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August 2008

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Animals

Saving
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Believing and
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At Home With

John and
Debi Sanders

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Editor's Note

Dear Neighbors,

May this issue encourage you to continue to stay active and healthy while having fun at the same time! This month, we feature very exciting individuals, some of whom are teens. (Who better to look to for insights when it comes to having a blast with life?)

First, there is Neil Thompson who has created and produced WW II movies with many local residents right here in our area! Next is 16-year-old Akia Nelson who has trained and competed in field events locally and internationally. After learning about Akia's life and journeys, let's enjoy horse-training instruction by Derrick Jones. Derrick is a softly spoken gent whose calming spirit is sure to impact both horse and man.

Although the summer will soon be coming to an end, there is still time to make the most of it.

All the best,
 Diana Merrill Claussen
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Subscriptions are available at the rate of \$35 per year or \$3.50 per issue. Subscription and editorial correspondence should be sent to: NOW Magazines, P.O. Box 1071, Waxahachie, TX 75168. For advertising rates and other information, call (972) 978-5151 or e-mail us at: rhensley@nowmagazines.com.



Friend of Animals

— By Diana Merrill Claussen

It is his calm, patient and easygoing demeanor which yields the greatest results with the horses he works.

Local teen, Derrick Bates (D.J.), got his first horse, Dollar, while he was in the second grade. One day, Dollar bumped D.J. with her head and seriously injured him. When they took him to the doctor, D.J.'s mom, Pam, and stepfather, Rodney, were told the injury had damaged the blood vessels in his eye. The doctor told D.J. to be careful to never re-injure his eye or he could permanently lose his sight. After receiving that prognosis, D.J.'s parents decided to keep him out of sports out of concern for his vision.

Without the outlet of sports, D.J. decided to stay active by spending time with his family's animals, especially with their horses. D.J.'s father, grandfather and stepfather had always kept horses, and were happy he decided to carry on the family tradition of horsemanship. Joseph McDade, Rodney's grandfather and D.J.'s step great-grandfather, inspired and taught them many valuable lessons regarding animals. "He taught us the old-school ways on how to handle dogs and horses and that there is more than one way to break a horse," Rodney reflected.

With Joseph's recent passing, D.J. proudly carries on in Joseph's remarkable footsteps, and credits Rodney for inspiring him to work with the animals he loves. "Both of my dads showed me how to really ride," D.J. shared. "Later, I got into reining, calf roping, steer riding, poles, barrel racing and breakaway events in rodeos. "We are really big rodeo supporters," D.J. said. "I used to rope every day when I was a kid."

When D.J. got older, he and his family attended the



Waxahachie Cowboy Church where he got another taste of the rodeo. "That is when I signed up to ride a bull," he shared. "When I got on the bull, I knew what to do because we rode steers a lot. This was my first time riding something so big with so much power." His cousin rode a bull first, and as D.J. watched him, "I got more motivated," he smiled. "As soon as I got on that bull and looked down to see how big he really was, all I suddenly wanted to do was get back off of him!" D.J. remembered. Somehow, this brave young man found the courage to stay on, and he was glad he did.

Recently, D.J. traded in his rodeo and roping gear to pursue his passion. "Now, I just train horses," this gentle-spirited young man shared. It is his calm, patient and easygoing demeanor which yields the greatest results with the horses he works. He also uses many of his rodeo skills during the training process. "I have been using my roping skills," D.J. stated. He especially uses roping to catch a local horse he has been working with named Silver. His skill and manner are what always persuade horses like Silver to consider working with him.

"He will have patience with a horse and, sometimes, D.J. will even squat down in a pasture just to wait for the horse," Rodney shared. "He handles them gently and easily, and he



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goes over and beyond to give the horses chances to adjust."

"With Silver, if you are jittery he can sense it," D.J. shared. "If you are calm with him, then you're going to have a good day. With a horse like Silver, you have to mount him slowly, and you can't just jump on him like a seasoned horse or he will buck or take off on you."



"With Silver, if you are jittery he can sense it. If you are calm with him then you're going to have a good day."

Although Silver did try bucking D.J. one time, "I stayed on him and he hasn't bucked anymore," he shared. "Silver is a curious horse with a lot of energy, but he's been in training and has gotten much better. I feel Silver and I have a nice relationship because he follows me and leans on me. I'm big on respecting the animals."

D.J. rides Silver five days a week for two to three hours a day. Horses, however, are not the only animals that seem to be drawn to this extraordinary young man. D.J. seems to have a special way with all animals — whether farm or domestic. "He is even good with chickens," Rodney exclaimed. "D.J.

used to have a chicken who would jump up and sit on his shoulder. He will get out here and play with all of our animals." Whether he is training horses or working with other animals, D.J. uses a few of his family's time-tested methods. "The tone of your voice and body language is always very important," he shared.

Last year, D.J. went to state FFA and showed both a lamb and a pig. "That was my first time showing in Cleburne," he said. He also showed a reserved champion lamb during the event. Between FFA and school, D.J. enjoys attending Lancaster High. "School is easy for me," he shared. "I especially like to go to the agriculture barn, mess with the animals and feed them." D.J. is also great at animal care. "He is really good at giving the animals their shots and still learns new things every day about them," Rodney said.

"I like animals," D.J. smiled. "I feel like I can communicate really well with them." He taught a few of his dogs new tricks such as begging, rolling over and playing dead. D.J.'s favorite dog, Zena, follows him everywhere. "She even sleeps next to his head," Rodney chuckled. "He really pampers her though. He also has more nerve than I do. He is not afraid to walk up to any animal, pick them up and play with it."

At home, D.J. loves spending time with his two favorite horses, Shine and Bossy, both Tennessee Walking horses. At school, he has many opportunities to spend time with both humans and animals through FFA. Many believe D.J. is a man with big smiles, but few words. So, they might be surprised to know that he is the FFA sentinel at his school. "I keep order and give instructions," he said.

"A lot of people will say D.J. won't talk, and some of his teachers are amazed at how quiet and easygoing he is," Rodney shared. "He has never been in any kind of trouble and people always compliment us on how fine of a young man he is. I am proud to have him as a son." **END**

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Venturing *Beyond* the Cover

— By Sandra McIntosh

Sometimes, the cover of a hardback book can be deceiving. Such is also the case with the ranch-style exterior of the three-bedroom, two-bath abode John and Debi Sanders call home. The interior, as well as the backyard area, is an eclectic blend of what the couple holds most dear. “Church, children and cars,” Debi quickly answered. “Sometimes, the children and cars go together, but God is always first.” Between the two of them, they have been able to masterfully incorporate family photographs, antiques and collectibles into what many would consider a priceless representation of their unity as a couple.

Before moving to Red Oak in December 1975, the couple and their 18-month-old son had lived in Dallas. Following a knock on the door, they soon realized they needed the safety and comfort a small community would offer. “We opened the door to a lady that asked if we had any marijuana for sale,” John said, still a bit shocked by the request all these years later. “She obviously had the wrong address.” For further clarification, Debi added, “We moved because we outgrew the house.”

The house they moved to in Red Oak is the one they still lovingly call home, but the changes have been many. In fact, they are constant and ongoing. “Red Oak’s population when we moved here was 720, I think,” Debi remembered. “It was a little street with nothing much but open farmland on all sides,” John interjected. Needless to say, all one has to do is

stand anywhere outside to see that is no longer the case.

For those who have the opportunity to venture inside, the exact same thing can be said. The changes have been constant and ongoing. While many homeowners hire individuals to do the work, John and Debi decided early on that as long as they could successfully master the project at hand, they would “do it” themselves. In fact, John has a knack for bringing all their mutual, well-thought-out ideas to life. “We have always worked well together,” Debi said, as John nodded his head in agreement. “We don’t do anything without

spending lots of time planning and thinking it through first.”

The tile floor they added in the kitchen early on still has the same characteristics it did when it was brand new. The pattern, which closely resembles fossils found in stone, has worn well. They both agree, “It was a great investment!” Nearly seven years ago, long before stained cement flooring became so popular,

the couple decided to rip up the carpet in the living room. Underneath the carpet and padding was a surprise they had not expected. “When the house was constructed, the builders had painted the kitchen cabinets on the living room floor,” John said, further explaining that the cabinets were green before they were replaced with the wood cabinetry in place



At Home With

John and Debi Sanders



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today. "It was a nightmare to get the green off the cement floor." As they diligently worked, they soon wondered if they had done the wrong thing by pulling the carpet up. "We almost gave up, but after leaving the chemicals we'd been working with on the floor overnight," Debi added, "the paint came up." What they ended up with is a floor with character and style — a floor that withstands the church fellowships and gatherings they host on a regular basis.

What was once the back patio is now the sun room. John removed the sliding

glass door and built an octagon-shaped room that allows natural sunlight to filter through the windows. When asked, they both said that this room is their favorite. "We get to sit," Debi explained, "and look out to the beauty of the backyard." Most mornings will find the couple venturing out back past the in-ground pool and the steel-plated decorative fence inspired by a trip to Florida, both designed and artfully constructed by John, to share their morning coffee on the porch of the whimsically decorated pool house.

Beyond the pool house is a three-car



garage that protects John's collection.

"I love collecting and working on antique cars," he said, adding that as members of the Horseless Carriage Club of America, he and Debi currently own six cars, with his favorite being the 1915 Studebaker. "I enjoy the pleasure people get from seeing the old cars." John's collectibles are not just to be looked at, they are refurbished to be driven. It is quite common to see John and Debi out for a ride with their son, Jay, his wife, Cheryl, and their two children, Patrick and Calla, 3 and 2 respectively. The awards the cars have won are many, but the two that stand



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out in John's mind are the Best in Show Award won with the 1915 Studebaker in Abilene and the Most Favorite Car in the Club Award won this past year with his 1931 Studebaker. "It was similar to a people's choice award," he said. "Receiving that award was quite something."

John is also an avid tour hat collector. One of the two glass display cases in the living room is home to an antique top hat, a newsboy cap and a boater, to name only a few. The second case is filled with a few of Debi's favorite things. "I collect cast iron and tin toys," she laughed. Included among the toys



is a doll in full Czechoslovakian costume that dates back to the 1930s and an original copy of *Raggedy Ann's Fairy Stories* as written by author John Gruelle. Debi also has an impressive collection of perfume atomizers, musical powder boxes and Magnolia China from the famous Greenbriar Hotel, which was once owned and operated by the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad. "When I learned that my grandmother's uncles had worked for the C&O Railroad, I became interested in it, too," she said. There is also a courtesy chair, similar to a wheelchair, that was used on the C&O passenger

trains from 1870-1903 that takes its rightful place in the living room.

John and Debi moved to Red Oak for the safety and security it provided. They stayed so their son could graduate from the same school district where he also attended first grade. "When Jay married," John said, "we realized the house was plenty big enough for the two of us." Every time they yearned for something different, they put their collective heads together. They took old and made it new. They found antiques that needed a bit of tender loving care. They saw "something" in things that had become nothing to others. "Now you can understand," Debi added, "how all the unique things came about."

Like aforementioned, you cannot judge a book by its cover. If you do, you might miss what is most important. In this case, you would miss the story of a couple who believe in doing things themselves. It makes for a very good read. **NOW**

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Honoring Living History



The Thompson family: Stan, Neil, Kenneth and Tammie.

Starting in the eighth grade, local teen, Neil Thompson, stayed pretty active playing with his friends. “We would fight invisible enemies,” Neil said. One day while Neil and his friend, Daniel, were watching a war movie, Neil decided he would like to make a movie about the subject of war, too. Once this decision was made, Neil, his brother, Kenneth, and their friends Daniel, Trent and many other buddies moved forward with their moviemaking venture.

“I take credit for the idea of a war movie, and Daniel pushed me into making it about World War II,” Neil shared. “Together we developed the idea and story.”

“The boys did a lot of research on D-Day,” Neil’s dad, Stan, shared. “Their first full-length movie, *Flies of Normandy*, is about a group of airborne paratroopers who land on Normandy’s shores and follows the experiences they face during their first two days after landing.” “When ‘D’

company lands in Normandy, they meet with a sergeant from ‘Easy’ company,” Kenneth shared. “The paratroopers are heavily fortified in their trenches and headquarters.” The fighters also experience heavy combat.

To achieve combat scenes, the boys recorded all over town and in the backyards of neighbors, family and friends. “We used many of our neighbor’s backyards and, at times, had to walk up to half-a-mile in our full gear to get to our shoot location,” Neil said. “The boys always asked permission to use people’s properties for the movie,” Neil’s mom, Tammie, added.

Neil made many homemade and life-like props from just about anything he could find. “We are scavengers when it comes to looking for props,” Neil said. “We obtained many props from eBay and the Army Navy Surplus Store,” Kenneth added. Whether using pieces of scrap wood or metal, Neil always came up with a perfect way to put it to good use. “Many of



— By Diana Merrill Claussen

the artillery props look very real,” Stan said. “Up close though you’ll see they are actually made from PVC [pipe].” Currently, Neil’s garage is the official prop room. “Yeah, I want my garage back one of these days,” Stan laughed.

Stan and Tammie are also looking forward to the day when they can change their backyard from a mock battleground back into a landscaped plot. The lawn contains many trenches, bunkers, foxholes, a fake tank and a faux burned-out building. All created to aid in many pertinent battle scenes. “One of these days, the boys are going to have to clean all of this up,” Stan joked. “But, they are using their imagination, and they are having learning experiences.” “It has also occupied them and kept them out of trouble,” Tammie interjected.

Another way Neil and his crew have been having fun and staying active is through planning and creating the story lines and the numerous special effects used in the movie. Many of the

ARTS NOW

effects came with humorous tales and many memorable experiences. There were a few times lead cameraman, co-director and film editor, Kenneth, had to duck and run while filming. While Neil acted, he also directed, coordinated many of the special effects, created props and wrote the scripts. Neil's parents, along with a few of the other parents, were always present and supervising during the filming of the movie. "We weren't in it, but we fed them," Tammie smiled.

When they first started filming, the boys used Kodak Easy Share cameras, "but now they use handheld DV cams," Stan said. Once their movie was made, Kenneth did the editing and sound effects. Though they live in Red Oak, they are in the Midlothian school district, so, "We get to use HD and sound booms along with other multimedia equipment at Midlothian High School's production lab," Trent shared.

In *Flies of Normandy* there was a cast and crew of about 17. "Although they didn't have a big cast, many of the boys played multiple roles," Tammie shared. *Flies of Normandy* is a full-feature film, running about 45 minutes and is on DVD ready to sell. Neil and his friends even held a movie premier at Midlothian High School.

Currently, Neil and his crew are working on their second film which has yet to be named. Many scenes from this second venture were filmed within Neil's backyard, at his grandparents' home and at Stone Canyon Ranch in Glenn Heights. Neil said he hopes to carry all he has learned through his moviemaking experiences into his future. "I am hoping to get into the film industry and also into professional prop-making," he shared. "I would like to attend the University of the Ozarks in Arkansas; they have a really good TV studio. My major would be in television and radio communications." **NOW**



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Believing *and* Achieving

— By Diana Merrill Claussen

Staying active is imperative for people of all ages. Just ask 16-year-old Akia Nelson the secret to her success and her response focuses on the power of positivity.

For Akia, being actively involved in sports since the fourth grade has led her to many academic and athletic successes. “When I started getting involved in sports, it was on a city soccer league,” Akia shared. “I was on the league until the sixth grade.”

By grade seven, Akia had become involved in basketball, volleyball and in track and field. The outdoor events on the track birthed a love of field events within her. “From then on, I started throwing shot put and discus,” she stated.

“When I was in seventh grade, my teacher, Mr. Hays, encouraged me to start throwing,” Akia said. “And since then, she just became a natural at it,” her father Barron added. These track and field events are chosen by age groups. The weights of the shots or implements range from six pounds to 12 pounds. Akia throws eight pound implements and her farthest throw this year was 31 feet 10 inches. “That has been her personal best,” Barron said. During districts this year, Akia won second place by throwing 31 feet 1 and three quarter inches.

Since Akia attends a private school, most of her 4A division competitions are against other private schools. “Sometimes, though, I have competed against public schools when we attend events like the Waxahachie Invitational,” Akia shared. She has also attended state competitions at Baylor University in Waco since her freshman year. “Only the top two competitors from each district attends state,” Akia said. She was the first freshman in throwing from Ovilla Christian School to make it to state. “Attending the state event made us more focused, and it was more intense.” At state, earlier this year, she won second place in discus and third in shot.

Akia has traveled to competitions across the country and around the world. “During our summer meets, if we qualify for regionals, we get to go to the Junior Olympics,” Akia shared. She made it to the Junior Olympics in California in 2007. “I didn’t throw very well, but I had never been to a track meet of that caliber before,” she said. This summer, Akia was invited to attend a track and field event in the South Pacific. The second leg of the trip will take her to Hawaii.

“One day during school, one of my guidance counselors gave me a letter which invited me to attend an international track meet called “The Down Under Games,” Akia shared.

“At first, I was a little skeptical, but once I obtained more information about it and saw it was a legitimate event, I became very excited about attending it.”

During the summer while Akia is competing with many track and field teams from around the globe, she is also training with a local former Olympic shot put champion. “Michael Carter is Akia’s off-season coach,” Barron said. “Michael has helped Akia and many young adults train and obtain college scholarships.” Through her successes, Akia has maintained a humble attitude, a level head and a very inspiring spirit. “She is so nonchalant right now,” Barron shared. “I

don’t think Akia has grasped where her skills and dedication has taken her to.”

Akia credits her family, friends and teachers as great mentors who have encouraged her. She also believes she was given the gift of always having a positive attitude and winning spirit. “My coach, J.J. Marks, passed away in March,” Akia shared. “She had such a willing heart and gave me so much inspiration while putting herself aside to help others. My family, pastor



Sports NOW

and my physics teacher, Mr. Foster, have always encouraged me to keep my good character, stay focused, have fun and always put God first. They have always encouraged and been there for me while showing me that I can achieve my goals." However, Akia has not reached all of her goals just yet. "I would like to go to college in either Chicago or New York and become a psychiatrist," she said.

"Akia has a lot of compassion," Barron said. "She is sensitive to the needs of others and she is a leader with high integrity. People are very drawn to her." It is Akia's faith and family who have always helped her to reach her goals. "I was adopted when I was two days old," Akia explained. Upon learning the news of her adoption, she said it did not really impact her because of the love which existed in her family.

There have been a few major setbacks on Akia's quest to achieve her best. "Within a span of three years, I had to have two major surgeries," she shared. Her first was emergency hip surgery caused by a slipped growth plate. "During my recovery, it was hard to see the kids playing outside while I was in a wheelchair for three months," she said. Then, in the eighth grade, Akia tore some cartilage in her knee and also chipped her patella. "I had to stop all sports, have surgery, recovery took months and then do physical therapy," she said. Akia had to learn to walk again after both of her surgeries. "Sometimes my leg would go out, and I would fall," she reflected.

Still, Akia's positive spirit helped her press through and overcome. "I knew that my journey wasn't ending," she shared. "The surgeries and recoveries were just temporary hurdles, and I knew things would get better." Akia said her motto has always been the same: "Never back down from anything, and put your heart into it. If you set your goals high and never back down, you can achieve anything," she smiled. **NOW**

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Business
NOW

Nurturing Healthy Smiles

— By Diana Merrill Claussen

Usually, the last thing expected when going to a medical professional is a highly pleasant experience, especially when it involves getting some kind of a procedure done. However, all you have to do is walk into the Red Oak dental practice of Aycox and Pearson to be immediately greeted by a friendly smile and an aesthetically relaxing atmosphere. “The whole thought of our practice is to create an environment where the patient feels comfortable,” Dr. Pearson shared.

As you pass from the serenely lit and decorated waiting room into the warmly illuminated patient area, the ambience is noticeable. The examination areas are not only complemented with softly lit sconces, they also feature art niches. “We opened our office last year,” Dr. Pearson informed. “We have the niches because we want to feature art from local artists within our practice. We want to provide an artist showcase for our patients to admire.”

The practice of dentistry is not only considered a science, but also an art. “We create tooth colors in precise shades to match a person’s enamel,” Dr. Pearson said. “There are so many variations in colors that are in different enamel shades.”

Many of Aycox and Pearson’s procedures not only require color coordination, they also allow them to sculpt, mold and polish. “We create and provide composites (tooth-colored fillings), porcelain and enamel crowns, dentures, partials, veneers, whitening and both nighttime and athletic mouth guards and impressions,” Dr. Pearson shared.

Besides offering these highly skilled procedures, Drs.



Doctors Aycox and Pearson pose with the staff of Aycox & Pearson Family Dentistry.

Aycox and Pearson provide standard services such as dental exams, cleanings, root canals, whitening and digital X-rays which “allow us to obtain immediate results without processing films,” Dr. Pearson informed.

The practice uses top-of-the-line sterilization and ultrasonic equipment, a new and innovative “chartless” system, while providing all aspects of general dentistry for patients of all ages. “Our patients range from pediatric to those in their golden ages,” the doctor smiled. Besides offering a smile, the doctors strive to provide gentle care often filled with kindness and lightheartedness.

Drs. Aycox and Pearson are not only talented in their dentistry skills they are also pros at putting everyone who visits at ease. The upbeat approach of the Aycox and Pearson team leaves each visitor feeling as if they have just made new friends. From the doctors and staff, to the office’s interior, this dental practice appeals to many of the “positive” senses.

Both doctors are graduates from Baylor School of Dentistry and, “We are a family-oriented dental practice,” Dr. Pearson said. The doctors not only care about their patients, but have worked in community health dentistry as well. “For my first

Business NOW

job as a dentist, I worked as a dental director for the public clinic at JPS [in South Dallas].” Dr. Pearson shared.


“There were a tremendous number of patients who did not realize how many options they had for dental care. Many did not know there were other options to toothaches besides just pulling out the tooth.” This experience allowed Dr. Pearson special insights as to how she

**Besides offering
a smile, the
doctors strive to
provide gentle care
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kindness and
lightheartedness.**

could additionally help her patients, some of whom do not have a history of taking care of their teeth. It is never too late to start practicing good oral health. “You have to start with taking baby steps first, especially if you haven’t been caring for your teeth all along,” she shared.

“With all of our patients we address bone and gum tissue health along with periodontal disease which is caused by a build up of plaque,” Dr. Pearson shared. Plaque is what causes inflamed or bleeding gums which are the first signs of unhealthy damage.


If you are keeping up with your six-month check-ups or would like to find out more about this practice, you may visit them in person at 307 East Ovilla Road in Red Oak, on their Web site at www.aycoxpearsonfamilydentistry.com or call (972) 576-0602. Weekend appointments welcome by reservation. **NOW**



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Education **NOW**

Saving Lives

— By Michelle Powe

When Karen Pickard says something is life or death, she is not kidding. A trained emergency room nurse and paramedic who teaches continuing education to nurses and paramedics, Karen knows all about life and death. More than that, she played a critical role in saving lives by bringing quality emergency medical service (EMS) to Ellis County.

Until the late 1970s, funeral homes ran the ambulance services in Ellis County. This had been common throughout the United States until the late '60s and early '70s when a number of factors changed pre-hospital emergency medical service: The Vietnam War brought about significant advances in trauma treatment; people began to question having untrained funeral home employees attending to accident victims; and the popular television show *Emergency* brought national attention to emergency medical service as viewers tuned in every week to watch Los Angeles paramedics, Johnny Gage and Roy DeSoto, save lives.

In Ellis County, Daniels Ambulance Service of Hillsboro took over for the funeral homes in the late '70s, but Daniels did not provide any training for its emergency medical personnel. No Johnny Gage or Roy DeSoto. "So there was a need for someone to provide paramedic training," Karen said. Rather than just talk about the need, Karen did something about it.

"I opened the program for training Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) and paramedics in Ellis County in 1980, and I taught exclusively in Ellis County at about three to four paramedic schools," Karen said. She also became a paramedic herself.

The expression "those who can do, and those who can't, teach" does not apply to Karen. She does it all. While she was teaching paramedics in Ellis County, she was working full time as the director of nursing services at Baylor Medical Center in Waxahachie. Previously an emergency room (ER) nurse at Parkland Hospital and Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas, she also spent some time teaching part time at the University of Texas Southwestern at Garland (UTSW) and the Garland Fire Department. Later, while working full time for the Garland Fire Department, Karen provided continuing education for their 200 paramedics. She was also employed for both the Lancaster and DeSoto fire departments to teach continuing education to their paramedics.



In 2004, Karen went back to UTSW full time as the quality improvement manager for the paramedic program. She also volunteered part time with the Ovilla Fire Department as a paramedic and continued to work as a part-time nurse. She is inexhaustible.

Karen's job at UTSW is research-oriented — "reviewing records, making sure paramedics have the training and equipment they need, looking at what they are doing," Karen explained.

Another aspect of her job is pre-hospital research. The paramedics Karen works with (about 1,200 in the Dallas area, including Cedar Hill, Lancaster and DeSoto) have been involved in a cardiac research program. "They have learned advanced interpretation skills for looking at a 12-lead Electrocardiogram (EKG) and making some assumptions," Karen explained. "They can look at the EKG and tell if the patient is probably having a heart attack."

If the patient is having a heart attack, or a heart attack seems imminent, the paramedics call ahead to the hospital to have the catheter lab open and ready, which saves critical time. "Our cardiologists think our paramedics are wonderful," Karen said. "We're so proud of these guys and gals."

Education **NOW**

Karen's job, however, is not only research. "I consider myself a faculty member because I share information," she said. "I'm with the paramedics all the time. They'll call me after a run and ask me questions."


"That's what I enjoy — sharing information," Karen said. "I'm an ER nurse by trade, so the clinical experience that I have is comparable to what they have."

Karen still teaches continuing education to nurses and paramedics, while keeping her own training up to date. She still does ride-alongs in ambulances with paramedics. Until six months ago, Karen was also working as a part-time ER nurse at the Medical Center at Lancaster, until the hospital suddenly closed. "For the first time in all these years, I only have one job," Karen said with a smile. "I will enjoy spending more time with my pets." The seven of them, four dogs and three cats, will be happy to have the attention. Most of them are rescues, including the Hurricane Katrina cat. It is just in Karen's nature to help others — human or otherwise.

That instinct to help, her initiative to train EMS personnel in Ellis County, led her to her husband, whom she met in 1981 when he took one of her EMT classes. Now a paramedic, Donny Pickard is Ovilla's fire chief and was named Texas Firefighter of the Year in 1998. He followed in his father's footsteps by being an Ovilla firefighter.

It is wonderfully appropriate and certainly feels like destiny that Karen — who helped train paramedics in Ellis County, who became a paramedic and who continues to teach paramedics — should become part of a firefighter family. She, like Pickards before her, has a long history of contributing to community service in Ovilla and Ellis County.

Do not count on her staying "quiet" with just one job for too long. There is still too much work to be done. **NOW**



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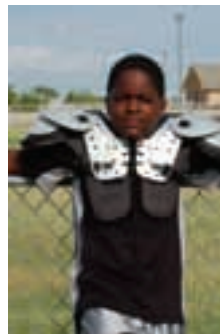
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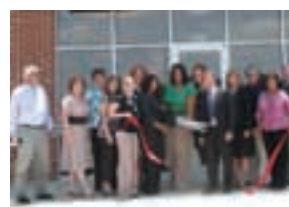


Around Town

NOW



The Sassy Seniors, top left, performed at a recent community event. Shaine Hailey of the Red Oak Longhorns, top left center, got ready for the upcoming football season. Barbara Stuart and her dog, Chewy, top right center, enjoyed some afternoon sunshine. Marci and Shaina Hailey, top right, attended a local family event together. The Red Oak ISD celebrated the start of the construction phase of the new high school, second row left, by hosting a groundbreaking ceremony. Siblings John and Mallory Perkins, second row right, had fun at the ball fields this summer. Leroy and Jordan Evans, bottom left, recently spent the day together at the local ball fields. Acting legends Burton Gilliam and Bob Cawley, third row center, visited with theater students at ROHS prior to summer vacation. A ribbon cutting, bottom center, was held at Aycox Pearson Family Dentistry. To raise funds, local Girl Scouts, bottom right, sold glow sticks.



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Look Who's Cooking

— By Faith Browning

IN THE KITCHEN WITH ADRIENNE SMITH

LINGUINE FLORENTINE

2 lbs. fresh spinach
9 oz. fresh linguine
1 Tbsp. olive oil
1/2 cup Parmesan cheese, freshly grated
1/4 tsp. white pepper
3 Tbsp. roasted pecans, chopped

Remove stems from spinach; wash leaves thoroughly. Cook spinach, covered in a large Dutch oven over medium heat about 4 minutes or until tender. (Do not add water.) Drain well; chop spinach and set aside. Cook linguine according to package directions, omitting the salt and fat; drain. Combine linguine and olive oil in a large bowl; toss gently. Add spinach, cheese and pepper; toss gently. Sprinkle top with pecans.

HOT CHICKEN SALAD

4 cups cooked Fran's Fryers chicken breasts, chopped
2 Tbsp. lemon juice
3/4 cup mayonnaise
1 tsp. salt
3/4 cup cream of chicken soup
1 2-oz. (small jar) diced pimientos

2 cups chopped celery
1 cup grated cheddar cheese
3/4 cup sliced almonds

Combine first 7 ingredients and place in a 9 x 13-inch casserole dish. Top with cheddar cheese and almonds. Cover; refrigerate overnight. Bake on middle rack of oven at 400 F for about 20 to 30 minutes.

SNOW PEA SURPRISE SALAD

SALAD:

5 to 6 cups organic field greens
2 avocados, pitted and chopped
1 14-oz. can mandarin oranges, drained (save juice)
3 green onions, chopped with tops
1/2 lb. snow peas
1/2 lb. bacon, cooked and crumbled
(OK to use turkey bacon)

DRESSING:

1/4 cup sesame seeds, toasted
2/3 cup canola oil
2 Tbsp. lemon juice
3 Tbsp. raspberry vinegar
2 Tbsp. sugar
1 garlic clove, crushed

.7-oz. pkg. dry Italian dressing mix
juice of the mandarin oranges
salt to taste

Combine the salad ingredients, reserving some of the oranges and bacon for the top after tossing with dressing. Combine dressing ingredients and mix well (may use blender). Pour desired amount of dressing over salad; toss together well.

ROASTED VEGETABLES WITH ROSEMARY

1 lb. small red potatoes, quartered
1 lb. fresh green beans, ends snapped, patted dry
1 large red onion, sliced
1 clove garlic, chopped
olive oil to taste
2 Tbsp. fresh rosemary
2 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar
salt and pepper to taste

Place vegetables on greased 11 x 15-inch baking sheet with onions on top. Drizzle with oil; sprinkle with rosemary and garlic. Bake at 400 F until vegetables are browned and onions are caramelized. Remove from oven; toss with balsamic vinegar, salt and pepper. Serves 8.

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Why Retirement Belongs on Every Woman's Radar

— By Nickie Weyrauch

Women tend to live longer than men. Because of this, their retirement income could potentially need to stretch over a longer period of time, according to a study published by The Center for Retirement Research (CRR) at Boston College.

Terming women's life expectancy the 'longevity risk,' CRR reported women age 65 could expect to live about three years longer than men their same age. As time passes in a woman's life, however, her standard of living could rapidly decline and she could even face poverty, if not financially prepared.

In fact, CRR reported nearly three out of 10 elderly single females are poor or near poor. Why do many women face such financial challenges in their retirement years? The startling statistics bring to bear other realities that impact women's financial outlook.

Americans for Secure Retirement, a broad-based coalition of groups encouraging annuitization as a way to ensure retirement security, points out that:

- Women usually spend less of their lifetime earning wages in the workforce and, therefore, receive lower Social Security payments.
- Women earn less than men, despite the proportion of women in the workforce.
- Women are more likely to be employed in part-time positions that do not carry benefits.
- On average, women contribute less frequently and at lower rates to employer-provided retirement plans.

- Fifteen percent of women over age 65 still participate in the labor force to earn an income.

For women, getting financially prepared for their future has never been more important. Talking one-on-one with a financial professional can make crafting plans for retirement easier. Meeting with a professional can also help assess what one has today and determine how much to invest in order to help meet future goals.

The following steps can help prepare for a meeting with a financial professional:

1. Find female-focused materials. Find consumer-friendly Web sites, books and seminars that focus on financial issues that may be specific to women in an effort to become more financially literate.

2. Get a credit report. Financially focused females know the importance of reviewing their credit report for accuracy. Individuals may receive a free copy of their credit report, once every 12 months at www.annualcreditreport.com.

3. Locate paperwork. Gather copies of important financial documents, such as insurance policies, bank information, and mortgage papers. These types of records will help facilitate an informative discussion regarding one's current financial situation.

4. Establish financial goals.

The complex world of Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs), annuities, life insurance and other financial products, can be confusing. However, a skilled financial professional can help align personal goals with products tailored to individual needs.

5. Get started. The sooner preparation for retirement begins, the sooner money can compound. It is never too early to start, as financial foresightedness makes maintaining a certain quality of life possible as years pass. **NOW**

Nickie Weyrauch is an Allstate representative based in Red Oak.

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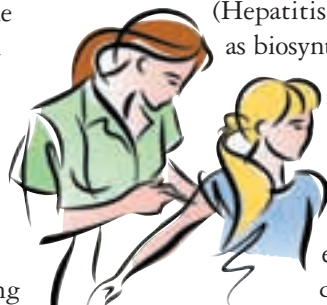
Give a Shot

— By Betty Tryon

Many of us are old enough to remember our smallpox vaccinations. We still bear the scar to prove it. The temporary, uncomfortable ordeal of the vaccination brought huge dividends — the eradication of smallpox in our lifetime. Although at times controversial, no one can argue how the discovery of vaccines has improved the quality of life for millions of people. Vaccinations or immunizations introduce into the body weakened or dead pathogens, such as viruses or bacteria, stimulating the immune system to produce antibodies to fight the invader. The very small and safe amount of disease-causing molecules creates the immunologic response.

This amazing living machine called our body has the ability to remember exposure to certain diseases, and within that memory database, to fight it effectively. This is where the miracle of immunization comes in to save the day from diseases that in the past would wipe out entire communities.

The four types of immunizations are inoculations with: weakened viruses, inactivated viruses or bacteria, toxoid and biosynthetic vaccines. The general population is familiar with vaccines from weakened and inactivated pathogens. Measles, mumps, rubella, anthrax and chicken pox vaccines are composed from weakened (attenuated) live viruses. The weakened state of the virus reduces its virulence. This may



pose a threat to a person who has a compromised immune system, such as someone with AIDS or being treated with chemotherapy. The inactivated or dead viruses yield the vaccines for influenza and hepatitis A. These vaccines are much safer for people with compromised systems. Toxoids from the bacteria or virus needed for inoculation are the third form of immunization. The common diphtheria and tetanus vaccines are produced from toxoids. Lastly, vaccines for diseases such as HPV (human papillomavirus) and HBV (Hepatitis B virus) are manufactured formulas classified as biosynthetic vaccines.

The immunization program begins in infancy with the first vaccine given at two months of age. This program continues with regularly scheduled visits to the clinic or pediatrician throughout childhood. Immunization does not end with childhood. Some vaccines, such as diphtheria and tetanus require booster shots to maintain consistent protection.

The quality of our lives improved with the discovery and administration of vaccines. Unfortunately, some diseases such as measles are making disturbing comebacks due to the lack of a national immunization policy in some countries. The creeping return of these dreaded diseases comes via travelers and then spreads to those who have not been immunized. The good news is that millions of children going back to school this year will first make a trip to their doctor for any immunizations they need. This simple act helps to ensure the safety of all. **WWW**

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

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August 2008

Community Calendar

Every Monday

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

Second and Fourth Mondays

Texas Ladies Networking meeting, 11:45 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., Ryan's Grill in Waxahachie. (214) 587-1221.

First and Third Tuesdays

Red Oak Lions Club meeting, 7:00 p.m., 207 West Red Oak Rd. (972) 617-3577.

Thursdays

Gamblers Anonymous meeting, 8:30 p.m., First United Methodist Church, 600 Red Oak Rd. (972) 617-9100.

Second Tuesday

Wagon Wheel Saddle Club meeting, 7:30 p.m. (972) 223-8118. www.wagonwheelsaddleclub.com.

Third Wednesday

Ellis County Christian Women's Connection luncheon, 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., Waxahachie Country Club, 1920 W. Hwy. 287. \$13.00. Vouchers for child care available. (972) 937-2807 or (972) 937-9984. windchime@charter.net.

Third Thursday

ABWA - Empowering Women Express Network meeting, 5:45 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center, 1 Community Circle, Midlothian. RSVP to Daphne Brewer at (972) 723-6551. www.abwa-empoweringwomen.org.

Last Thursday

DeSoto Art League meeting. www.desotoartleague.com.

Every Friday in August

Harps of God Worship Jam, 6:30 p.m., Bubba Que BBQ's front porch. Bring your instrument to make a joyful noise!

First Saturday

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

First and Third Saturday

Family Story Time, 3:30 - 4:30 p.m., Red Oak Public Library, 200 Lakeview Pkwy. (469) 218-1230. www.redoakpubliclibrary.org.

August 3

NBBC "Run Toward the Son" Motorcycle Rally, 10:15 a.m., New Beginnings Bible Church, 1970 FM 983, Ferris. Family event. All types of motorcycles are invited. Free hot dogs and bottled water. Register online at www.newbeginningsbiblechurch.com.

August 5 - 7

Navarro Small Business Development Center sessions. Tuesday: Copyrights and patents. Wednesday: How to start a small business. Thursday: Sales tax session. Registration required. (903) 875-7667 or e-mail ophelia.mendoza@navarrocollege.edu.

August 11, 12 and 16

Waxahachie Community Theatre will conduct *The King and I* auditions. Show dates: October 31 and November 1-2 at the Chautauqua Auditorium in Waxahachie. August 11 and 12: Adult auditions, 7:00 p.m., First United Methodist Church, 600 W. Red Oak Rd. August 16: Children's auditions, 10:00 a.m., First United Methodist Church, 600 W. Red Oak Rd. Open to children ages 8 - 14. Call PJ for information, (972) 723-6976 or visit online at www.waxahachiecommunitytheatre.com.

August 19

Navarro Small Business Development Center session: How to write a winning business plan, 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. Registration required. (903) 875-7667.

August 22

Downtown Ovilla Days: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Heritage Park. Arts, crafts, antiques, refreshment vendors and free entertainment. (972) 515-8550.

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





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