes of golf individually, or as a team of two or four. Each participant is expected to raise \$1,000 through pledges. For more information on registration, call Leroy Fenton at (214) 676-4486.

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

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In The Kitchen With Vonna Boyer

— *By Sandra Strong*

Vonna Boyer married Robert, the love of her life, 51 years ago. Throughout their life together, Vonna has thoroughly enjoyed cooking for her husband and their three grown sons — Ricky, Kevin and Keith. Her church honored her as Mother of the Year in 1979. “I have always had a passion for cooking,” Vonna admitted. “I make my own original recipes, and my real love is cooking for loved ones. I love to entertain and share my passion.”

Her collection of cookbooks is now well over 200. Vonna watches the Food Network and finds great satisfaction in gourmet cooking. “I have catered complete dinners for up to 400 people,” she said. “For several years I made wedding cakes.” When she’s not cooking, you can bet she’ll be singing. **NOW**

Vonna’s Dill Potato Salad

- 6 large potatoes**
- 1 cup mayonnaise**
- 4 eggs, boiled, peeled, 3 chopped and 1 in reserve**
- 1/2 cup dill pickles, chopped**
- 2 tsp. fresh or dried dill, chopped**
- 1 tsp. salt**
- 1 tsp. pepper**

- 1.** Peel and cut potatoes into bite-sized pieces. Cover with water and cook until done. Drain well.
- 2.** Add mayonnaise. Fold in remaining ingredients, except reserved egg. Mix well.
- 3.** Pour into a serving bowl. Slice the reserved egg. Decorate the top with the egg slices. Sprinkle lightly with additional dill.

Stuffed Chicken Breasts

- Chicken:*
- 6 chicken breasts, boneless and skinless**
 - Dijon mustard, to taste**
 - Italian seasoning, to taste**
 - 6 slices ham**
 - 6 slices Mozzarella cheese**
 - 1 cup flour**
 - 1/2 cup olive oil**

- Sauce:*
- 3 green onions, chopped**
 - 4-6 green tomatoes, chopped**
 - 1 lb. fresh mushrooms, sliced**
 - 1/2 tsp. Italian seasoning, to taste**
 - 1/4 cup olive oil**
 - 1/2 cup wine**
 - White rice, cooked (optional)**

- 1.** *For chicken:* flatten chicken breasts between 2 pieces of wax paper. Spread mustard on each breast. Lightly sprinkle with Italian seasoning.
- 2.** Top each breast with a slice of ham and a slice of cheese. Roll tightly. Tuck ends into roll.
- 3.** Fold into flour, lightly coating all sides of roll. Sauté in olive oil until browned on all sides and completely cooked inside.
- 4.** *For sauce:* sauté onion in olive oil. Add tomatoes, mushrooms and Italian seasoning. Cook for 5 minutes over low heat.
- 5.** Add wine. Cook an additional 2 minutes. Serve chicken rolls over bed of rice.

Easy Cobbler Topping

- 1 stick margarine**
- 1 egg**
- 1 1/4 cups sugar**
- 1 cup flour**
- 2 16-oz. cans pie filling, flavor of your choice**
- Cinnamon, to taste**

- 1.** Cream margarine and egg. Add 1 cup sugar, blending in completely. Add flour; mix well. Dough will be stiff.
- 2.** Pour filling into baking dish. Drop dough on top by the spoonful. Sprinkle remaining sugar and cinnamon on top if desired.
- 3.** Bake at 400 F until lightly browned on top.

Yummy Chocolate Peanut Butter Candy

- 1 12-oz. pkg. semi-sweet chocolate chips**
- 1 12-oz. pkg. butterscotch chips**
- 1 cup peanut butter, creamy or crunchy**
- 1 cup pecans, chopped**
- 2 cups miniature marshmallows (optional)**

- 1.** Melt chocolate and butterscotch chips in top of double boiler. When fully melted, stir in peanut butter and nuts, mixing well.
- 2.** Remove from heat and fold in marshmallows if desired.
- 3.** Spread into buttered dish and let cool. Cut into squares. Store in refrigerator in airtight container.

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

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Above: Bobby Malatia, Internet Director for Waxahachie Autoplex,
with Megan Mills, Secondary Teacher of the Year
Below: Samantha Kosoris, Rookie of the Year with her Jeep Wrangler



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