

A photograph of two young boys on a swing set in a backyard. The boy in the background is wearing an orange shirt and is smiling while holding the blue rope of a swing. The boy in the foreground is wearing a blue polo shirt and is also smiling, looking towards the camera. They are sitting on a black horse-shaped swing. The background shows a wooden fence and green grass.

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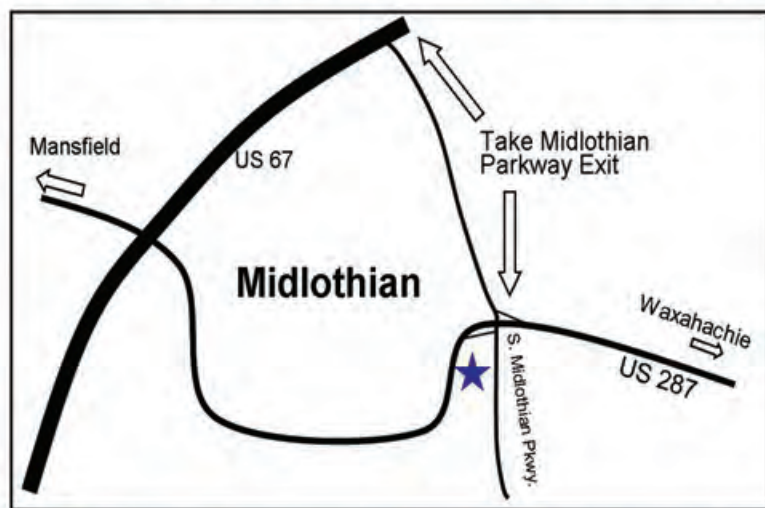


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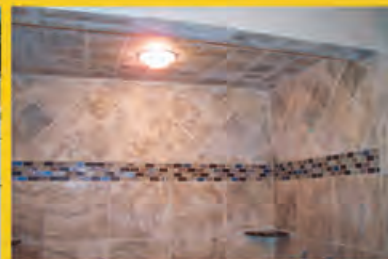
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## ON THE COVER



*Seth and Clark Roberts enjoy a romp in their backyard.*

*Photo by Opaque Visuals.*

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## Editor's Note

*Hello, Midlothian!*

August, like the sand in an hourglass, signals the beginning of the end of summer. But, before you get too sad, there is still plenty of time left for slices of red, juicy watermelon on a hot afternoon and flagging down the ice cream man before you get too deep in back-to-school shopping. I have many fond memories of summers that were spent playing outside with friends as we captured fireflies in jars, worried tadpoles in the creek and picked wild

blackberries from the side of a country road. Even though kids today do not have the freedom to roam as we did, there are still many opportunities for exploration and some degree of independence. Kids, why not put down your cell phones and iPads and enjoy the summer day? There is just no telling what memory treasures you'll find!

*Betty*

Betty Tryon  
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# Relaxing GETAWAY

— By Betty Tryon

*Yay! It is summertime and summer camps are revved up. Millions of children cannot wait to get there and have fun, fun, fun! The promise of endless hours of carefree play, the opportunity of participating in challenging sports and enjoying the security of always having a playmate nearby heighten the anticipation. One little boy, however, while enjoying the experience of camp, became fascinated with the camp workers. He looked at them and thought, Someday, I'm going to work on staff here.*

**“I just thought it would be a neat summer job, never knowing it would lead to a career.”**





John Horton, executive director for Salvation Army Hoblitzelle Camp and Conference Center determined at a young age that is what he wanted to do for the rest of his life. “My dad was a Baptist pastor, and we attended many conferences during the summers. There was one in Glorieta, New Mexico, and one in Ridgecrest, North Carolina, where we went back and forth for summer conferences. I wanted to work for Glorieta as part of their summer staff. So in 1974, between my junior and senior year of high school, I started working for them, and I’ve been at it ever since. I just thought it would be a neat summer job, never knowing it would lead to a career. I started in food service at the camp and slowly worked my way up. There was one time when I went for an assistant supervisor position, and I didn’t get it,” he laughed. “I was a little hurt, but over time it worked out.”

John’s major in college was in mass communications, radio and TV production, and his minor was in English and management. “In my mind, I thought I would go to school for electrical engineering, but the Lord had other things in store for me,” he shared. Considering what he studied to become, he smiled when recalling the only television work he has done was some on-air interviews in Glorieta, when the camp hosted some evacuees

from a wildfire in New Mexico.

John worked for 20-plus years at Glorieta. Before coming to Hoblitzelle, he was at a Baptist Conference Center in Alabama. When considering the job here in Midlothian, he made inquiries about the camp itself. “We are the Texas division, which is part of the Southern territory of the Salvation Army. This is the largest Salvation Army camp. We are proud of what it has here,” he stated.

Camp Hoblitzelle is a camp and conference center that has been in operation since 1956. It is owned by the Salvation Army for Salvation Army summer camps and other events specific to that organization. They wanted to have a location where children and leaders would have a special place to come relax and renew themselves. “Get away to get in touch” is the mission statement for this camp, which is open year-round for guest groups.

“That’s our purpose for existing,” John said. “Beyond that, we rent our facilities primarily to not-for-profit groups for retreats, conferences, scout meets, churches and school groups. We have a capacity of hosting 600-650 people, depending on how friendly people are,” he laughed. “For example, the Hacienda hotel has 10 rooms with 10 king-size beds, so you might have 10 people in there, or with couples, you might have 20. That is where the numbers vary sometimes.”

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group. Summer camps with kids are typically housed in the dorms with separate counselor rooms that can provide some privacy. Adults usually do not prefer the more austere style of the dorms. The hotels are more suited for them. "The hotel space has two full-size beds and a twin-size bed and is more conducive to families. Or, sometimes we have ladies groups who want to be in a hotel-like space without sharing a bed. Our most prestigious hotel, the Hacienda, is the only hotel that has a TV in each room," John explained.

For the last eight years, John has been with Hoblitzelle. The camp recently underwent a major building project. The old conference center was replaced with a larger facility that is as functional as it is beautiful. Conference rooms are available to accommodate any group size. There are huge fireplaces with a decor that showcases a decidedly western theme with an emphasis on Texas. The accent pieces and works of art are quite beautiful.

The camp hosts about 17,000 to 18,000 guests a year. It takes a tremendous amount of organization to host that many people and see to their comfort. For John, it has become second nature for him, because he has done it for so long. "It is good to be of service to people," he said. "We may be helping them to have the right kind of meeting space, the right kind of lodging, the right kind of food service and making sure





their whole event comes together. In my role as director, I may not always be directly involved in those activities, but I am helping others. Part of my service is to my staff, to help them accomplish what they need to for our guests.”

Midlothian can be proud that it is the location of the 1,000-acre camp and conference center with the adjacent Hi View Ranch, which the Salvation Army also owns. The campsite sports a large outdoor pavilion, a music conservatory building, a clinic for summer camps, in addition to a chapel that seats 650 people. Groups that attend the campground provide their own agenda and programming. “We are just the hosting facility,” John offered, “and we try to do that with good hospitality. There are some recreation activities we



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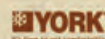
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Rarely, the campgrounds are open to people who find themselves in extreme, extenuating circumstances. During the disasters of Katrina and Rita, Hoblitzelle was called upon to provide shelter for some of the victims, if possible. “We look at our bookings and ask ourselves if we can help without greatly affecting those people we already have booked. But, if something on the magnitude of Katrina happens, then certainly some of our groups are open to saying that is a more important need. Providing emergency service is not our primary service, but if we need to then, yes.

“I have been doing this kind of thing all my life,” John shared. “My kind of thing is retreat and conference center management, with a Christian perspective. I feel a calling to this Christian ministry, and this is the way I express it.” **NOW**



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# OTHER TANGIBLES

— By Alex Allred

*Courtney Tobolka likes the chatter, while Faith Hardin is the strong, more silent type. Together, Courtney and Faith make for the perfect combination on and off the volleyball court. “They were just what we were looking for,” said Coach Hank Moore of Southwestern Assemblies of God University of his two new recruits.*

Faith met her future college coach when she joined the Ellis County Juniors, a competitive volleyball team, four years ago. By her sophomore year in high school, “she was 6 feet,” Coach Moore said. Aggressive, strong and fearless, Faith was a stand out. “She is focused, very business-like in the way she plays. You almost have to cut up with her a little bit to get her to lighten up. No one is harder on her than she is.”

One year later, Courtney joined the Ellis County Juniors.





"With that one," Coach Moore said, "the play never ends. You might think the play is over, but then she dives in where most can't. She never gives up."

While Faith and Courtney are undeniably good athletes with never-say-never attitudes, there are hundreds of other athletes just as good. What coaches look for is something special, something extraordinary that sets one particular athlete apart from the others. For Coach Moore, he got that extra something in a set. "I was coaching them a year before it all happened that spring and then, literally, right before school started."

"My parents got a divorce," Courtney said. "I was angry and disappointed. Sometimes, I would just walk up into the stands and cry." She even considered quitting the sport she loved so much, "but I had my best friends on my team. They knew all about it and would support me."

Specifically, Faith supported her, and their coach made note of it. "Faith is the peacemaker," Coach Moore said.



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"If there is tension, she always takes the higher road, but if there is a problem, she will try to fix it. Not everyone in team sports is selfless, but Faith is the one who brings about peace."

In the case of her friend, nothing could be fixed, but Faith could do what she does best. "It's about supporting each other. I like to cheer on my teammates," she said, smiling. "We're a team on and off the court."

"You know, SAGU is a privately funded Christian college," Coach Moore said. "The No. 1 thing we look for in a student or student athlete is their relationship with Christ. They're both good athletes, but we look at other tangibles. To play college sports is very demanding academically. We're on the road quite a bit."

Academic success is a must, but so is leadership. As the coach talks about a student's "walk with Christ," he discusses the expectations for the "complete" student. As athletes, "both will be able to compete for playing time, which is rare for an incoming freshman." But the scholarship means more than scoring points. "We are looking for leaders in the community, role models, people who will make a difference."

For Faith and Courtney, they literally give blood, sweat and tears to their teammates and their coaches on the court. Known for their fearless dives, attack blocks and spikes, it is their performances off court that appear to be effortless. "It's important to be a hard

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worker but also be coachable, be a team player and a team leader,” said Faith, All District Academic, All State Academic, First Team All District champion in volleyball for the state of Texas.

“And to be a role model,” said Courtney, a Second Team All District champion and co-captain with Faith for the Midlothian Panthers varsity squad.

In fact, it is here, this “other tangible,” where the girls most shine. While Faith plays the role of peacemaker, Courtney is very open about overcoming obstacles, working for what you want and surviving divorce. “You can’t keep things bottled up,” she said, noting that if she is open



about what she went through, she could be helping someone else who is quietly suffering. “It’s about being strong, having a positive attitude. Look where it’s gotten me. I’m proud! I’m proud of what I have been able to do.”

This mantra was adopted by both athletes while playing for head volleyball coach, Rhonda Currey, at Midlothian High School. “It’s been amazing to watch them grow into amazing young ladies and leaders,” Coach Currey said. While Courtney and Faith learned very specific skill sets with their club team, Coach Currey gave them an added responsibility. “We, the coaching staff, included the girls in many of our decisions, and they offered great input. They were a good sounding board for the coaching staff,



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and they really set a precedent for the other kids," she said. These character qualities made it easy to name Courtney and Faith as captains to the team.

"They both really put up with a lot of trials, both physical and emotional, yet both persevered." Both had to sit on the bench, giving up their starting positions and cheer on their team while they healed from back, ankle and head injuries. "That's a very hard transition, but neither one had a pity party. They both immediately shifted into a new role of leader."

In turn, "this was probably the least drama-filled year of volleyball I've ever had," Coach Currey laughed. After 16 years of coaching girl's volleyball, she attributes such a wonderful year to the leadership style of Faith and Courtney. "They set examples. They made others want to follow them. They didn't just tell people what to do, but they did it themselves."

When the season came to an end and SAGU had athletic scholarships available, it was an easy decision for Coach Moore. He knew how competitive and talented both Courtney and Faith are. Again, there are many other such athletes. But those other tangibles, being strong in character and faith, in commitment and heart, are a rarity not to be ignored. "Sport is a lot like life," Coach Moore said. "You have to be able to communicate with those around you, both in words and action."

Courtney, by her own admission, will talk the entire game, telling people where to stand. "Everyone has a role on the team," Courtney said. "You just have to figure out who is best for what."

"I'm good at play calling," Faith laughed. Her instructions are short and to the point. "It's about being a team, being there for each other and believing in each other," she added. As co-captains, their leadership styles are very different, but on or off the court, they are unstoppable.

"I've always told them that doing things the right way isn't always the easiest way," Coach Currey said. The tasks that seem the smallest and most tedious can often be the most important. "Little things can lead to big changes." There is a saying Coach Currey believes may be cliché, but is accurate nonetheless: It is not if you win, but how you play the game. **NOW**



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# Refined by Fire

— By Zachary R. Urquhart

*When Doug and Erin Roberts were heading to the store, they heard the beep of the smoke detector. So, they added batteries to the list in their head. But when Erin stepped closer to double check the smoke detector, she smelled smoke, and one of the most memorable days in their lives took shape. The fire that consumed their house took hold of all but the foundation and bricks. Now, two years later, Doug and Erin have seen their home and their lives refined by fire.*

AT HOME WITH  
**Doug & Erin Roberts**

Doug and Erin met in Rockdale, Texas, in April 2002. Neither of them was all that excited about the blind date a mutual






friend decided to set up. "I think I had mowed a yard that day," Doug said, "and didn't even shower afterward." Erin was similarly disinterested, but by August, the two were engaged to be married.

They wed in June 2003 and moved to the area. "I went to Midlothian High School, so we knew we wanted to move here," Erin explained. With Doug in school and Erin teaching in Alvarado, Venus was a good fit both for location and financial reasons. But pretty soon, they decided they wanted to move to Midlothian. "Venus was great for a while," Erin explained, "but we were ready to get closer to our family and our friends. We are involved at the Midlothian Bible Church [MBC], so we wanted to be in town." They moved to the neighborhood near the high school in July 2007.

Doug and Erin have two children. Seth is 7, and Clark, who was born a few months after they moved to Midlothian, is almost 6. Erin only taught one more year after moving, though she is now back in education, working at J.R. Irvin Elementary. Doug finished school and works as an investment banker in Fort Worth. For several years after moving, the family lived what seemed like the American Dream. But on August 13, 2011, their dream life went up in flames.

Erin remembers it being a lazy morning. "We usually get up and go to the grocery store. But that Saturday, we slept in and cooked a nice breakfast. We were just getting ready to go shopping when we realized what was happening." Once they figured out there was a fire in the house, they went next door and called the fire department. Then they waited, in the rain. "One of the lasting effects has been that Clark really hates the rain," Erin said. "We still have to pray him through storms, because he associates them with the fire."



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The fire, which started in the walls near the boys' bedrooms, did enough damage that the house had to be entirely gutted. In their disbelief, Doug and Erin began mentally preparing for what would come next. "My first thought was that we would be cleaning our house for weeks," Doug recalled. "I wasn't thinking about how bad it actually was." Though their belongings and house would eventually be all but totaled, Doug and Erin were blessed by an outpouring from their church family that day.

Once they had firefighters on the way, Erin began calling friends and family. Within a few hours, there were several dozen volunteers on hand, taking out furniture and doing their best to restore what they could. "We were amazed at all the people who came to help out. We didn't know what was going to happen with all of our stuff, and our

church family was just here clearing and cleaning," Erin recalled. "There is a picture from that day where there are probably 60 people. It's amazing."

The family had to move into a rental property for several months while their home was being rebuilt. Once again, they felt the love of their friends in a time of need. "We had people bringing stuff we



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could use right away,” Doug said. “We are still using some of what people donated while we were in transition.” They got furniture, toys and even clothes. “One of our friends found out the Lancaster’s assistant police chief had a bunch of suits he didn’t need anymore,” Doug added. “Of course, they were a perfect fit.” And on November 11, 2011, Doug and Erin were able to move back into their new and improved, home sweet home.




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Losing their home was a great tragedy, but Doug and Erin were able to find blessing in the situation. “It ended up being fun getting to change some of the little quirks in the house,” Erin admitted. “It was cool getting to pick out stuff like chandeliers.” Though many of the changes were cosmetic, Erin was able to make some important changes. “I had wanted to make some changes to my kitchen,” she admitted, “so I lowered the bar and raised the cabinets, giving myself more space when I cook.” They also added raised baseboards, crown molding and a pocket door.

They have moved things around in the house as well, owing to the fact that with new belongings, they are getting to use their space in different ways. Doug





took some of the original cabinets that were salvaged and put them in the garage. He also upgraded the media room in more ways than one. He was able to replace both their television and entertainment center with larger versions. "I have a special chair that no one else can use," Doug added with a smile. Doug and Erin also decided to take out their formal guest room in favor of work space. "We realized a room that was being used twice a year didn't make sense. So we changed it into a kid's room and made the extra bedroom into an office and hobby room."

While they love the changes they were able to make, Doug and Erin are grateful they were able to keep a few items that survived the fire. "Because of the people coming and helping," Erin explained, "we still have about a dozen things. Our China cabinet with all of our China survived, thanks to some tough cleaning by our friends. We have stuff solely because our church family was so diligent."

Having lived through this life moment, the family has been affected in big ways. They were humbled by the help they got from friends and family. "Sometimes, it was hard accepting all of the help from everyone," Doug admitted. Two years later, they use the fire as a reference point when reminiscing on family moments. They learned some valuable lessons from the ordeal. "It made us realize what we could do without," Doug shared. When they look back, Doug and Erin know they are blessed to have come through the fire stronger than ever. **NOW**



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*Dr. Jerome Stewart, Superintendent*



## First Day of Class Monday, August 26, 2013

Elementary: 7:45 a.m. - 2:45 p.m.

Middle School: 8:35 a.m. - 3:40 p.m.

High School: 8:55 a.m. - 3:55 p.m.

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Midlothian Heritage High School (MHHS) will open for the 2014-15 school year, and the first class of students will be all of the District's first-time ninth graders. Community members can view the bond financial reports, construction photos and learn more about future grade configurations on the MHHS website, MISD bond project website and Dr. Stewart's blog [drjstewart.wordpress.com](http://drjstewart.wordpress.com).

According to the City of Midlothian, the FM 1387 road project (to straighten out sharp curve) will be substantially completed by the time MHHS opens in 2014.

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Ninety students explored crafts, music, science and technology while at the 2nd annual Midlothian ISD A.C.E. summer camp.

## Elementary Meet-the-Teacher August 22, 2013

<b>Baxter Elementary</b> 5:30-6:15 p.m. PreK - 2nd 6:00-6:45 p.m. 3rd - 5th	<b>LaRue Miller Elementary</b> 5:30-6:15 p.m. Head Start - 2nd 6:15-7:00 p.m. 3rd - 5th
<b>Irvin Elementary</b> 6:30-7:30 p.m. K - 5th	<b>Mt. Peak Elementary</b> 6:30-7:30 p.m. PreK - 5th
<b>Longbranch Elementary</b> 5:30-6:15 p.m. K - 2nd 6:15-7:00 p.m. 3rd - 5th	<b>Vitovsky Elementary</b> 6:30-7:30 p.m. PreK - 5th

## Frank Seale Middle School Orientation & Schedules

August 12	10 a.m.-12 p.m. CUB Camp
	6:00-7:30 p.m. 6th Grade Orientation
August 13	8:00-4:00 p.m. 7th Grade; Pick Up Schedule
August 14	8:00-4:00 p.m. 8th Grade; Pick Up Schedule
September 3	6:30-7:30 p.m. Meet-the-Teacher

## Walnut Grove Middle School Orientation & Schedules

August 15	6:30-7:30 p.m. 6th Grade Orientation
August 19	10 a.m.-12 p.m. CAT Camp
	6:30-7:30 p.m. 7th Grade Orientation
August 20	6:30-7:30 p.m. 8th Grade Orientation
September 5	6:30-8 p.m. Meet-the-Teacher

## Midlothian High School Orientation & Schedules

August 14, Seniors 9 a.m., Juniors 11 a.m., Sophomores 1 p.m.  
August 19, 2-5 p.m. PANTHER Camp for 9th graders  
August 19-23, 9-12 p.m. Parking permits sold in cafeteria

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**FSMS:** Coy Tipton, principal; Brian Garrison and Amanda Rodgers, assistant principals

**MHS:** Zac Oldham, associate principal; Cesar Condarco and Steve Hammons, assistant principals

**MHHS:** Krista Tipton, principal

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# MANLY MAN

— By Alex Allred

*The joke goes that Garland Owensby had a very manly father who did construction, loved sports and was very rough and tough. “And I was in musical theater wearing tights,” Garland said. As a kid growing up in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, “the mushroom capital of the world,” Garland was not interested in sports. With a town steeped in history, including important ties to the American Revolution and the Underground Railroad, he was a boy exposed to history and the arts. He was a boy who loved to talk, to entertain and help other people.*

“I wasn’t the tallest, the smartest or the fastest, but I was funny.”





When Garland was in the eighth grade, a teacher told him he would make a good pastor, "and that was really the first time anyone ever told me I would be good at something," he said. Until that time, Garland really did not know what his talent was. That same year, his school hosted a talent show, and Garland got involved. "It was a Neanderthal talent show," he laughed. "Somehow, I became the MC, and I was really good. I thought, *Yes! I can do this!* I wasn't the tallest, the smartest or the fastest, but I was funny."

Garland was not the class clown, but he was the class comedian with a mission. He was a comedian who one day wanted to go on a mission. It was a conundrum. Could he preach and tell jokes? Was a preacher allowed to be funny? Could a comedian tell religious jokes? Throughout high school, Garland wrestled with what he wanted to do most in life. "The way I saw it," he said, "it was performing arts or ministry." It was one or the other.

He went on to attend Southeastern College of the Assemblies of God (now Southeastern University) in Lakeland, Florida, where he earned his bachelor's in pastoral ministries and also met his future wife, Tiffani. Together, they were in a traveling drama club, performing at different churches. The nagging question: "Do I have to be serious?" was finally answered for Garland three years later, when performing *The Gospel According to*

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*Scrooge* — a quirky, offbeat spin from the Charles Dickens classic.

Garland and Tiffani married in 1992, and Garland went on with his education, earning a Master of Science in practical theology from Southwestern Assemblies of God University in Waxahachie, Texas, and then his Doctor of Educational Ministries from Southwestern Theological Seminary in Fort Worth. He also launched his career as a successful comedian.

“There is a fine line between acting and preaching. With acting, you can take on different characters, but with preaching, you have to be honest. There can be no pretending with preaching,” he explained. As a result, Garland believes comedy and preaching complement each other perfectly. “The comedy brought me closer to preaching,” he said, but there are rules. “I never make fun of Jesus Christ — just his followers.”

Garland began performing in local comedy clubs, quietly building a reputation as a “clean, but funny” preacher. He has now appeared on XM/Sirius satellite radio’s clean comedy station, Laugh USA!, and travels around the country offering words of inspiration and humor to crowds of up to 4,000 people. He has three CDs on iTunes and Amazon.com, including *Manly Man*, a unique perspective of a man in today’s world. In fact, much of his funny insight has come about since the birth of his three sons, Austin, now 16, and twins Bryson and Logan, 12.

“I love to watch sports with my sons,” Garland said, noting how the experience



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is all too often interrupted with inappropriate commercials for alcohol, cars and medical conditions using all the wrong images. Though he disapproves, it makes for great fodder in his routines by helping him share what constitutes a manly man. "What is masculinity really?" There is an amusing bit in which he questions men who take communal showers together in the name of sport, the sweet science of saliva, the term "no offense," intelligent design and gauges in the human body, this last one allowing parents to monitor just how badly a child has to go to the bathroom while traveling. Imagine, he pondered, if you could get the Pope to say, "Bless you!" when you sneeze.

But Garland also pokes fun at himself. He is OCD. He is devoid when it comes to mathematical ability — a particularly humbling disability, as his wife is a math teacher. "I'm not allowed to make bank deposits," he said, telling the story of how severely he once bungled a bank transaction. "I couldn't stand it, and I pressed the button to the teller and said, 'I want you to know I have a doctorate,' and the teller came back and said, 'I have a calculator.'"

"My parents actually helped me with my career. When I was in high school they told the counselor, 'He's going into the ministry. He doesn't need math,'" he added with a laugh.

However, Garland's talents — love of preaching and teaching — do add up to great success for Southwestern Assemblies of God University where he now teaches. As the youth and student



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ministries professor, Garland teaches six different ministry classes. He brings his comedy to the classroom, preaching not only the Gospel but also how to understand God. He believes there are different stages in learning about and appreciating the Bible. "From childhood to adolescence to how you interpret the Bible as a freshman in college — these are very different stages in a person's life," he said. "We try to bridge the gaps."

Additionally, there are contemporary issues in the youth culture that preachers did not have to contend with 10, 20, 30 years ago. "A preacher must ask questions in an entertaining way today," he said, speaking about his young audiences. "They are not watching C-Span. Their worldview is formed by media, so we have to approach it [teaching the Gospel] from that angle." And because of his own sons, "I never run out of material!"

Through humor, applying his funny insights and impersonations, Garland is able to talk to young people in a way they can appreciate. "I want to shape and understand them," he said, noting that it's not enough just to preach. The more he learns from them, the more he understands them, the more he *can* preach. Together, Garland and his students watch movies, review commercials and videos and analyze lyrics in contemporary songs and ask, "What would the Bible say about this?"

Garland's style is to engage the truth and entertain with the truth — no posturing or fist bumping, no aggressive or foul behavior. "His message," he said, "is simple." Be generous, be truthful, be honest, for this is what a manly man is all about. At long last, Garland has found his answer. A good preacher can be funny. **NOW**



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# Leadership BOUND

— By Betty Tryon

*Allison Cardwell is on a mission. Though young, she has determined what she wants for her future and works every day toward that goal. Guiding her in this self-discovery has been the student organization, Family, Career and Community Leaders of America. It is the only school organization that has the family as its central focus.*

Allison wants everyone to know who they are, what they do and what they represent for the future. "We focus on strengthening career goals and their family skills as a whole," she explained. "Family, Career and Community Leaders of America







(FCCLA) used to be FHA for Future Homemakers of America. The name was changed to make it friendlier to males. With that, we changed what we wanted to focus on and who could be a part of it. We get our members ready to go out into the real world. We get them ready to go to college."

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Allison Cardwell (center) is pictured with FCCLA advisors Sherry Almand and Nicole Walker.

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advisor stated. “It’s a lot more than that. It’s about careers and leadership skills.”

Becoming a member of FCCLA actually helped Allison decide what she wanted to study in college this fall. “I’d never planned on being a teacher,” she said. “I wanted to go into communications. After FCCLA, I changed my mind and wanted to become a FCCLA teacher,” she stated. “In school I’d always played sports, but I wanted to be involved in something different.”

After she became a member, Allison brought the same resolute spirit and determination to the organization that she displayed when playing every sport in middle school. Her enthusiasm and dedication to FCCLA led her to eventually serve in several offices on the state level. During her senior year in high school, she was the vice president of the Texas chapter FCCLA. “I had to dedicate a lot of time to it,” she said. “I spent most of my summers at leadership camp. For a week during the summer I went to the national competition. I also helped with the teacher conferences. The rest of the time I spent planning for our school chapter. That was my entire summer. I would then spend the whole school year doing things for the organization. So, it literally became my life. I couldn’t imagine taking FCCLA out of it when it had been so much a part of my life for four years.”

Allison has devoted much time and energy to the organization and received much in return. One of the things she had the opportunity to do was to be



an advocate for Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSO). "I got to go to the Capitol and talk to a congressman about CTSOs and about how they are changing," she said. "I think people don't realize that our organization is about getting people ready to go out into the world. They are real classes that can give kids good careers. It has also helped me improve my speaking skills. At the state conference, I spoke in front of over 5,000 people. It has given me so much confidence that I can just get up there and start speaking without being nervous."

Allison received the CJ Davidson Scholarship from FCCLA for \$18,000. "It's helped me go to college and get other scholarships," she shared. "The organization has given me so much — the scholarship and many opportunities, such as getting to meet Gov. Perry and going to special seminars that most people don't get to experience. I just want to give back to the organization when I get older. I want to give my time and help."

Many opportunities to give back exist, as FCCLA works to do projects within the community. This year, the organization worked with the United Way campaign at high schools. "We didn't just focus on money, because high school students don't really have a lot of money to give," she acknowledged. "We focused more on the time they were donating to their community. Some of the groups we worked with were Manna House, Gingerbread House and the Senior Citizen Center. We are trying to get the members more involved and to realize that community service hours sometimes help more than money."

"Hopefully, when this generation of students enters the workforce for large companies that do United Way campaigns, they will understand that United Way gives back," Nicole added.

The group eventually reached 16 different community organizations and raised \$500. They sold T-shirts to raise money for United Way and logged 900 hours of volunteering. "We work with our student council and other big organizations on campus to help us get students motivated," Allison stated. "We were able to increase our membership by meeting with them."

The group's participation in a project



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allows them to enter competition within the FCCLA organization. The Midlothian group is very successful in that arena. They have won first place many times and, as a result, they have competed nationally many times and have come away victorious. "The most rewarding moment about FCCLA is getting to look back after completing a project and see all of the people you have impacted," Allison acknowledged. "My favorite project was the Ellis County Teen Parenting Workshop. For the past three years, we have invited all of the teen moms in Ellis County to come to a workshop to hear from speakers, receive resources and learn new ways to interact with their young children on a budget. Some of those girls don't have anyone to support them, so being able to provide them with necessary resources is really heartwarming."

Leadership skills are taught in all of the meetings, as indicated by the course name — Family Career and Community Leaders of America. "Our events are based on those aspects," Nicole offered. "We have events based on community service and others that impact families and children. Allison, as an officer, ran the leadership training and classes. She was also helping with all of the community service projects we did as a chapter."

"I am proud to be an FCCLA member because of what we stand for," Allison shared. "I believe family is one of the most important things about life, so being able to lead an organization that teaches teens how to strengthen their family and become better family members gives me hope for our future, and a possibility to see a change in the direction our generation is headed." **NOW**



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*Two local dentists make your smile their priority.*

— By Betty Tryon

Long Family Dental brings something special to the practice of dentistry — a legacy of over four decades of experience from a father and his two sons. Although Henry Long, the father, has retired from practicing dentistry, his two sons, Bob and Chris, continue to build the business together.

Henry started the business in 1970 in Cleburne. “I started in 1995, and Chris started in 2004,” Bob stated. “The nice thing about having my brother is we are each other’s cheerleader and supporter. There is no competition between us. Our patients get the benefit of both of us, because Chris and I bounce ideas off each other. So you have two sets of eyes looking at your case quite often. We keep each other sharp.”

Bob graduated from The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio in 1993, where he earned his Doctor of Dental Surgery degree. He completed his residency in general practice at University Hospital in San Antonio, where he also received his IV sedation certification.

Chris earned his Doctor of Dental Surgery degree at The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. He was recently awarded the honor of being a Top 40 Dentist under age 40 in the U.S. by *Incisal Edge Magazine*. They both returned to Cleburne, Texas, to begin their dental careers in private practice with their father.

Bob and Chris expanded their practice to Midlothian



last September and are very pleased with their decision. "Business has been good," Bob said. "We wanted to open a second location and chose Midlothian because of the quality of the schools, the quality of city government, the business atmosphere and growth and the long-term planning." Bob contends that part of the success of the business is the staff. "We surround ourselves with excellent staff. They are the best in their field and are carefully chosen."

The new office in Midlothian houses a private surgery suite where procedures such as implant surgery, wisdom tooth extraction and IV sedation are performed. "The residency program and anesthesia training in San Antonio I completed allows me to do some things you would typically see reserved for a specialist," Bob shared. "Sometimes patients may be very anxious, and our goal is to take patients who are nervous and gain their trust. If you can get their trust, then we can custom tailor our approach to take care of their anxiety. Our restorative and cosmetic dentistry gives us the opportunity to take someone who is apprehensive about their appearance, turn that around and make them confident about themselves and their appearance. We fix that smile so they stand up a little straighter, because one of the first things people notice is someone's smile."

Chris performs all of the root canals in their practice. Bob often sends his patients who require that procedure to him. "Patients appreciate the convenience of being able to stay with us for a lot of the procedures, but we both recognize when it is time to refer to a specialist," Chris said.

Their business philosophy is quite simple: "I go to work every day and try to be better than I was the day before," Bob stated.

"We make each of our treatment decisions as if you were one of our own family members," Chris stated. As they advance the business their father started, they acknowledge that their legacy is your smile. **NOW**

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*The Mt. Peak choir score a "1" and receive a trophy for their efforts at Alley Cats.*



*The FSMS combined Women's Choir earn Best in Class at Sandy Lake FunFest.*



*Austyn Rapp enjoys volunteering at the Midlothian Bible Church's VBX.*



*VBX Cheer gives an impressive show during Vacation Bible School.*



*A group of Independence Day revelers wait patiently for the fireworks.*



*The MHS Debate/Speech Team receives accolades for a job well done.*



*Sweet puppies that are for sale fall asleep from all the excitement.*



*Community Problem Solvers show their table at the Showcase event.*



*LaRue Miller Elementary first graders show off cards they handcrafted for their mothers.*



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### August 3

Mt. Peak Cemetery Association annual ice cream supper/fundraiser: 6:00 p.m.; auction begins: 7:00 p.m., FM 875. The event includes: ice cream, hot dogs and cold drinks and a bounce house and face painting for the kids. Bring a cake or other baked goods for the auction. All proceeds are used for upkeep of the cemetery and grounds.

### August 6

Final Summer Reading Club Story Time: 11:00 a.m.-noon, A.H. Meadows Library.

### August 6, 20

Bluegrass Jam Session: 6:30 p.m., Lighthouse Coffee Bar, 1404 N. 9th St. Everyone is invited to join in. Bring your instrument, or simply relax and enjoy!

### August 5, 19

Wildflower & Bird Walk: 9:00-11:00 a.m., Mockingbird Nature Park, 1361 Onward Rd. Members of the Indian Trail Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Program will lead this free combined wildflower and bird walk. Please bring drinking water and

binoculars. For more information, call (972) 775-7177.

### August 7

Family Friendly Movies: 2:00-4:00 p.m., A.H. Meadows Library.

### August 12

Manna House Back-to-school Supply Round-up deadline. Items needed: backpacks, glue sticks, scissors, black pens, blue pens, notebook paper, etc. For more information on how you can help, call Norma Belcher at (972) 775-1800.

### August 22

Elementary Meet the Teacher Night: Noon-5:00 p.m., all elementary schools.

### August 26

First day of school.

### Ongoing:

### Monday

Celebrate Recovery meetings: 7:00-9:00 p.m., Lighthouse Coffee Bar, 1404 N. 9th St. A Christ-centered recovery program

designed to help those struggling with hurts, habits and hang-ups.

### First Tuesdays

Midlothian Area Historical Society meetings: 7:00 p.m., Community Room, Citizens National Bank, 310 N. 9th St., Midlothian. For more information, email midlothianhistory@hotmail.com.

### Second Tuesdays

American Business Women's Association Midlothian Chapter (ABWA) meetings: 6:15 p.m., Temple Wellness Studio, 440 S. Walnut Grove Rd. Dinner will be served. If you want to be a featured business, please send an email to abwainfo@ymail.com. For more information, visit midlothianabwa.com.

### Saturdays

Midlothian Downtown Farmers Market: 8:00 a.m.-noon, Heritage Park by Larkin Newton log cabin.

*Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your event details to betty.tryon@nowmagazines.com.*



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## In The Kitchen With Crystal Wells

— By Betty Tryon

Here is a new one for tradition. Every Thanksgiving, Crystal Wells' mom chases her around the kitchen with a raw turkey! "It's rather disgusting but hilarious to watch!" Crystal laughed. Her mother's teasing stemmed from Crystal's complete distaste for raw meat. Good thing she has help in the kitchen. "My husband is the 'Ultimate Grill Maestro' and does most of the cooking at home, because we grill almost everything we eat. It's super easy and probably a lot healthier. I'll help chop veggies and prepare stuff, but I'm more of a baker. Whatever it is we do, I enjoy getting my two daughters in the kitchen with us to help and learn, and they love it, too." **NOW**

### Texas Sweet Onion Casserole

Makes 6-8 servings.

- 1/2 cup butter (divided use)**
- 3 medium Texas sweet onions, chopped**
- 2 cups grated Swiss cheese**
- 1 cup crushed saltine crackers (divided use)**
- 2 eggs**
- 3/4 cup light cream or half-and-half**
- 1 tsp. salt**
- 1/8 tsp. black pepper**

- 1.** Melt 1/4 cup butter in large skillet; sauté onions until tender.
- 2.** Place half the onions in 1 1/2-quart, deep-dish pie pan or brownie pan. Sprinkle 1 cup Swiss cheese over onions. Sprinkle 1/2 cup cracker crumbs over cheese. Repeat layers of onions and cheese.
- 3.** Beat eggs with cream, salt and pepper. Pour evenly over onion mixture.
- 4.** Heat remaining 1/4 cup butter in skillet; stir in remaining cracker crumbs. Lightly brown crumbs; sprinkle over top of casserole.
- 5.** Bake at 350 F for 25 minutes.

### Sweet Potato Pie

Makes 12 servings.

- 6 15-oz. cans candied yams**
- 1 cup butter, melted**
- 4 eggs, whisked**
- 1/2 cup heavy cream**
- 1 cup brown sugar**
- 2 tsp. cinnamon**
- 1 tsp. pumpkin pie spice**
- 2 tsp. vanilla**
- 2 10-oz. bags marshmallows (divided use)**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 375 F. Grease bottom and sides of large casserole dish with butter.
- 2.** Mash yams in a bowl. Add butter, eggs, cream, sugar, spices and vanilla. Mix well.
- 3.** Pour half of mixture in casserole dish. Top with one bag of marshmallows. Pour remaining mixture on top. Bake for 30 minutes; remove from oven.
- 4.** Top with remaining bag of marshmallows. Bake for 10-15 minutes until marshmallows are lightly browned.

### Your Favorite Chocolate Swirl Cheesecake

Do not preheat oven. Makes 12 servings.

*Crust:*

- 2 1/2 cups Oreos, Thin Mints or chocolate chip cookies, crushed**
- 1/3 cup sugar**
- 3/4 cup butter, melted**
- 1 12-oz. bag regular-size chocolate chips**

*Filling:*

- 4 8-oz. pkgs. cream cheese, room temperature**
- 1 1/2 cups sugar**
- 4 Tbsp. flour**
- 1 Tbsp. vanilla**
- 2 Tbsp. heavy cream**
- 14 oz. sweet condensed milk**
- 4 eggs, room temperature**
- 1 12-oz. bag mini chocolate chips**

- 1.** Prepare 10-inch springform pan by lining with parchment paper and greasing sides.
- 2.** Prepare a water bath by filling a roasting pan with 1/2 inch water and placing pan on bottom rack of oven.
- 3. For Crust:** Mix cookie crumbs with sugar. Add butter. Stir until all crumbs are coated. Press into the springform pan; freeze.
- 4.** Melt 1 cup regular-size chocolate chips in double boiler until chips are almost melted. Do not overheat! Remove from heat; stir until all chips are melted. Immediately pour over cooled crust, spreading evenly; refrigerate.
- 5. For Filling:** Beat cream cheese only until creamy.
- 6.** Add sugar and flour; mix on low until smooth. Scrape sides of bowl.
- 7.** Add vanilla, cream and sweet condensed milk; mix; scrape sides.
- 8.** Add 1 egg at a time. Mix and scrape sides after each addition. Remove and set aside 2 cups of batter.
- 9.** Fold in 1 to 1 1/2 cups mini chocolate chips into remaining batter. Pour mixture into pan.
- 10.** Melt all remaining chocolate chips in double boiler. Gradually add to reserved batter. Blend well. Drop by spoonful into batter in pan; swirl with toothpick. Do not over swirl.
- 11.** Place cake on middle rack in a cool oven. Bake at 400 F for 10 minutes; bake at 325 F for 45 minutes or until center is set.
- 12.** Open oven; let cake cool completely in oven. Refrigerate for at least 4 hours. Remove from fridge about an hour before serving.



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