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AUGUST 2012

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Linguistics opens up the world
for Zachary Lopez.

Photo by Amy Ramirez.

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Editor's Note

Hello Ennis Friends and Family,

Summer break is almost over for students. For the most part, family vacations have all been taken. Weekend outings are just fond memories in a photo album. Once again, it's time to settle back into a routine. The morning routine for so many will include a fast, half-eaten breakfast, new school supplies thrown into a backpack and a mad dash out the door so as not to be tardy for school.

Personally, I like a routine. It keeps me grounded in what I need to accomplish from one day to the next. I'm also one of "those people" who work best from a list. Most days the entire list is completed, while other days the items not completed will end up on the next day's list. I know, it sounds crazy, but it works for me. In fact, now I can mark Editor's Note for August off my list!

Sandra

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EnnisNOW Editor
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An Open Letter from Ennis ISD

Dear Parents and Patrons,

First of all, thank you for entrusting us with the education of your children. There is no greater responsibility than providing a high quality education in a safe and secure environment for the young people of our community. It is a responsibility we take very seriously here at Ennis ISD.

With the new school year beginning on August 27, it is important for us to recognize where we are as a school district. It cannot be argued that Ennis ISD had a difficult and challenging year in 2011-12. Some events occurred that were unexpected and unforeseen that directly impacted our students, parents and staff. Along with you, we shared many of the same emotions – frustration, confusion, anxiety, and even a little fear at times.

We did our best to work through those issues, and we can say with absolute certainty that we could not have done so without your support, understanding and compassion. Please do not forget – you make the difference. Part of our responsibility is to listen and learn from you, just as students learn from our teachers.

So, where do we go from here? It's simple – if you get thrown off the horse, you dust yourself off and get back on! The 2011-12 school year is over. We are fully committed to a successful new year. This includes the implementation of a new curriculum management system – CSCOPE – that we strongly believe will help close any gaps that prevent us from attaining the best student achievement possible. After all, that is why we serve in education – to prepare your students for future success. We cannot ever forget our ongoing mission.

Please, let's stay connected! We have open houses taking place this month – you are most welcome to come and visit us personally. Stay informed with our EISD website, and through our Facebook and Twitter pages. If you have a student in school, make sure we have your updated contact information so you can receive our School Messenger communications. Together, we can continue to build a strong partnership in support of a common goal – helping our young people succeed. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Mack Boyd, D.V.M.
President
Ennis ISD Board of Trustees

Barbara Qualls, Ph.D.
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*“I welcome the
challenge of
studying the
expressions
and accents of
other cultures.”*

Love for LANGUAGE

— By Randy Bigham

Zachary Lopez doesn't just enjoy learning foreign languages. The 14-year-old model student at Ennis Junior High School is passionate about it. He can speak seven languages so far and hopes to pick up more in time. "I welcome the challenge of studying the expressions and accents of other cultures," explained the articulate, high-spirited eighth grader. "I know some people think it's hard to speak another language, and I guess it can be, but I love it." Love is the operative word, considering that French and Italian, in which he is fluent, are classic "romance" languages.

Zachary is also conversant in Portuguese, has achieved intermediate status in Russian and German and recently began tackling Polish and Latin. One language he has yet to master is Spanish, although he's proud of his Hispanic heritage, and his parents, Robert and Mary Lopez, are bilingual. "I like to set goals for myself that are hard," Zachary said. "People would expect me to know Spanish, so maybe that's why I'd rather concentrate on other languages."

The young man's mother and father may be divorced, but they have always encouraged him and his older siblings to make education a high priority, and he's grateful to have had the incentive they set for him to excel in school. "My parents instilled in me a desire for knowledge," Zachary pointed out. "They have been supportive from the beginning, which is probably why school is an important part of my life."

Zachary's foreign language skills aren't being honed at Ennis

Junior High, although he has impressed friends, teachers and other staff there with his aptitude. Zachary is also enrolled in Stanford University's Online High School, a fully accredited program that grants diplomas to seventh through 12th grade students around the world. "It's a great opportunity," he said. "Through the school I can sign up for more advanced classes, such as biology, which I normally couldn't take until ninth grade, or quantum physics."

Language is obviously Zachary's forte, and he's especially fond of French. "I like French best," he confirmed. "It's the most beautiful language there is. And I love the culture and history of France. I guess you could call me a Francophile. I don't know where the attraction to the language came from, but it always seemed natural to me. I started learning to speak French at about age 9 or 10." Zachary leaves in the dust many adults who visit Paris, brushing up on just enough of the native language to order

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dinner or buy souvenirs. This teenager can carry on full-scale conversations in French, discussing politics and art, and he understands the nuances of the language that many never absorb.

But learning languages isn't all roses. Zachary thinks German is the most difficult language he has attempted. "It's more intricate than others," he said. "And the correct delivery is hard to get. It's a very assertive style of speaking." From a historical perspective, Latin is most intriguing. "It may be a dead language, but it's exciting to learn, and to see how many familiar words and phrases originated in Latin."

Zachary's motivation to learn foreign languages is not to astonish his classmates with his prowess or to compete with others intellectually. He enjoys the task of challenging himself to accomplish goals he has set. "There's a sense of satisfaction in completing something you thought you might not be able to do," he said. "It's the same as athletes pushing themselves, so it is very gratifying."

Although the credits Zachary earns through the Stanford curriculum are not

transferrable to his classes at Ennis Junior High, the young man is far from discouraged. "It doesn't matter that I can't use the credits," he said. "It's the experience and the learning that matters, and they will help me in my education here and down the road."

Zachary enjoys campus life, and while he admits to being more focused on studying than many of his classmates, he isn't treated differently for his concentration on academia. "Ennis is big on athletics," he admitted. "But there's a lot of support for kids interested in English and other subjects. I don't feel left out or that I'm



missing out on anything by paying more attention to school than to extracurricular activities." He has many friends, both among fellow students and academics who admire his devotion to self-education. He singles out his English teacher, Virginia Phillips, for

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inspiring him in his studies. "She's a great educator," Zachary said. "Mrs. Phillips has been a teacher for 40 years, and I respect her dedication to, and understanding of, English."

Apart from improving his grasp of foreign languages, he enjoys such subjects as science and psychology. "I really find medicine an interesting area, and I might go into anesthesiology," Zachary said. It wouldn't be mandatory for him to speak other languages in that field, but he points out that the ability would be very helpful if he decided to join the Peace Corps or volunteered for international medical aid missions.

Psychology captivates Zachary because of its exploration of the meaning behind certain behaviors and idiosyncratic character traits. He is also a self-described techie, enjoying all things computer-oriented. He may consider a position in software development after college. In fact, he is already working in the sphere as an intern with Apple. "I help sort 'app' proposals," Zachary explained. "There are 10,000 or more apps submitted for approval by Apple every week and interns like me help streamline the procedure by making sure all requirements are met." He isn't certain if it's a career path he will follow but admits to being fascinated by the possibilities of a market that's increasingly geared to other nations. "It would give me an edge in that profession to speak several languages," he said. "Asia is a huge market now, and Japanese would be an interesting language to learn."

Harvard University would also be a short cut to success, and the Ennis prodigy hopes to attend the famed Ivy League school. "May as well shoot for the top!" he laughed. "But at whichever college I pick, I will probably pursue an MBA degree which would be a good foundation for whatever else I decide to do."

For the time being Zachary looks forward to becoming more and more adept at the languages he loves through the Stanford program, gaining hands-on technical proficiency at Apple and even enjoying some down time. "I have a great support system and love Ennis, even if sometimes life here can be routine," he said. "I love my family and friends and know wherever I go from here they will be in my corner." **NOW**



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European Details

— By Sandra Strong

It may very well have been love at first sight for Mike and Ivonne Ayrelan, but the language barrier they shared still brings back memories that make them smile. “When we were dating, we’d each carry our own copy of a Spanish/English dictionary everywhere,” Mike recalled. “I was trying to speak Spanish, while Ivonne was learning English.” Ivonne still has letters Mike tried to write in Spanish to her, and when she mentions them, they both look at one another with a grin that speaks volumes of the love they still share today.

The couple will celebrate 11 years of marriage on October 14. They have been through so much since they exchanged their wedding vows. Mike spent 14 years in the U.S. Army prior to his retirement as a staff sergeant on January 27, 2012, dictated by the events of what Mike refers to as the Battle of Donkey





AT HOME WITH *Mike and Ivonne Ayrelan*

Island. "I was wounded while I was in Iraq," he stated, pulling up his sleeve to gently rub the scar on his forearm. "I was with the first infantry division. I took seven bullets, but only two went right through me. Another bullet got me in the thigh. The body armor saved my life." One of the five remaining bullets went completely through Mike's helmet, without injury, while his lost right index finger is a result of the bullet he took in the arm. Mike wasn't able to call Ivonne until the following day, and he still admits that was the longest wait ever. When he finally heard her voice, he explained all that had happened. "I told her I had been shot a couple times," he recalled.

While Mike was actively on duty, Ivonne stayed with her family. "2008 was a very good year," Ivonne shared, in her beautiful Spanish accent. "Mike came home in 2008. We celebrated our eighth wedding anniversary in 2008. We bought our home in 2008. Madelynn was born on November 8, 2008, at 8:00 p.m. She weighed 8 pounds. Everything was eight."

The space they share with Madelynn, now 3, and Kaleb, 2, is home to a closely knit family, memories from Mike's time in the military and the memorabilia of his

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Mike explained. "We added antique ceiling fans, molding, French doors and a bay window. We were able to repurpose lots of the old wood from the beauty shop that was attached to the rear of the home when I reframed the windows. What was old to the sellers became new to us." Each item

European travels. Mike is not sure exactly when his love for antiques began, but that love is evident throughout the three-bedroom, two-and-a-half-bath home. The home was built in 1958, but Mike and Ivonne lovingly refer to it as a "continual work in progress."

Prior to moving into the home, the couple spent six months remodeling specific areas to make it their own. "The floors are now hardwood throughout,"

that has been changed, added or restored is a result of Mike's handiwork and his eye for detail. "I used the trial-and-error method," Mike admitted. "I've learned things from talking to other people and from working with Ivonne's brothers whenever I was home on leave."

Thankfully, all Mike's memories are not centered on the event that brought his long military career to an end. His good memories are found throughout

the home in antique furniture, artwork, glassware and chandeliers. "Several of our favorite pieces are from Germany. I left with two duffel bags, and came home with 5,000 pounds or more," he laughed. "Most are European, but we've mixed in a few American pieces, too."

One of the couple's most favored pieces is the Hunter's Cabinet that dates back to the early 1860s. The ornate china cabinet found its new home in the formal dining room, along with a clock that dates back to 1880. The regal table setting in place on the dining table features one of many epergnes. As defined by the Britannica Online Encyclopedia, an epergne is a centerpiece





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dating back to the early 1700s, usually of silver, that generally sits on four feet supporting a central bowl and four or more dishes held by radiating branches and used to serve pickles, fruits, nuts, sweetmeats and other small items. Epergnes have additional holders for candles, casters and cruets. They define unique elegance for Mike and Ivonne. "Back in the day, they were a status symbol to those who were rich enough to own them," Mike explained. "We collect them for their beauty."

Chandeliers are the constant throughout the home. Mike's love for them began when he started frequenting flea markets in Europe. "I never buy brand new," he confessed. "I have bought new crystals so I can mix and match." There isn't a single room in the home that doesn't boast of at least one of Mike's creations. They not only hang from the ceiling in the entry hall, master bathroom and kitchen, but they are also found atop many of the antique pieces, bringing the home together in an exquisite, yet peaceful harmony. "I buy those that need TLC," Mike admitted. "Refurbishing them is relaxing, and I find great pleasure in redoing them to Ivonne's specifications."

The comment may have been shared in jest, but many of Ivonne's ideas can be found in the chandeliers. "I wanted the overhead lighting in the kitchen," Ivonne confessed, "but it was too big."

"I solved that," Mike added, explaining that the kitchen lighting was his first brand new purchase. "The lamp was too long, so I cut the ceiling out to accommodate its size. Colorful Swarovski crystals are found in many of the

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chandeliers I've refurbished, because that's what Ivonne wanted."

"Now we're all happy," she mused.

New antique finds are added to the home on a regular basis thanks to the Ennis Auction House. The desk in a corner of the living room is one of Ivonne's favorite Ennis finds. "It's old and pretty, beautifully carved," Mike said. "She fell in love with it." The dresser, which was purchased in Germany, is found in the master bedroom. Back in 1910, it was probably used for lingerie, but the dresser holds Ivonne's large purse collection today. They also enjoy collecting oil lamps, salt and pepper shakers, salt dips, teapot warmers, shot glasses, ashtrays, crystal cigarette boxes and framed photographs of places they've seen thus far.

Mike and Ivonne's home could be considered an antique museum, but Ivonne has made it conducive to children, entertaining and pure family fun. They agree that Ennis is home. "It's a great place to raise the children," Mike stated, "and it's also a great place to find the antiques we love." **NOW**

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To Eat WELL

— By Janice C. Johnson

Like many college freshmen, Helen Baumgartner enjoyed most of her courses and merely tolerated a few. Less typical of a freshman is the confident focus she shows when talking about her education and career plans. Always fond of baking and cooking, Helen began her training as a chef the summer before her senior year at Ennis High School by taking college courses at El Centro College in Dallas. It was a nutrition class, at the University of North Texas, however, which proved to be a turning point. "I fell in love with the science of dietetics," she said. "It's so cool how it works; how the body reacts to different nutrients."

Not only did the subject fascinate her, but she also realized its value in helping people. As she pointed out, “People don’t really need restaurants to be healthy, but they need someone who can help them make wise choices; someone who knows the science behind it.”

Helen applied and was accepted to the University of North Texas (UNT) in Denton. There, nutrition courses are found only in the College of Merchandising, Hospitality and Tourism, which forms a pretty big umbrella. “There are lots of directions you can



go,” Helen acknowledged. She declared “hospitality management” as her major and jumped right into working on a Bachelor of Science degree.

Rerouting her education plans did not faze Helen. After all, it reflected not so much a “change” in her goals as a way of fine-tuning them. She still intends to work with food, but as a dietician, as well as a chef.

Helen cannot remember a time when she wasn’t cooking. “I’ve just always cooked with my mom in the kitchen,” she said. “The first big thing I made was a cake for a Band Boosters cake auction.” From that small start, Helen has since gained a reputation as a cake artist.

As she learned more about cooking, she began to experiment with her own recipes. Her single favorite dish is a sauté of chicken with onion, rosemary and a balsamic vinaigrette. “My older brother especially likes it,” she said. “We call it



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Helen Chicken, sort of as a joke.”

But no cook is immune to the occasional flop. Helen’s most spectacular kitchen disaster happened long ago, before she understood how to use a candy thermometer. “I kept cooking and cooking the candy, but it just wasn’t



At El Centro College making pasta.

reaching the right temperature. I thought the thermometer was not working. So I turned off the stove and called my mom. “As a child, I didn’t know you were supposed to keep the thermometer in the pan. I was putting it in only occasionally to take its temperature,” she said shaking her head. “Five or 10 minutes later, the candy was a rock.”

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Errors like that are certainly rare now. Helen excels in her food preparation courses, and throws herself wholeheartedly into all her work. Last semester she took 15 credit hours of coursework. "It was enough to keep me challenged," she said. Taking two



courses online gave her schedule extra flexibility. She finds both challenge and support in working at the university level.

Because UNT does not offer a professional nutrition program, Helen will have to go beyond her bachelor's degree to earn her certification for dietetics. "My current major is a good basis, but I will also need to earn an associate's or master's degree in nutrition at another college," she explained.

One drawback of her major is that the degree plan calls for courses like financial accounting and foundations

of international travel and tourism, alongside nutrition and food preparation. While she isn't fond of the courses that are unrelated to her career goals, Helen keeps a philosophical attitude about it. "They aren't fun, but they're necessary. Besides, those will be good skills to have for life in general." Meanwhile she strategically chooses her electives to



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best fit her future plans and to fulfill the requirements for her minor.

Helen's plans, of course, focus on clinical or private chef work rather than preparation of the popular, but unhealthy dishes. However, she does not quite rule out the possibility of entering the



hospitality industry at some point. Her nutrition training will be a big part of any plans she makes. "If I were to open a restaurant," she said, "I would make everything healthful, using whole grains, lean meats, fresh fruits and vegetables to make visually appealing and delicious meals."

As Helen prepares to take her education out of the classroom and into real life, she looks forward to more hands-on training. She will spend one semester of her junior year working at The Club at Gateway. This on-campus, student-run restaurant doubles as a laboratory. There, Helen and her fellow students will experience both the serving and cooking ends of the foodservice industry. She also hopes for an opportunity to experience working in a clinical situation to see if that is a direction she wants to go. "A dream job would be to become a personal chef for someone where I could customize meals to fit their personal needs," she shared.

Helen has adjusted her plans as she gains new experience and knowledge. But her purpose, helping people to eat well, remains clear. "One of my favorite quotations is, 'The food you eat can be either the safest and most powerful form of medicine or the slowest form of poison.'" **NOW**

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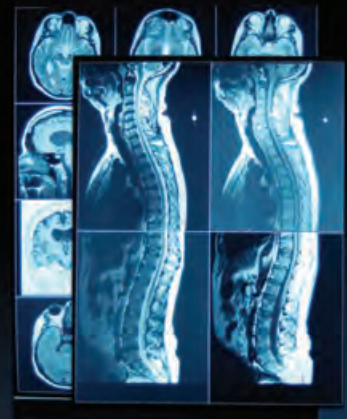
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Sharon Wolfe, director of nurses, and Brent Glover, administration, meet the needs of the residents at Ennis Care Center, which has become a home away from home for many.



Called to Care

Ennis Care Center is striving for perfection, but accepting excellence. — By Sandra Strong

“Take care of people, and the rest will take care of itself.” The atmosphere at Ennis Care Center is a testament to this statement made by owner, Tom Scott. The family-oriented nursing and rehabilitation center believes in putting the residents first, while including loved ones in the equation even before admittance. “We are a family taking care of other people’s families,” said Brent Glover, administrator of the facility. “It’s not going to be perfection, but any problem that may arise will be handled when the problem is little, not after it’s grown. At Ennis Care Center, we are always striving for perfection, but we will accept excellence.”

The excellence of which Brent speaks comes only with the help of an educated, caring staff of many. He admits that he couldn’t do it without the tireless efforts of Sharon Wolfe, the

facility’s director of nurses, who also becomes aide, sounding board and confidant when needed. “Our quality of care comes from the stability in leadership,” Brent said, as Sharon smiled in agreement. “Staff must meet the needs of the residents all the time. That goal can only be accomplished with consistent leadership.”

“The direction at the helm must think alike,” Sharon reiterated. “Long-term care is dependent on the organization you work for, and in the way that organization works together as a whole. It involves everyone working toward the same goal.” This philosophy may very well be the reason Ennis Care Center was recently named the only five-star facility of its kind in the Ellis County area by the Center for Medicare Services. “We’ve witnessed, experienced, heard and seen it all,” Sharon added.

"The success comes from being patient and caring. It's about listening to both the staff and the residents."

Brent came to Ennis from the Texas Hill Country in January 2009. The same success he had established at another facility within the company was needed in Ennis. Once the challenge was offered, he wasted little time transferring to Ennis Care Center. "The staff turnover is so great in this area of healthcare," Brent admitted. "My initial goal was to work on staff turnover."

Sharon was born and reared in Ennis. She will celebrate 38-plus years in the field of nursing later this month, with the last 17 spent at Ennis Care Center. She understands how vicious the turnover cycle is. The first year Brent was at the helm, drastic changes were implemented.



The goal for Brent and Sharon was to increase employee morale. Brent, along with the knowledge Sharon had gained from years of experience, accomplished this goal by making his presence known. "He walked the floors and got to know the staff," Sharon explained. "Employee-appreciation events soon followed."

Brent and Sharon are one of the longest running "teams" in nursing and rehabilitation healthcare in Ellis County for one reason — they both have the same goal in mind. It took patience on Brent's part to see that all the ideas of the employees came together for the common good of the whole organization, while Sharon realized whatever they did to boost morale had to be personal to the staff. "Brent gave the employees a voice," Sharon said.

The Ennis Care Center team of many is an example of what Tom said in the very beginning. As they take care of the people — staff and residents alike — the rest is taking care of itself. "Happy employees," Brent and Sharon agreed, "mean happy residents." **NOW**



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1. Take swimming lessons. Statistics show that younger swimmers are typically better than older swimmers. If you are an adult who can't swim, consider a weekend swimming lesson. And if you have a child who has not yet learned to swim, sign them up for lessons as soon as possible. Learning to swim at an early age builds confidence and encourages water safety for a lifetime.

2. Never swim or boat alone. Not only is swimming/boating with a friend more enjoyable, it's also smarter. Having someone there to assist in an emergency could save a life.

3. Install barriers and keep a close eye on children. Children between the ages of 1 and 4, who drown in an at-home pool, are usually under parental supervision and out of sight for less than five minutes. Pool barriers can help restrict access to the pool. It is also important to teach children to ask before going near the water, and to remove pool toys, whenever possible, as they can attract a child's attention and draw them to the water.

4. Do not use air-filled toys as flotation devices. Pool noodles, water wings and blow-up rafts are not designed to be used in place of personal flotation devices. If you are on a boat, or are a new or unsure swimmer in any body of water, be certain to use a U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device.

5. Wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device (PFD) when boating. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 72 percent of boating incidents are drowning incidents, and nine out of 10 people who die from such incidents aren't wearing personal flotation devices. Even if you're a strong swimmer, a PFD is a good idea when on the open water.

6. Know your limits. Swimming can be a lot of fun, but if you're not a strong swimmer, or if you're just learning to swim, don't go in water that's so deep you can't touch the bottom. And don't overdo it or try to keep up with skilled swimmers.

7. Learn CPR. Effective bystander CPR, provided immediately after sudden cardiac arrest, can double or even triple a victim's chance of survival. Need a crash course? Visit redcross.org for course offerings.

8. Don't mix alcohol and water activities. Alcohol use is involved in a large percentage of swimming and boating incidents. Alcohol can dull your judgment, response time, balance and the body's ability to stay warm.

9. Use caution in natural water settings. Statistics show that as people get older, drowning incidents are more likely to occur in natural water settings. Be careful when boating or swimming in these areas. Unexpected rocks, branches, waves or water temperatures can easily take a swimmer or boater by surprise.

10. Pay attention to local weather reports. When at the beach or in natural water areas, pay attention to weather reports and know the color of the flags that warn beachgoers of potential threats. Keep an eye out for dangerous waves, debris and/or rocks.

About 3,500 Americans drown each year, averaging 10 deaths per day. Drowning is the sixth-leading cause of unintentional injury death for people of all ages, and the second-leading cause of death for children ages 1 to 14 years. Many drowning deaths could have been prevented, which is why taking simple precautions, like those listed above, are so important. To learn more about keeping your family safe in the water, visit www.redcross.org, and enter the keywords "water safety." **NOW**

*Becky Lucas, NP
Member of the Medical Staff at Ennis Regional
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Maxed Out on Your IRA and 401(K)? What's the Next Step?

If you are contributing the maximum amount to your 401(k) or other employer-sponsored retirement plan each year, that's good. And if you're also "maxing out" on your Individual Retirement Account (IRA) annually, that's even better. But what then? If you're already fully funding your 401(k) and IRA, can you put away even more for retirement? Should you?

The answer to this last question is almost certainly "yes" — because you could spend a long time in retirement. How long? Consider these statistics from the Society of Actuaries:

- A man who's reached age 65 in good health has a 50 percent chance of living 20 more years and a 25 percent chance of living to age 92.
- A 65-year-old woman has a 50 percent chance of living to age 88 and a 25 percent chance of living to 94.
- There's a 50 percent chance that at least one member of a 65-year-old couple will live to 92 — and there's a 25 percent chance at least one of them will reach age 97.

Because you have a reasonably good chance of spending two, or even three, decades in retirement, you clearly need to accumulate substantial financial resources before you retire. So, if you consistently reach the contribution limits on your 401(k) and IRA, you're making a smart move, as both these vehicles offer the potential for tax-deferred earnings and a variety of investment choices. But if you can still afford to put away more money, or if your income level prevents you from contributing to a Roth IRA, you may want to look at these possibilities:

- **Life Insurance Retirement Plan** — A Life Insurance Retirement Plan (LIRP) is essentially a life insurance policy that can potentially help you generate tax-advantaged income during your retirement

years. Until you begin taking withdrawals, the cash value of your policy has the potential to grow tax deferred. Then, when you retire, you can take tax-free payouts from your principal. (After the entire principal is paid, payouts are treated as loans against the contract.) And your beneficiaries will receive the balance of the death benefit income tax free, minus any loans or loan interest.

- **Annuities** — You might find that a fixed annuity can be an appropriate way to supplement your retirement income. Like a LIRP, a fixed annuity's earnings have the potential to grow on a tax-deferred basis. Also, fixed annuities generally offer some type of guaranteed rate of return over the life of the annuity contract. And perhaps most importantly, you can structure your annuity to provide you with an income stream you can't outlive. (Keep in mind, though, that annuities are generally more appropriate for investors who are at least 45 years old.)

While you can certainly get some key benefits from a LIRP and a fixed annuity, you need to fully understand all aspects of these investment vehicles and make sure they are suitable for your situation and individual needs. Consequently, before investing, consult with a financial professional.

But don't wait too long. By preparing for your retirement well ahead of time, you can boost your chances of enjoying the type of "golden years" lifestyle that you've envisioned. **NOW**

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Jeff Irish is an Edward Jones representative based in Ennis.

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Calendar

AUGUST 2012

All Month

Ennis Public Theatre presents: *The Odd Couple*, 2705 N. Kaufman Street #C. Call (972) 878-7529 for specific dates and show times.

"Don't Call It Courage: The Battle of Fredericksburg," a temporary exhibit of original documents: **Monday-Friday:** 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.; **Saturday:** noon-4:00 p.m., The Pearce Museum in Corsicana. Call (903) 875-7642 or visit www.pearcecollections.us.

August 1-5

National Bikers Roundup: Texas Motorplex, 7500 W. Highway 287. For a daily schedule of events, call (972) 878-2641.

August 6-9

EJHS Volleyball Camp: 10:30 a.m.-noon, EJHS gym.

August 6-10

EHS Lionette Line Camp: 8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., EHS dance studio.

August 11

Wildlife Expo: 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center, 2000 Civic Center Lane. Call (972) 937-8860.

August 24

Varsity Football: 7:30 p.m., away scrimmage game with Weatherford.

August 25

EHS Band Ice Cream Supper Fundraiser: 5:30-8:30 p.m., EHS Bardwell commons and gym.

30th Annual Ennis Chamber of Commerce Auction: doors open: 5:00 p.m.; silent auction: 5:00-9:00 p.m.; dinner: 5:00 p.m.; live auction: 7:30 p.m., Knights of Columbus Hall. Contact the Chamber at (972) 878-2626.

August 27

New school year begins.

August 31

Varsity Football: 7:30 p.m., away game with Burleson Centennial.

September 3

Labor Day, EISD Holiday.

September 7 and 8

Fun Ford Weekend: Texas Motorplex.

September 20-23

27th Annual AAA Texas Fall Nationals: Texas Motorplex.

September 29

Annual Telico Volunteer Fire Department Barn Dance: 4:00 p.m., SPJST Hall, East Highway 34. Fundraiser includes BBQ dinner plates, live and silent auctions, raffle, live music, crafts, games for children, rooster drop and more. Contact Chief Van Fowler at (972) 878-2083.

Ongoing:

Mondays and Wednesdays

Sign Language Class: 4:00-5:15 p.m., Ennis Public Library, 501

W. Ennis Avenue. Classes are free and available for all ages. No sign up required.

Third Tuesdays

Veterans Networking Group: 5:00 p.m., Ryan's Steak House, Hwy. 287 Bypass and 77. Call Mike Lamb at (214) 763-0378.

Thursdays

Chess for Kids: 6:00-7:30 p.m., Ennis Public Library, 501 W. Ennis Avenue, Ennis. Elementary age and above. No sign up required.

Second Thursdays

Mom's Connected: 9:30-11:30 a.m., Tabernacle Baptist Church, 1200 Country Club Rd. Call (972) 875-3861.

Fourth Saturdays

Bristol Opry: 7:00 p.m., featuring local singers and musicians. Sponsored by Bristol Cemetery Association and Caring Hands of Bristol. Contact Jim Gatlin at (972) 846-2211.

Sundays

GriefShare: 2:30-4:00 p.m., Cowboy Church of Ellis County in the sanctuary Youth Inc. room. Call (972) 935-9801 or visit www.cowboychurchofelliscounty.org.

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



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Adam G. Arredondo, M.D.
Pain Management



In The Kitchen With Amber Perez

— *By Sandra Strong*

Amber Perez learned how to cook using the trial-and-error method. “Once I understood certain cooking techniques,” she confessed, “I pretty much stopped using traditional recipes.” Cooking is Amber’s therapy. She forgets the day and concentrates on making a yummy dish for her family. “It’s funny how food — good food,” she stated, “can bring a family together. If cooking was a love language it would be mine!”

Her best dishes seem to come about when she hasn’t been to the store in a while. “I’ll throw things together,” she said. “They end up being a family favorite.” Baking may not be Amber’s specialty, but down-home cooking is what she enjoys most. “It’s that kind of cooking,” she shared, “that makes you think of home.” **NOW**

Taco Casserole

- 2 lbs. chicken breast or ground beef**
- 2 pkgs. taco seasoning**
- 2 10-oz. cans Ro-Tel, drain only one**
- 6 10.5-oz. cans Campbell’s Fiesta Cheese soup**
- 1 15-oz. can Ranch Style beans, any flavor**
- 1 15.25-oz. can corn, drained**
- 1 red onion, diced**
- 4 cups sharp cheddar cheese, shredded (divided use)**
- 2 lb. bag tortilla chips**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 425 F Cook meat; drain fat. Place in large mixing bowl.
- 2.** Add taco seasoning, Ro-Tel, soup, beans, corn, onion and 2 cups cheddar cheese. Mix well.
- 3.** Lightly coat the bottom of a 12x16-inch pan with taco mixture. Add chips evenly over taco mixture. Add remaining taco mixture over chips. Sprinkle remaining cheddar cheese on top.

- 4.** Bake 35-45 minutes or until cheese is a golden brown.

Herb Beef Stew

- 2 lbs. beef tips**
- 6 cups water**
- 2 Tbsp. coarse Kosher salt**
- 1 Tbsp. pepper**
- 1/2 tsp. paprika**
- 1/2 tsp. onion powder**
- 1 tsp. thyme**
- 1 tsp. rosemary**
- 2 tomato bouillon cubes**
- 1 large yellow onion, chopped**
- 3 celery stalks, chopped**
- 2 cups baby carrots, chopped**
- 10 size B red potatoes, unpeeled and cut in halves**
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream**

- 1.** Brown beef in skillet. Place in water in 4-quart stock pot. Add salt, pepper, paprika, onion powder, thyme, rosemary and bullion. Bring to a boil; cover and continue to

simmer over low heat for 3 hours.

- 2.** Add onion, celery and carrots to stew. Raise the cooking temperature to medium. Cover; cook for 10 minutes. Add potatoes; cook for 10 to 15 additional minutes or until potatoes are tender.
- 3.** Remove from heat. Add cream to stew mix before serving.

Chocolate Steam Cake

- 1 3/4 cups self-rising flour**
- 1 3/4 cups brown sugar**
- 3/4 cup sugar**
- 1 1/2 tsp. baking soda**
- 1 12-oz. bag white chocolate chips**
- 1 12-oz. bag semi-sweet chocolate chips**
- 1 1/2 sticks butter, softened**
- 1 egg**
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 350 F Mix all dry ingredients together. Add the 3 remaining ingredients; mixing together until a dough forms.
- 2.** Line cookie sheet with parchment paper. Scoop 1/4 cup of dough, rounding it into a ball.
- 3.** Place the balls on the cookie sheet 2-inches apart. Bake for 10 minutes.

Autumn Pear Cobbler

- 6 pears, skinned and sliced**
- 1 Tbsp. water**
- 2 cups sugar (divided use)**
- 1/4 tsp. ground cloves**
- 1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon**
- 2 cups self-rising flour**
- 1 1/2 cups milk**
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract**
- 1 stick butter**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 350 F Place pears, water, 1 cup sugar, cloves and cinnamon in skillet over medium heat. Cook for 10 minutes until pears are soft and syrup is thickened. Remove from heat.
- 2.** In mixing bowl, add flour, milk, remaining sugar and vanilla. Wisk for 2 minutes until mixture is smooth; set aside.
- 3.** Place butter in a 9x13-inch cooking dish. Put dish in the oven allowing butter to melt. Remove from oven.
- 4.** Add flour mixture evenly over the melted butter. Evenly spoon pears and syrup over the flour mixture. Place back into the oven; cook for 30-40 minutes or until crust is a golden brown.

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