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AUGUST 2011

## Finding Faith on a Lonely Road

### Also Inside

Shooting for Perfection

Educating Runs  
in the Family

Get Well, Stay Well

In the Kitchen With  
Kathleen Walker

## AN UNSCRIPTED JOURNEY

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## On The Cover



The fun-loving Kelly family express themselves through art.

*Photo by Opaque Visuals.*

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# Editor's Note

*Howdy, Mansfield!*

German beer and German food — cooked by local restaurants and St. John's Lutheran Church — will be served August 13 at Mansfield's Wurst Hometown Festival, created by the city of Mansfield, the Mansfield Area Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Merchants and the Mansfield Historical Museum and Heritage Center. The event celebrates our community's history and heritage.

Our founding fathers, Ralph Man and Julian Feild, were creative businessmen, according to museum director, Vern Raven. "Mr. Feild's family name stems from Alsace-Lorraine, where de la Feld was their name before they migrated to England during the Norman Conquest in 1066," Vern said. "Mr. Man's family came from England, most likely, prior to 1711."

You can learn more about Man and Feild and your own ancestors when you visit the museum during the Hometown Festival. And if you'd like to volunteer to help host the event, contact Theresa Cohagen with the city of Mansfield at (817) 804-5785.

Have a great August!

*Melissa*

Melissa Rawlins  
MansfieldNOW Editor  
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# An Unscripted Journey

— By Melissa Rawlins

*“I guess I’m the Scotty McCreery of Mansfield,” Todd Murdock said, with ob-so-straight a face, referring to the recent winner on the hit TV show, American Idol. Todd is the only bass in his choir at Central Baptist Church. Because of the clear, powerful ring of his voice, he gets volunteered for a lot of his performances, whether at church or the Senior Center at the Mansfield Activities Center — or sometimes for funerals. He moves people to tears with a cappella versions of the old traditional songs, such as: “When the Roll is Called up Yonder,” “Wouldn’t Take Nothing For My Journey,” “I Saw the Light.” And sometimes, Todd has a difficult time not breaking down and crying, because he knew those people he sings for.*

Throughout his life, especially while working as a traveling printing press technician, Todd sang country or gospel tunes, mostly to himself, just to keep himself motivated. “I’ve always liked the song ‘When the Roll is Called up Yonder,’ ever since I was a young ladster,” Todd said. “I would say the words: ‘I’ll be there.’ If we didn’t have hope, we wouldn’t have anything.” Growing up in Kennedale, Todd was a member of Rendon Baptist Church. Over the years

he has worshipped at Bible Baptist Church, then Calgary in Cleburne, and 11 years ago moved his church letter from there to Central Baptist in Mansfield. “My faith hasn’t done anything but help me out. If we didn’t have the Lord to look forward to, I don’t think we’d have anything to look forward to. If it wasn’t for Him, I wouldn’t have made it through what I’ve been through.” Todd was in the Second Armored Division when in the Army. His commander was

General George Patton Jr. — who Todd remembers looking just like the elder General Patton.

Todd considers himself lucky. “The Good Lord has watched over me,” Todd said, advising young people of today to live day by day. “Thank God every day that you wake up. You can live by those words of wisdom.” When Todd was younger and going to high school in Kennedale, he ran around with Mansfield school students. “I can remember when





*"I feel like the Lord  
has sent me to take  
care of these people."*

Mansfield had nothing but a little bitty jail house on Broad and Main. We used to ride around with our guns in the car going to hunt rabbits. We always got along real well with the folks from Mansfield. We were just kind of a gang hanging together."

He left high school and joined the Army before entering the printing field and traveling all over the United States, Mexico and Canada working on printing press equipment. For 37 years, he lived out of a suitcase. Sometimes he was gone a month at a time. "I made real good money, but it is hard to raise the family when you're not there," Todd said. He has two daughters, Stefanie and Angela, two grandsons and one granddaughter in Kennedale.

Most of his time, now, is spent caring for his wife, Bea, and stepson, Paul, both of whom have cancer. Bea and Todd met at a senior dance in Fort





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Worth. “We started going to a lot of different dances all around — Mansfield, Weatherford, Cleburne, Haltom City, White Settlement.” They fell in love, got married 10 years ago and have been dancing ever since. Whenever their favorite band, Dave Eder & The Final Showdown, plays in Waxahachie, the Murdocks head down to either the Senior Center or the old civic center for an evening of good fellowship and dancing.

Dancing proves to be good medicine, after a full week going to doctors and all that goes along with caring for people with cancer. Todd cooks for his stepson every morning, and again in the evenings. And sometimes he cooks for Bea and himself in the daytime. He cooks with compassion: “I’m what you call an old southern fried cook. I can cook just about anything,” said Todd, who makes white cream gravy for his mashed potatoes. “I make Paul and Bea everything they want, even though the doctor says, ‘If it tastes good spit it out.’ That’s a form of compassion, to give them what tastes good.” He and Bea invite friends from church, some of them ladies over 90, for dinner. Beyond food, they are offering good fellowship. That’s when Todd discovers what kind of help his friends need around their house. “It says in the Bible you’re supposed to help



out the widow ladies. I do whenever I get a chance.

"I feel like the Lord has sent me to take care of these people," said Todd, who is not only a member of Central Baptist Church, but also a trustee there. He helps tend the 3/4-acre church garden behind Walgreens, picking vegetables for the people in the church, and selling leftovers at the Greenhouse for contribution into the church's building fund. This month it will be goodies like okra, squash, zucchini, black eyed peas, green beans and tomatoes, plus watermelons and cantaloupes.



"There is another man named Cecil Nall who does the plowing, planting and stuff. I take care of it, doing the watering and the picking. I like getting out like that — where there's nothing out there but grapevines all around."

Watching over gardens and people has taught Todd a thing or two about compassion. "I've learned a lot about

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taking care of sick people through the years," Todd said. "I've taken care of a few people who have had cancer, just helping them out and their wives or spouses. The most important thing to do is try to be uplifting to them. There's not a whole lot you can do for people like that except everything you can do to try to get them to get out and outside of their drab life in their apartment or house. I have a lot of compassion for them because I've seen so many other people go through that same thing. I think leaving this world happy is a lot better than leaving it with a broken heart. I'm not saying it makes me feel good or anything like that to do this, but maybe it's just my calling."

This life Todd leads is different than he had imagined for his retirement. He had planned to fish a lot and hunt for Indian artifacts out in the wilderness. "I haven't done what I was planning because I've been taking care of everybody. Yet I can't complain about it," Todd said. "When I get out in the garden in the evenings, it feels like I'm out in the country. I'm in heaven when I'm out there. I guess you might say I've been blessed." **NOW**



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# Finding Faith on a Lonely Road

— By Jeremy Agor



*When she went to bed on October 14, 1995, Cyndee Hopkins had a good life. She and her husband, Dave, had three sons — Zack, 6; Spencer, 4; Ian, 20 months; and a daughter, Emma, born 12 days prior. When Cyndee woke the next day, her world was turned upside down with the discovery that Dave had passed away in his sleep. Now, she faced a great emptiness and the strain of taking care of her family, while battling the constant grief she suddenly faced. “That day led to a crisis,” Cyndee admitted. “I’d always considered myself a Christian, but when my faith was tested — I found I had none. I didn’t know it, but I began a journey to find something to hold onto, to find faith — what it was and find out if I believed in it.”*



Dave had recently started a new job and his insurance benefits — including life insurance — had not kicked in, creating an additional burden. She somehow made it through the first year. “I know I fed the kids that year, but I don’t remember much else,” she recalled. Then she began to take advantage of services offered in the community to help her provide for their needs. Echoing Hillary Clinton, Cyndee agrees it takes a village to rear a child. She found three groups to help out her family: a church



with a good children’s program and youth group; The WARM Place in Fort Worth, an organization, providing grief support for children and families; and Big Brothers Big Sisters.

Each of these programs helped fill the void her children were experiencing because of her husband’s death. However, as Emma turned 2, a new set of problems began to appear. By her

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third birthday, it was apparent something was very wrong. Doctors diagnosed her with Pervasive Developmental Disorder — Not Otherwise Specified (PDD NOS), a higher-functioning autistic spectrum disorder, and a new wave of grief struck Cyndee. “Just as I was getting over my grief for my husband, I had to deal with grief for my child. The grief was the same in that I was losing something, but they were different in that when someone dies you eventually accept it, but with a special needs child it’s an everyday grief and a reminder of what you lost. It’s an adjustment,” Cyndee explained.

Throughout all this, Cyndee continued to attend church, still seeking answers and trying to find her lost faith. However, she often attended because being at church ate up time, and she was able to provide a meal for her children — one she did not have to prepare. One day, Cyndee went to church and felt a moment of peace, as if God had given her a hug, but pulled back immediately because He knew she would not accept it. That moment helped rekindle her faith. “I’ll never be a Christian who quotes





Bible verses, but I get what I need to know: that God loves me and He'll lead the way. I've come to realize that God gets you to the place you're supposed to be, but you don't always like the road He takes you on," she admitted.

Before long, Cyndee reached a point where she wanted to be a giver, to help people in need. She began volunteering and became a consultant for parents of special needs children. She also became board president of Fourth Street School in Arlington, which is a school for special needs children. She became a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) volunteer, working with the court system to help with the decision process on whether a child should be reunited with his or her parents. She saw a lot of bad things through her experience with CASA — abuse, neglect, parents who



didn't love their children — but she felt that she needed to give back and help those who couldn't help themselves.

Finally, Cyndee became a speaker for churches and single parenting groups. One day she appeared on the television program, *Good Morning Texas*, to discuss a special needs resource guide she had compiled. Author Karol Ladd saw her and later called to ask if Cyndee would



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like to be in Karol's next book. That interaction led to Karol encouraging Cyndee to write a book about her experiences, *Detour to Happiness: An Unexpected Journey*, which was released in March.

"I was a little surprised Karol thought anyone would want to read a book about me, but I did it because I wanted somewhere to put my memories for my children. I'm the memory keeper, and they were young when this all started. I wanted them to have a way to remember, too. It's not a book about grief, but a book about hope. There are lots of books out there on grief. I'm not telling you what to do, but I'm putting what I did out there, and if there's something in my story that makes you say 'Aha!' then I've achieved my purpose," Cyndee explained.

In spite of her detour, Cyndee has a good life again. She is comfortable with who she is and where she is in life, and her children are happy and doing well. Her eldest son, Zack, is 22 and makes movies in Los Angeles. Spencer, 19, is completing his first year studying business at The University of Texas at Austin. Ian, 17, is a junior at Mansfield High School, where Emma, 15, also attends as a freshman. "I wish the bad things in my life hadn't happened, but there are gifts that came out of it. I've learned from Emma about patience and empathy, and it has rounded me out. I'm more aware, and I wouldn't be a special needs consultant if it weren't for her," Cyndee explained. "Life experiences make you who you are. I wish my husband's passing wasn't what my experiences were based on, but I think the harder the lesson, the bigger the impact.

"I've learned that being happy is a choice," she continued. "It's hard work. If you look at my situation on paper — I lost my husband; he didn't have insurance; I'm not college-educated; I have four children, one with autism; I'm turning 50 this year and I don't date — by all accounts I could be unhappy. But I'm happy for the things I have instead of worrying about what I don't have. I live by the premise that I *know* you can go to bed and not wake up. I make sure the people I care about know it. I'm always mindful that words can't be taken back." **NOW**





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# Art and the Family Tree

— By Melissa Rawlins



## AT HOME WITH *Curtis and Diane Kelly*

*New friends of Ross and Lindsay Kelly are always surprised when they come to visit. After welcoming them into the ultra-traditional, two-story home, with its combination of white stone, reddish-orange brick and dark trim, Dr. and Mrs. Kelly hand the visitors a silver paint pen, offering them free access to the wall upstairs. The graffiti bricks were the first work of art Dr. Curtis Kelly produced when he and Diane moved their family to Mansfield in 2005. Using a rectangular sponge and red paint, this seemingly straight-edged guy — who works as a research scientist at Alcon Laboratories by day — created a whole play room with what looks like three old brick walls, and makes you feel like you are in a back alley somewhere.*

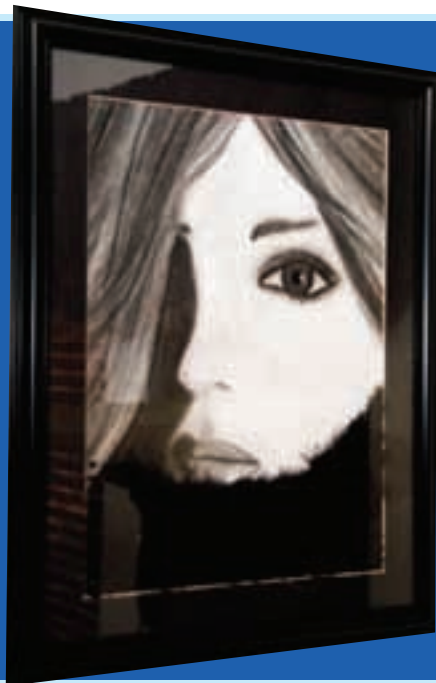
Ross and Lindsay have installed a black leather couch, a big-screen television, a computer, an Xbox, a set of electronic keyboards and some speakers. This is where Lindsay creates music, and the guys play video games. Ross prefers Minecraft or Call of Duty. When it is time for father-son bonding, Curtis comes upstairs to play the Halo series with Ross.

Usually, Diane stays downstairs during their fun, writing in whatever spot feels most inviting at the time. “It is a form of mental *feng shui*,” said Diane, a part-time tax attorney in Fort Worth and author of a novel called *Death, Taxes and a French*





*Manicure.* “I bounce around from my desk to my bedroom to outside. Usually, if it is nice outside, I sit on the patio and write until it gets too dark. I often sit in bed to write creatively. I feel like the desk is more of a work space for Mansfield High PTSA (Parent Teacher Student Association) work and Friends of Library bookkeeping, but now that I have my



publisher's revision letter for my next novel — that feels like work — so it's out here on the desk.” Treasurer for the Friends of the Mansfield Public Library, she also coordinates the Mansfield Writes program, which is in its fourth year. And of course, she has been an integral part of the Mansfield READS visiting author program.

While carrying out her nitty-gritty work at the oversized, oak desk inherited from her uncle, Diane can look up and enjoy three amazing charcoal drawings by her daughter, Lindsay. One of these, the girl with the feather boa, even impresses her father, who uses his artistic talent to help his family. When walls need painting, or things need fixing, Curtis heeds the call. He not only painted Lindsay's room with a Paris theme and Ross' room camouflage, but he also helped his son build a dragster out in the garage. Ross got involved in the Technology Students Association at Ben Barber, where he feels as comfortable as he does at home. This year at Frontier High School, Ross will study computer animation and video

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editing. Ross's artistic side is evident in a few of his drawings, displayed on the living room mantel.

Nearly everything in the Kelly's art collection has been created by family, and much of it combines function with form. "Our dream house, if truth be told, would be an old Victorian with original wood floors for the sense of history," Diane said. Now, she has laminate wood paid for by her first advance from her publisher, and she and Curtis have filled their easy-to-maintain modern home with

their ancestors' art. The grandfather clock in the entry hall was made by Curtis' maternal grandfather, Ross Mainland, who also built the maple kitchen table and the rocking chair in the living room and painted the wintery old Maine cabin that is set on the mantel beside Ross' drawings. The desk to the right of the fireplace belonged to Curtis' paternal grandfather, and his dad remembers his father sitting at the desk to do work. Now it holds a lamp Lindsay made using green soldier men wrapped in clear

packing tape. With her eye for placement and color, Lindsay has been the true decorator in the Kelly home, choosing where to place the family heirlooms. The dining room has a luggage chest from one of Curtis' grandmothers, after whom Lindsay was named. And on the mantel is a ukulele, from one of Curtis' grandfathers. "It's neat to have things that have stories passed down with them," Curtis said.

Lindsay's room itself has a story, having gone through two incarnations of



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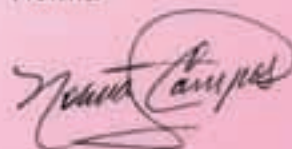
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decor. Upon moving in, after painting the graffiti wall, Curtis was called on to paint Lindsay's room for fun. One wall had polka dots another one was argyle. "That was the tough wall," Curtis remembered. "There was a stencil we used."

But he had a simpler time repainting in solid yellow when Lindsay came up with the Paris theme. "I made an Eiffel Tower painting in Miss Rudnicki's



art class then based my room off the picture," explained Lindsay, a senior at Mansfield High School, who plans to study art in college. She is also on the dance company team at Stagedoor Dance Centre. "I wanted my room to be bright and fun and very open." The openness stops when it comes to sharing her bathroom with her brother, who is 20 months her junior. "When we moved here, we made a treaty: I would get to use that bathroom if he got a tree house





outside. So now, he usually uses the guest bathroom.” The two enjoy after-school relaxing upstairs, where nothing is out of bounds or breakable. Ross practices airsoft (a combat simulation sport) in his camouflage room, preparing for outings to play paintball — the grownup way of playing soldier.

Growing up in the Kelly home requires flexibility on everyone’s part, since activities keep each person busy. “We find going on a vacation is the best way to spend time together,” Diane said with a shrug. “Yet this house is home base. We try to give the kids space to be who they are, without imposing a whole lot of rules on them.”

All four of their combined personalities work together to impose a few rules on the family’s two dogs, adopted from the Mansfield shelter. Junior is a German Shepherd mix and Reggie, who is deaf, is part Dalmatian. “And maybe half Tasmanian devil,” joked Diane.

Their cats enjoy lounging on the window sills, looking out at the larger, older trees on the lot, including an old live oak and pines out front. “The country used to be just right behind the street behind us,” Curtis said. “We’ve had snakes, tarantula, possums, skunks, raccoons, turkey vultures and hawks. We get a lot of wildlife here that surprises us.” Apparently, feral cats seem to know the family with soft hearts who will appreciate their silhouettes and give them their very own rooms — with a view. **NOW**

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— By Jeremy Agor

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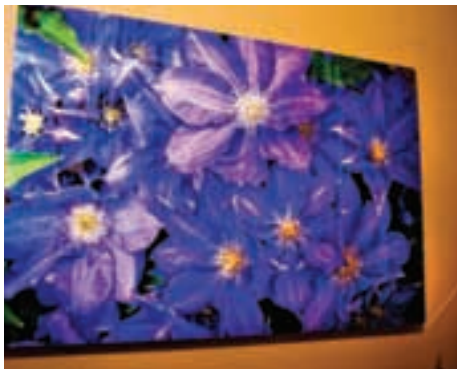
The art of photography, however, involves a good eye, great timing and a little luck. It's a hobby to many and a career for some. Garrett Gilliam took his first photography class as a junior at Mansfield High School and now, just three years later, has begun a career as an artist with works displayed in galleries. "I took a photography class in high school because I wanted a nice camera," Garrett laughed. "I always thought a picture was a picture with no meaning or anything, but the teacher, Landon Day, really opened up my understanding of what makes a great picture. Then, once we started talking about cameras and how they work, I was fascinated."

Soon after, Garrett started down the path toward getting paid for photography. Landon started his own photography business and hired Garrett as an assistant. The jobs Garrett did were decidedly unglamorous. He held flashes and worked with lighting elements, took bookings, did some second-camera (backup) work during photo shoots and recruited models. Although his tasks weren't always exciting, Garrett continued to benefit from Landon's



knowledge and was given access to top quality equipment, from computers to editing software, to borrowing an occasional lens. "Landon and I are really good friends. He critiques my work and tells me if he likes a photo or not. He also gives me tips on how to improve. It's good to have someone to share ideas with," Garrett admitted.

Garrett enjoys sports photography and also shoots nature and landscapes, as well as photos of everyday items taken from a different angle, finding the art in something just by gaining a different perspective. The typical commercial photography route doesn't interest him, however. "I definitely want to do photography as a career. I'm torn between the artistic side and the media side, and I



**"I'm torn between the artistic side and the media side, and I debate which to do every day."**

debate which to do every day. I'm not a fan of portraits though, so studio work is out of the picture," he explained.

In the short time he has been focusing on the artistic side of photography, Garrett has seen his career begin to take hold quickly. His girlfriend, Lauren Blinn, gets her hair done with an artist named D.J. Nachritz who was looking for a photographer to take digital copies of her work for her electronic portfolio. He agreed, and after a couple months, she asked to see some of his work. Duly impressed, she began taking him around to galleries and helped him get his work shown. Twice, he was a featured artist

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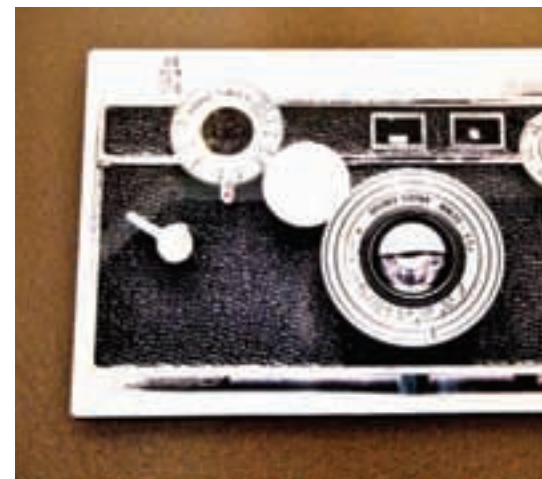
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for one-night shows, but the Cullen & Burke Gallery in Fort Worth made him its featured artist for the gallery's opening night, and his work is still on display there.

"I'd been trying the artistic stuff for three or four months, so this was a nice jump start," Garrett said. "It was weird and kind of scary being the featured artist at Cullen & Burke. I don't fit the 'artist' mold and I'm new at this, and there were people there who've been doing this for years asking me about my inspiration for different photos. The



gallery is open almost every day and that leads to even more shows."

Beyond photography, Garrett works at a local big box electronics store (he likes being around the cameras, he says), hangs out with friends and loves to play poker. He also plays softball, competing in tournaments two to four times each

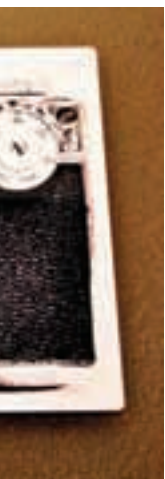




month, playing outfield and middle infield positions. His passion for the sport has helped him in his photography. "I love to shoot baseball and softball, and I even took tennis pictures in high school when I played. Shooting sports is all about timing. You have to know your camera to try to time it exactly right when the ball hits the bat. There's lots of guesswork," he said.

Garrett often finds his inspiration by accident. Many times he takes his camera out without a plan and wanders until something interesting catches his eye. Those trips are among his favorites, because he never knows what kind of images he'll capture. "I just go out and walk around and see what's there. That's what I like, because you're always going to see different stuff and do different things with your camera that will make a photo great," he said. "One time, I went out to Tyler, Texas, because I'd heard it's beautiful and I'd only driven through on my way to Florida. On the way there I found Tyler State Park on my phone and stopped to take pictures. I only got about 50 shots, but it took me four hours to get them and they were all good."

Content for now to hone his skills locally, Garrett dreams of someday traveling to places where he will find a different type of subject matter. "Someday if I hit the lottery, I want to



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go to Europe. It's beautiful. A friend of mine went to Italy and came back with about 300 photos, and I was just blown away. There's so much culture, and the beauty of the buildings and the landscapes ... I probably wouldn't come back," Garrett mused.

Although travelling all over Europe to pursue his photography is a dream at this point, Garrett embraces his youth and considers it a distinct advantage over photographers who start later in life. "Being young is definitely cool," he



smiled. "It provides some advantages. I have a lot more time to keep getting better. With hobbies like softball, my body will eventually begin to deteriorate, but with photography, I can gain experience and keep learning and trying new things. I want to be as perfect as I can."

Taking inspiration from wherever he can get it, learning as much as possible from his mentor and putting in the time it takes to learn his trade have so far given Garrett an excellent start on the local art scene. And, like many sons, he says his mother plays a large role in his craft.

"Whenever I order a picture, the most rewarding thing is to hear my mom say, 'Wow!' That's the one thing I really go for in my photography. It means a lot if she reacts well. If she likes it and I don't happen to sell that particular photo, I don't lose anything. She's the one person out of everyone who sees my work who I'm trying to impress." **NOW**



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# *Educating Runs* in the

— By Julie B. Cosgrove

*Tammy Sutton comes from a family of female educators. Her mother and sisters went into the field of education, and now her daughter, Keslynn, is majoring in education at Dallas Baptist University. At first, Tammy didn't have that urge to become an educator of children. Instead, she became a businesswoman. "I just wasn't interested in a teaching career," she recalled. "I ran my own business for 20 years."*

Growing up in Fort Worth and living in south Arlington, she suddenly found herself a single mother with an impressionable little girl. Making sure her daughter was reared in a faith-based environment became her No. 1 priority. "We found a church here in Mansfield where I didn't feel like being a single mom was some sort of stigma. Instead, the pastor and the people were kind and accepting."

Immediately, Tammy jumped into volunteering to help with the Sunday school program. Keslynn was entering first grade at the time. "I wanted to make sure Keslynn was learning the right things," she said. "Being involved gave me that assurance." Soon Tammy's savvy business sense led to her becoming one of the directors. Over the next several years, the city of Mansfield







# Family

and their church became more and more their lifeline community. "We [Tammy and Keslynn] were spending most of our time here. I realized that we're Mansfield people," Tammy said. "I love it here. This is home." So, in 2001, they moved into the city. "The schools are super here. Keslynn graduated from Mansfield High School."

In 2003, the church needed a new program for the children who attended on Wednesday nights. "We were looking for a series that would draw in more children," she explained. "We found AWANA." She initially discussed the program with her pastors, who supported her efforts. "It was a new ministry, and a change. That was a challenge," Tammy said with a smile. "I like challenges. I wanted to make sure the very first year ran really well. Today, thanks to all the volunteers and church staff, it almost runs itself. This year, we'll be starting our eighth year. We average 200 kids per week, now."

AWANA is an acronym for Approved Workmen Are Not Ashamed, which at first may sound like an unusual title for

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a church-based children's program. It's derived from the passage in 2 Timothy 2:15, which reads: "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth." Originating in 1950, the program involves children up through the sixth grade in Bible verse memorization through classroom activities, at-home participation and affirmative encouragement. Tammy counted off the different activities each Wednesday evening on her fingers. "There are three rotations each session," she explained. "We have game time — all the AWANA games are right there in a booklet for the teachers. This is when the kids learn about teamwork and sportsmanship. Then we move to counsel time, which is teaching the children through worship and Bible lessons. The third rotation is handbook time when the children can recite verses they have memorized and get little awards along the way."

Tammy emphasized the two-hour program doesn't provide snacks or drinks for the children. "That's not the purpose. It's to teach these kids Bible verses they can use in their daily lives. If a child goes all the way through this program, by the end they will have memorized 432 verses and know what they mean. They learn through repetition." Tammy knows of several churches in Mansfield who have adopted AWANA, as well. It's now internationally based, and part of the program is to teach children to support the overseas clubs with donated money





they have earned by doing chores. “We also teach them to become involved in their own community and to help out with charitable programs, too,” Tammy stated. “We help with food drives and last year encouraged donations of personal hygiene items, like toothpaste and toothbrushes for area schools.”

The program’s success, according to Tammy, relies on both parent and volunteer involvement. “I’m really just a small part of it,” she admitted. “It runs smoothly because of the wonderful volunteers and our children’s leaders at the church. I couldn’t do this without Kodi Tanner, the children’s pastor, and Tracey Wilkerson, the preschool minister, and, of course, all the parents, who volunteer to teach, help prepare for the classes and support the kids in helping them with their handbooks during the week at home.”

As the program director of AWANA, Tammy is called the commander, and the children are clubbers. Tammy explained that now even children as young as 2 years old can be a clubber. They’re called Puggles, and their mascot is a

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duckbilled platypus. Cubbies are 3- and 4-year-olds, and kindergarten age through second-grade students are called Sparks. The fourth division, T&T (truth and training), consists of students who are in third through sixth grade.

Even though Keslynn was too old to be a clubber when Tammy started the AWANA program, she became a student helper and has continued to be involved in AWANA since its inception eight years ago. Junior high and high school aged students can volunteer to help out with the classes. "Many of the kids who are in junior high and high school now were once clubbers in the very beginning," Tammy said with tears in her eyes. "It's great to see them want to stay involved. I feel that has truly blessed me."

Tammy is now happy in her career with a local insurance agency, but she loves being involved in AWANA. "If I didn't have that, I'm not sure what I'd do. I can't imagine not being involved in AWANA now." Little did she know all those years ago that the education of children would end up becoming not only her passion, but her daughter's future. "The proudest thing in my life is my daughter. She teaches a first grade group of AWANA children at the church, now, as well as a fourth grade Sunday school class." Tammy's eyes gleamed with pride. "She's as much a part of this as I am. She's confirmation of why I did this in the first place."

This successful single mother is convinced her daughter's desire to pursue a career in education came out of their desire to volunteer with the Bible memorization-based program. Tammy's mother worked in the education field, as do her sisters. Now, by helping to teach children through AWANA, Tammy has received the education baton and is passing it to her daughter. It runs in the family. **NOW**

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*— By Melissa Rawlins*

Reared in a Canadian town of 300 people, Dr. Neal Griffin grew up to be as friendly as any native Texan. He takes a personal interest in all of his patients. He recently texted congratulations to two of his patients who had finished the Texas Ironman Triathlon — folks who took advantage of his expertise on helping athletes heal quickly. “Quick injury recovery is absolutely possible, especially if both parties are doing their part,” Dr. Griffin said.

Tennis and golf pros rely on Dr. Griffin for possible sport injury risk assessments plus evaluation and treatment after injury. He worked with the PGA TOUR players this summer at the Byron Nelson Golf Tournament and is happy to give you the same specialized care. “If you are playing with pain or need

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Dr. Griffin enjoys working with all types of athletes — whether professional or weekend warriors — because they have intrinsic motivation. “They will typically get what ails them taken care of, so it won’t affect their performance. Depending on the athlete, we see different injuries: rotator cuff, tennis elbow, plantar fasciitis, neck and lower back or ribs, to name a few. The fun thing is getting to work with these athletes and see them get well. Usually I hear responses like, ‘I have better range of motion,’ or ‘I can’t believe I waited so long for treatment.’ It is very rewarding



to see them do so well after they get over the problem. They're thankful and grateful that they can get back to their activity so quickly."

Dr. Griffin trained his staff — Susan Tucker, who has been here nearly six years, and newcomer, Lindsey Johnston — to serve each patient. "They are fantastic at helping people feel comfortable from their first call. We spend the time the people need to address all their issues. It starts with taking a complete history, and then assessing the person with a series of unique functional tests. We schedule a minimum of 30 minutes for intake, not including treatment," Dr. Griffin said, adding: "Even if we can't help the patient, we work with and refer to many physicians and therapists in Mansfield and Arlington."

A strong believer that the community survives because its businesses give back to the community, Dr. Griffin is a member of the Arlington Sunrise Rotary Club. "I'm passionate about eradication of polio and everything Rotary does internationally and locally," he said. He has two children of his own and supports two programs — North Texas Big Brothers Big Sisters and Toys for Tots — out of pure appreciation for what they do for underprivileged children.

Rather than trying to be a master of all trades, Dr. Griffin specializes in short-term treatment for sports injuries, such as: tennis and golfer's elbow; bulging discs; sprains and strains; wrist, shoulder, hip, ankle and knee injuries; sciatic nerve pain; neck and lower back pain. The treatment methods he uses include: Active Release Technique (ART), decompression therapy, Kinesio Taping® Method and cold laser treatment.

"It is important to understand how injuries occur. Sometimes, it is because of muscle imbalances or loss of strength, but also many times is simply because of a lack of flexibility," Dr. Griffin said. "The treatment is specialized, but applies equally well to the injured weekend warrior, whether one is on the baseball field or working in the garden." Griffin Chiropractic's mission is to give you what you need to get well quickly and help you stay well. **NOW**

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# Back to School With Good Health — *By Angel Biasatti*

Good posture and good health are important for learning. A healthy body contributes to a healthy mind. Research shows that children who regularly eat nutritious meals and maintain good health have better standardized test scores, better behavior and are less hyperactive than children who do not.

As a parent, encourage your children to run, jump, walk and climb, and participate with them in a variety of activities. Regular physical activity has significant health benefits, including building strong healthy bones and muscles and improving balance and coordination. Ensure your child gets physical exercise every day. Children age 2 years and older should get 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise on most — and preferably all — days of the week.

Eating more home-cooked meals as a family is also better for a child's health than supersized portions of nonnutritious processed foods. The U.S. Department of Agriculture recommends filling half your plate with fruits and vegetables, consuming whole grains, such as wheat bread or brown rice rather than white, and including calcium-rich foods such as low-fat dairy products (milk and yogurt), leafy green vegetables and legumes, such as chickpeas, lentils and split peas.

Discourage your children from drinking too much sugary soda and instead offer more nutritious drinks like water and nonfat milk. Soda, energy drinks and sports drinks are major sources of added sugar and calories.

Encourage good posture and make sure your children carry no more than 10 to 20 percent of their body weight. When shopping for school backpacks, choose one with wide, padded shoulder straps and a padded back, and show them how to use



both shoulder straps to prevent muscle strain. You can also avoid back pain by strengthening muscles in the abdomen and lower back. Doing crunches and other exercises to strengthen the abdominal muscles is also recommended. Brisk walking, swimming and riding a stationary bicycle are good options for building overall muscle strength and flexibility.

With summer break coming to an end, and the new school year nearing, make sure to keep these helpful tips in mind. Start the school year right by promoting healthy habits with your children. You may be surprised that the change in diet and activity may soon filter into healthy and positive classroom learning. **NOW**

*Angel Biasatti*

*Director Community Relations and Marketing  
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# Are Your Final Expenses Covered?

— By Tim Bordelon

Are you worried about how your loved ones will pay the expenses incurred at the time of your death? While death is an inevitable part of life, financial questions associated with final medical bills, funeral expenses and estate settlements should not be.

According to a 2006 General Price List survey of the National Funeral Directors Association, the average cost for final expenses is \$7,000. Preparing for those costs today could prevent family members from dealing with a financial burden in addition to coping with the loss of a loved one.

One way you can assure that your final expenses are covered without placing the responsibility on your family is to make certain you have a life insurance policy that will meet your needs. Your life insurance policy can be an important part of your financial planning. Taking the time now to review your coverage and benefits may give you the peace of mind you deserve.

The death of a loved one can be enough of a physical and emotional burden for your family. By planning ahead, you can prevent it from being a financial hardship as well. Visit with your



insurance agent and discuss how a life insurance policy can cover your final expenses. It will only take a few moments of your time, but may go a long way toward easing the burdens of those you leave behind. **NOW**

*Tim Bordelon is a State Farm agent based in Mansfield.*

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### August 8

First Annual Tiger Golf Tournament: 1:00-5:30 p.m., Walnut Creek Country Club, 1151 Country Club Drive. The Tiger golf program — players of the past, present and future — invites you and your guests to participate in a tournament benefiting Mansfield High School girls and boys golf teams. Contact Kathy and Mike Johnson at (817) 473-0181.

### August 17

Lunch 'n Learn: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Mansfield Area Chamber of Commerce, 114 North Main Street. Build your business by participating in a luncheon seminar focused on providing professional development opportunities. Hosted by Medi-Weightloss Clinics, this month's topic is: "What Makes You Unique? Features & Benefits." The luncheon is free for the first 15 attendees

who are members of the Chamber. Call Tami Stringer at (817) 473-0507.

### August 18

Business After Hours: 5:30-7:30 p.m., Walnut Creek Country Club, 1151 Country Club Drive. Call Tami Stringer at (817) 473-0507.

### August 19

Hearts on Fire: 6:30-10:00 p.m., First Church of the Nazarene, 2001 East Main Street, Crowley. All-Ages Christian Music Concert and Benefit for Jamie McLester. NewLyfe Paperboy (hip-hop) and Supernova Remnant (rock) close out the show, which starts with spoken word and praise. Tickets: \$10 at [www.ticketstorm.com](http://www.ticketstorm.com). Visit [www.897powerfm.com](http://www.897powerfm.com) or [www.fwf.org](http://www.fwf.org), call (817) 297-7003 or contact Jamie McLester at [jamesmichael9@gmail.com](mailto:jamesmichael9@gmail.com).

### August 23

Board Meeting for Mansfield Independent School District: 7:00-9:00 p.m., 605 E. Broad Street. Call Julie Moye at (817) 299-6382.

### August 25-November 17

GriefShare: Thursdays, 7:00-8:30 p.m., Mansfield Bible Church, 2351 Country Club

Drive. When death happens, grief recovery is a painful process. To bring hope and direction to this process, Mansfield Bible Church is offering GriefShare on Thursday evenings through November 17. The cost for materials is \$20. To sign up for the group, visit [www.mbcchurch.com](http://www.mbcchurch.com) and look for GriefShare Recovery Support Group in the support group section on the small groups' page. Call (817) 473-8089.

### August 26

Networking Luncheon: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Walnut Creek Country Club, 1151 Country Club Drive. The Mansfield Chamber of Commerce invites anyone interested in learning more about how to serve the Mansfield community to come to the monthly luncheon sponsored by Primerica Financial Services. The guest speaker will be Mr. Larry Tubb, senior vice president of system planning at Cook Children's Hospital. All are welcome, and Chamber members receive a discount. Call Tami Stringer at (817) 473-0507.

*Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your event details to [melissa.nowmag@sbcglobal.net](mailto:melissa.nowmag@sbcglobal.net).*

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## In The Kitchen With Kathleen Walker

— *By Melissa Rawlins*

Mansfield's small-town atmosphere appeals to Kathleen Walker, who finds the people friendly and the stores well-stocked. That's important, since she and her husband, Stan, grill poolside almost every day in the summertime. With three children, six grown grandchildren, one great-grandchild and lots of friends, the Walkers generally host a Sunday dinner at Kathleen's seasonally-themed table. She especially enjoys making guests feel special by creating "tablescape" arrangements out of unusual candies, flowers, napkins and china, all of which accentuate the meal. Kathleen learned how to cook in Stephenville and Fort Worth from the women and men in her family — including her dad, who loved to barbecue. Here she shares a BBQ sauce recipe from her brother, James Swanner, plus a few other ideas for a perfect August get-together. **NOW**

### Swanner's BBQ Sauce

**18 oz. Kraft original barbeque sauce**  
**2 capfuls lemon juice**  
**2 capfuls Worcestershire sauce**  
**4 Tbsp. Catalina salad dressing**  
**6 Tbsp. brown sugar (heaping)**  
**1/8 tsp. sea salt**  
**1/4 tsp. fresh ground pepper**  
**Dash of meat tenderizer with no MSG**

**1.** Mix all ingredients in a saucepan. Cook on top of range over medium to low heat. Bring to a boil, then cover and simmer on low for 12-15 minutes. Sauce is done when it sticks to a spoon.

**2.** Serve on your favorite meat entree or as a side dish. Store any leftover sauce in the refrigerator in covered container for up to 2 weeks.

### Fresh Mint Tea

**1 quart water**  
**4 tea bags**  
**8-10 mint sprigs**  
**1 6-oz. frozen lemonade**  
**1/2 cup sugar**

**1.** Heat water. Add tea bags and mint leaves. Steep 1 hour.

**2.** Pour into pitcher, add lemonade and sugar and stir well.

### Dr Pepper Ribs

**3 pounds pork loin ribs, thawed**  
**4 Tbsp. steak or brisket rub to taste (use your favorite)**  
**3 Tbsp. olive or vegetable oil**  
**Salt & pepper, to taste**  
**12 oz. Dr Pepper**

**1.** Prepare pork ribs by rubbing olive or vegetable oil on both sides. Sprinkle rub on both sides. Salt and pepper both sides as desired.  
**2.** Line a metal or aluminum roasting pan with aluminum foil (I like the wide heavy duty variety) and place the ribs in the pan. Pour the Dr Pepper over the ribs and cover with foil (like a tent). If the pan has a cover, it can be used as well.  
**3.** Place pan on BBQ pit at approximately 200 degrees for 1 1/2 to 2 hours (depending on your BBQ pit and placement of the pan.) Rotate pan occasionally and check meat periodically to determine if cooking too quickly and for doneness. When the meat begins pulling away from the bone, remove from the heat.  
**4.** Slice between the bones with an electric knife or butcher knife and serve with BBQ sauce (recipe above).

### Greek Tomato Salad

**Several romaine or butter lettuce leaves**  
**5 large, ripe tomatoes, sliced**  
**1/3-inch thick**  
**1 small, red onion, thinly sliced**  
**1/4 cup olive oil**  
**1 Tbsp. Balsamic vinegar**  
**Salt and pepper, to taste**  
**4 oz. feta cheese**  
**1 Tbsp. fresh parsley, chopped**  
**1 cup Kalamata olives**

**1.** Arrange lettuce first, then tomatoes and onions on a large platter.  
**2.** Drizzle olive oil into the vinegar, whisking as you pour. Sprinkle this over the salad.  
**3.** In a small bowl, mix the remaining four ingredients. Use to garnish the salad.

**To view recipes from current and previous issues, visit [www.nowmagazines.com](http://www.nowmagazines.com).**



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