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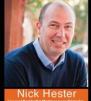
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#### ON THE COVER



Who can say no to a blue-eyed goat?

Photo by Amy Ramirez.

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A serene water garden starts with a koi pond.



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#### Editor's Note

Another school year begins!

As the scorching days of summer roll into the beginning of another school year, I'm reminded of how excited I used to get as a student at Palmer High School. I would get so giddy about returning to the classroom that I'd be unable to sleep the night before. Yes, I was a bookworm, and I know I was in the minority, but school gave me a reason to get up in the morning.

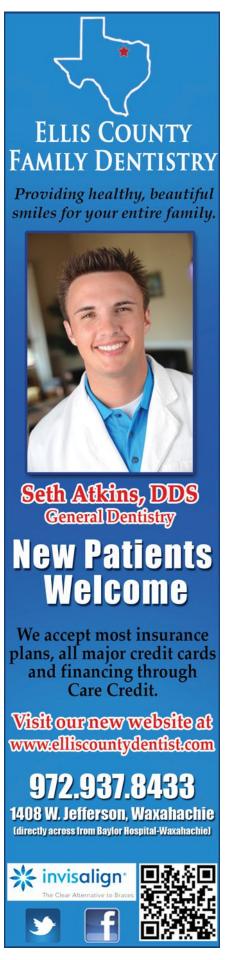
I've always loved to journal, so it's not a stretch to say my favorite subject, other than art, was English.

The late Becky Bailey Wadley tapped into a part of me I never knew existed. She may have been strict, but she taught me the importance of the written word, and for that I will be forever thankful. Without her I feel quite certain I would never have met so many of you!

#### Sandra

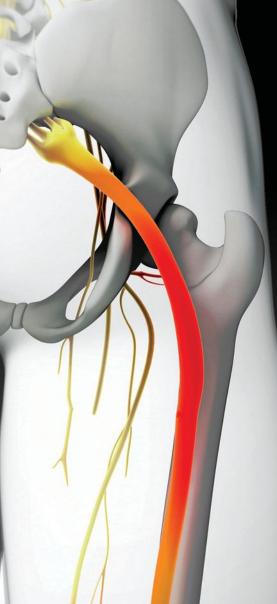
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Animals are special when it comes to offering unconditional love to humans without expecting much in return. "Animals are accepting of all. They don't discriminate, and they definitely don't show favoritism," Gina Robinson said, speaking from her years on the farm. "They just naturally know compassion, gentleness and love, and they're not timid about sharing what they've experienced with others."

Gina learned about the therapeutic value of animals while she was still young. At the age of 5, while growing up on the family farm, she remembers the pigs, goats, chickens, horses and cows. "As a shy child, I found I related to the animals much better than I did with people, and I still feel the same way today," Gina admitted with a smile. "Animals bring out the goodness in people. They can lighten the heaviest mood."



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You will be provided with information regarding the 2014 G.R.E.E.N. Marathon that will take place on Friday, September 26 at Country View Golf Club in Lancaster. We are looking for teams of golfers and sponsors for this event that has raised over \$200,000 to date to help children in need.

Proceeds will benefit CASA of Ellis County, the Children's Welfare Board, and Rainbow Room.

#### Schedule of Events

Noon Lunch, Welcome, Information and Questions How do I play 100 holes in one day? How would I raise money for abused and neglected children?

There is no commitment, all we ask is that you be there at noon to hear about the cause and be open to playing in the marathon if you deem it worthy of your time, or pass along the information to fellow golfers.

> Please note that there is limited seating on a first come first serve basis. Due to limited space, you must RSVP in advance.

#### Please R.S.V.P. to golfmarathoninfo@yahoo.com by August 7.

For more information, contact G.R.E.E.N. Golf Marathon Chairman John Knight at 214-597-5679.

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She carried this close kinship with animals from childhood into her adult life, as she also has a farm that's home to some of her most special family members. Some of them were rescues, while many others were unwanted male babies. Gina feels her life-calling is centered on these unwanted and unloved animals. "I am their steward," she said. "I give them a life with a purpose. The animals are family, so they are treated and loved like family."

The care that goes into Gina's family pets, totaling 80 when counting the chickens, is a full-time job. She handles most of the duties like cleaning stalls, building maintenance, monthly visits to the veterinarian and yearly vaccinations



alone, but welcomes the help of her husband, Paul, when he's available. In fact, Paul is Gina's biggest and loudest cheering section. "He's here when I need him," Gina said. "He's done it all. He's welded the pens and built the fencing, shelters and barns. He customized the stock trailer I use to transport the animals. He's the one who gives me support and direction when I feel like giving up. Together, we make an awesome team!"

Nearly two years ago, Gina decided it was time to share her furry and feathery friends with others. In doing so, God's Little Critters was born, and their therapeutic value is being felt within the community. "I try to take several of the animals to Renfro Healthcare Center twice a month," Gina explained. "The

residents get excited on those Friday's when they know we're coming."

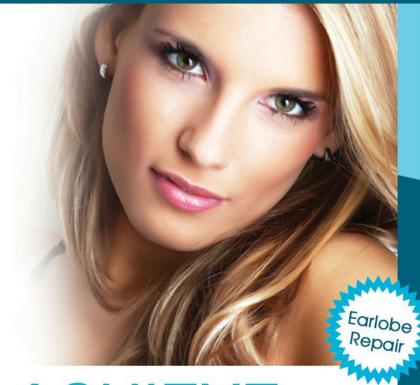
The majority of residents want to interact with the animals. In fact, several of them have their favorites. "Puppies and goats are popular," Gina shared. "Goats in diapers and puppies, all on leashes, travel from one hall to the next making their rounds. Residents love to pet the goats and put the puppies in their laps." Needless to say, the smiles during these visits are contagious.

In two years, the memories Gina and her pets have, although priceless, still pull at her heartstrings. Poncho became a member of the Robinson family after being in a terrible accident. As a rodeo horse, he came to Gina with an attitude,



but the gentleness was almost immediate when Poncho became a therapeutic riding horse. "His mood changed when he understood he had a rider with special needs on his back instead of a rodeo cowboy," Gina stated. "Poncho was the first experience I had with an animal who realized what his true worth was. Poncho knew the difference in bucking a cowboy and riding easy with someone who needed his help. It was amazing!" Today, Poncho is 23 and enjoying retirement.

When Diesel was just a piglet, he would travel to the nursing facility to be held and loved on, but now at 2 1/2 years old and 53 pounds, he finds he's more comfortable staying at the farm. There was also a young man who was bedridden. He was depressed and unresponsive.



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"That was until I introduced him to Gabriel, the baby goat," Gina said, also mentioning the goat had markings that looked like angel wings on his back. "Gabriel had such a gentle spirit. He was just what that young man needed at the time. Gabriel would curl up beside him on the bed, so they could take a nap together."

Jackson the Dachshund is another story that brings emotion to Gina's voice as she begins to share about a resident who had been bedridden for a very long time. "He, too, was unresponsive," Gina said. "When Jackson showed up that first time, the elderly man's eyes lit up and



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a smile spread across his face. Jackson evoked a response no one else had been able to evoke."

Jerry Randall, a current resident at Renfro who is also referred to as the "birdman," took a keen liking to Waddles, the goose. "I look forward to her visits, because they remind me of a pet goose I had growing up," Jerry explained. "That goose hated everyone in the family but me. I had a '67 Classic Chevrolet Convertible with glasspack mufflers. That ole' goose heard me coming home from five blocks away. He would start honking and wouldn't stop until he was able to wrap his neck around mine to give me a hug."

"When I heard her story," said Laura Branford, Renfro's activity director, "I knew we had to have Gina and her critters here. Her animals may be the only activity some of the residents participate in."

Gina also tries to do several fundraising and last wish events for others throughout the year as a way to give back to the community. Sometimes she will show up with her animals for a mini petting zoo. Other times she will donate animals for the cause. "Patches is a tiny goat who made the biggest difference in a man's life at one of these fundraisers," Gina recalled. "We took the goat out to a car where the man was sitting so the goat could give him some comfort." That day, Gina and so many others learned how a simple act could have such a profound impact on someone else. "Simple acts cost nothing much in time or money," Gina added. "This man will always remember that simple act."

The individuals on the receiving end of the animal's love usually end up receiving the bigger blessings. The autistic children Gina has worked with in conjunction with Hidden Miracles may not be able to speak, but Gina heard their thanks loud and clear through their hearts. "People just come alive," Gina said. "I get to know them at their best when an animal becomes part of the equation. Animals bring out the best in people."

Even after so many success stories, Gina still wonders if she's doing enough with the ministry she has come to love. "This is not a job to me," she confessed. "It's a calling. I'm trying to make the world a better place, one pet and one pat at a time." NOW

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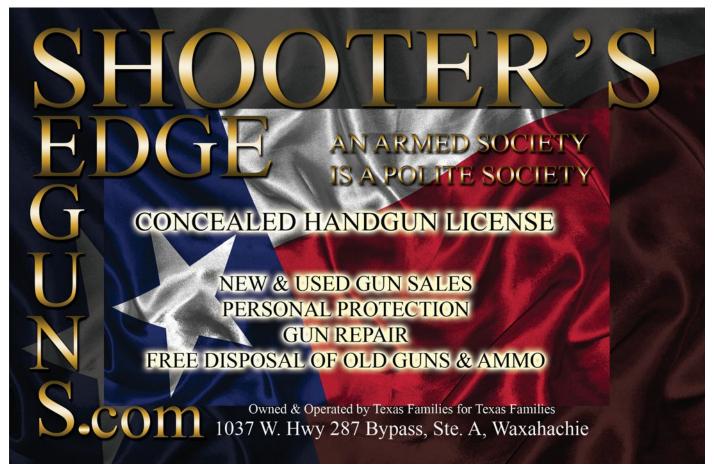
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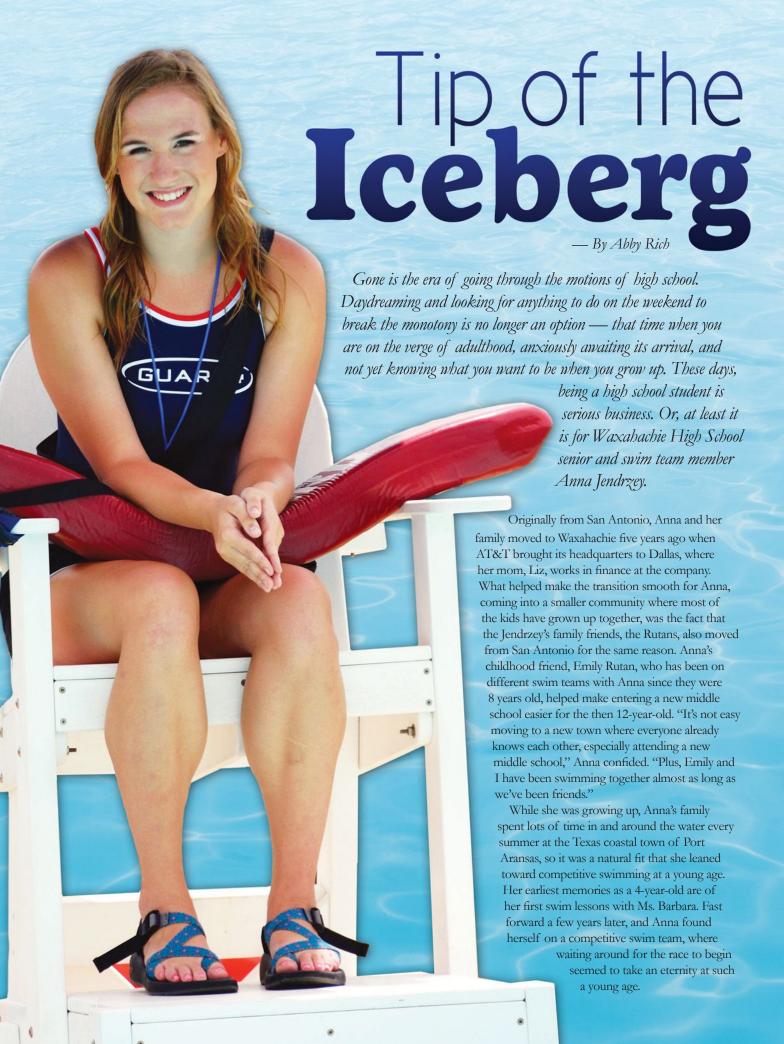
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When Anna was around 9 years old, living in San Antonio, she had a unique experience that spurred her toward wanting to swim competitively. Olympian swimmer Josh Davis, who frequented her practice pool, taught Anna how to back dive. "It was really cool. He was the nicest guy, just really down to earth," Anna beamed. The world-record-holding Olympian inspired her to keep swimming competitively and to always try her best.

Anna admits to taking a few years off from swimming to pursue other passions like volleyball and dance. However, her true love of swimming eventually won over, and she was back to swimming competitively at age 14. This will be her fourth year on the Waxahachie High School team, under Coach Pruitt, where the women have won district three years in a row, and the men have won four years in





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# "Emily and I have been swimming together almost as long as we've been friends."

a row. The 100-meter backstroke is Anna's best competition-level stroke, individually. She also swims in the 200- and 400-meter freestyle relays with the team. "Coach Pruitt really gets to know her swimmers, individually," Anna explained. "She's like a mom, and the swim team has been like a second family."

Swimming is both a team and individual sport. Anna tries not to think in those terms but instead attempts to swim better each meet — swimming for her coach and team first and herself second. When asked what she focuses on in the water during a meet, she replied, "I try not to think about anything, and I primarily keep my eyes down because there's not a wide visibility range. But I can sense when someone is coming up on me." Anna went on to explain that it's more motivating to swim

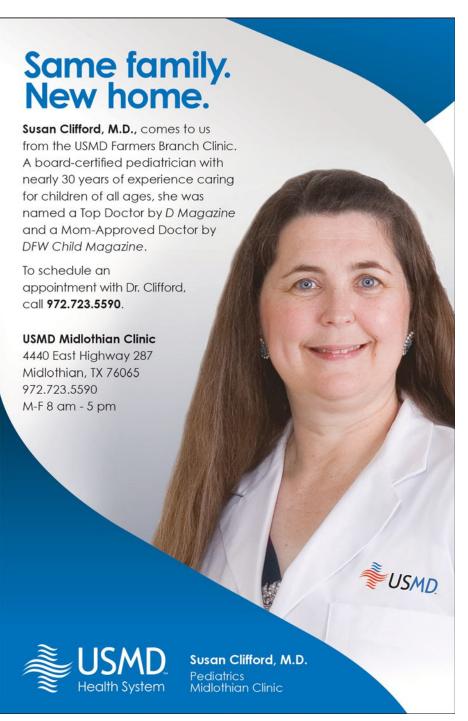


faster if someone's gaining on her versus her attempting to catch up to an opponent. But regardless of what place she's in, the last lap is when she really kicks it into high gear and pushes hard to the end.

While the high school swim team takes up most of Anna's time from September to mid-February, during the rest of the school year she's involved in so many extra-













curricular activities it can make heads spin. She is on the yearbook staff and will be coeditor in chief this coming school year, and the president elect of Rotary Interact Club. She also takes all honors classes, as well as dance lessons at Dance Works. The honor role student is in the top 1 to 2 percent of her senior class, ranking No. 6.

With such high academic achievements, Anna hopes to attend The University of Texas at Austin, Rice University or Vanderbilt University. Math and science are her favorite subjects in school, which is helpful since she would like to attend medical school after she completes a degree in biochemistry or another similar type of science. Her goal is to become a medical doctor, possibly in the field of neurology or diagnostics at the hospital level.

The apple doesn't fall far from the tree when it comes to Anna's work ethic. Her mom has had a lengthy career in finance, and her father, Ed, is an attorney and part-time judge. On top of all Anna's extra-curricular activities, including summer classes at Navarro, she lifeguards each summer at the YMCA. In fact, this was her second summer to lifeguard. When choosing a way to make some extra money Anna didn't have to think too hard. In her eyes, lifeguarding is the coolest job she could have, and it allows her to be near the water all summer long. While she sits in the lifeguard chair frequently, she also gives swim tests to kids to determine which depth level of the pool they can safely go into. And luckily, she's only had to pull a few kids over to the side while on guard.

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Helping others has always been in her nature, which she attributes to being the oldest sister to her two brothers, ages 14 and 12.

Juggling work, nonschool activities, team sports and a couple hours of homework every night is bound to take a toll on the high school senior, so as a creative outlet, Anna enjoys dabbling in the visual arts like drawing and painting. Currently, she is studying and creating ceramics in art class, so vases and other trinkets can be found throughout her home. When working on the yearbook, she prefers designing the pages over writing portions of the yearbook. As well, Anna can always be found cuddling with the family dog or cat.

So, when you see a group of high school students go driving by or waiting in line at the grocery store, try not to yearn for their carefree lives too much. Because chances are, if they're anything like Anna, their lives are not so simple.

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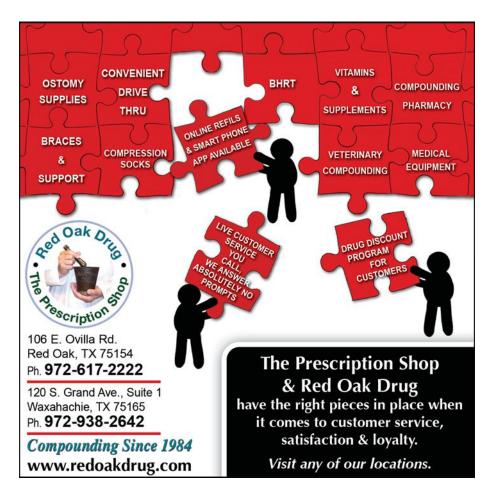
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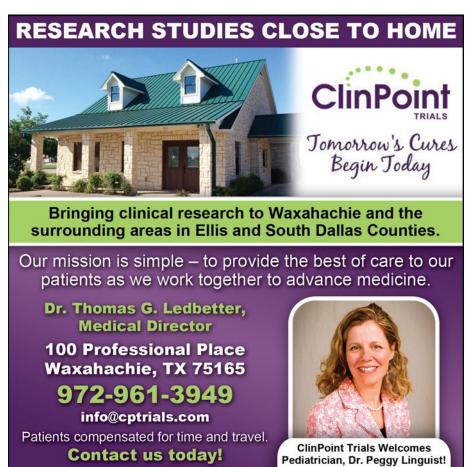
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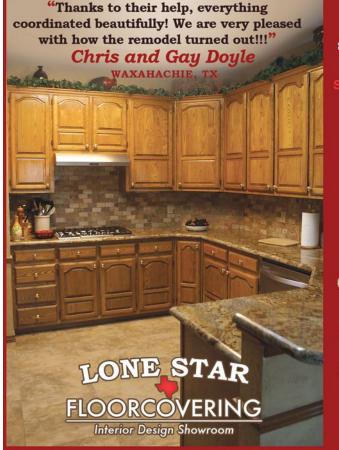
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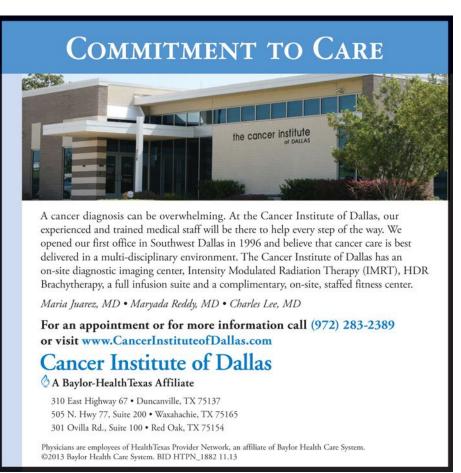
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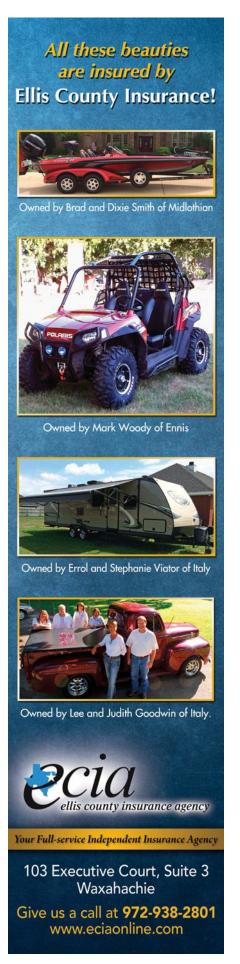
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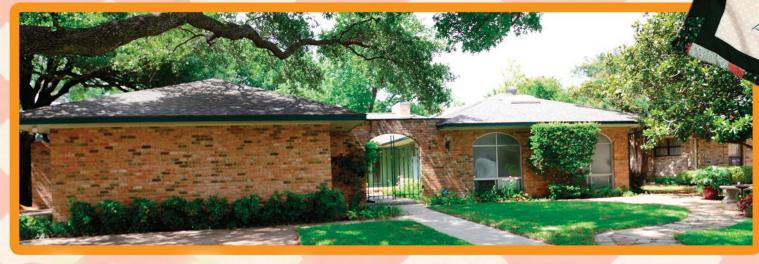










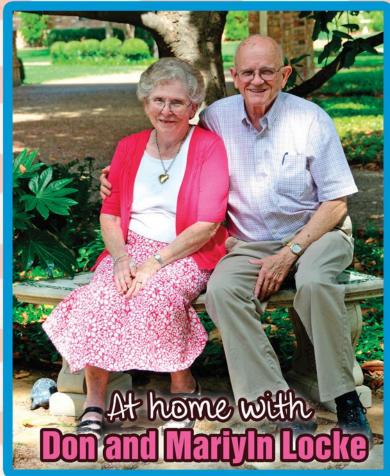


## Sewn Together With Love

— By Sandra Strong

Don and Mariyln Locke made their way to Waxahachie in 1959, but they didn't move into the home they still share today in the Chapman Addition until nearly 10 years later, in 1968. "The home took nine months to build, from start to finish," Don remembered. "The builders promised we'd be in by Thanksgiving, but we didn't actually move in until the first of March." After serving two years in the Air Force, Don wanted to set up his own dental practice in a small city. He wasn't interested in the hustle and bustle Dallas had to offer, but it was a dental supply company in Dallas that pointed them to Waxahachie. "And this is as far as we got," Don said with a smile, mentioning his practice flourished for 42 years before his retirement in 2001.

The custom-built, four-bedroom, two-and-a-half-bath architecturally designed home has withstood the test of time. Not once since moving into their home have Don and Mariyln done a remodel, but they've been diligent about the maintenance. They have seen many changes in the neighborhood since 1968. "We raised our three children, Sue, Kevin and Steve, here,"



Mariyln said. "They used to fly kites at the end of the road in an open field where houses now stand." Cotton and corn fields were their view in the beginning, but that view has also changed to the homes that over the years have completed the addition. "But, Chapman Park still serves as a wonderful buffer to the traffic around us," she added.

When designing the home, Don, Mariyln and the architect were well ahead of the times. The list of amenities is quite lengthy. Built-in, floor-to-ceiling cabinets flank both sides of the



brick fireplace. The hidden cabinetry in the kitchen has proven to be a wonderful feature for keeping countertops free of much of Mariyln's cookbook collection, as well as canisters and electrical items. "Appliances are all hidden out of view," she said. "The stove also features a gas grill that's perfect for indoor barbecuing."

The bank of floor-toceiling windows lining the back of the home offers a gorgeous view of the oversized backyard from the living room and kitchen. Rabbits, squirrels and several species of birds find solace in the garden areas Mariyln's green thumbs have created. "I love working in the yard," she shared. "I find it to be quite relaxing." Their newest addition is a rock garden/walkway/patio





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area in the backyard, which they've been designing on paper for some time.

A duplicate wall of floor-to-ceiling windows is found at the front of the home adjacent to the main entry. Don and Mariyln can't help but look at one another and laugh as they remember the speculation from neighbors during the building process. "So many of them thought it was going to be an indoor pool," Don explained. "In reality, it was a rabbit pen that later turned into our greenhouse." The beauty of this enclosed, indoor greenhouse offers Don and Mariyln year-round pleasure, since they're able to bring patio plants in during the winter months.

Many family heirlooms and antiques are displayed in key areas throughout the home. The marble-top coffee table in the living room dates back to 1928. The table was given to Mariyln's parents on their wedding day. As an only child, it makes perfect sense she would have it in her home now. "The desk in the living room corner was given to my father many years ago. I believe it dates back to the late 1800s," Mariyln said. "The desk chair is really one of four dining chairs refinished with a needlepoint bottom."



Old kitchen tools and utensils serve as the wall decor under the bar area. Each item was either given to Don and Mariyln by family, or they purchased them during their travels locally and



abroad. An antique display shelf from the National Biscuit Company finds its place in front of the large window. Cookbooks and McCoy pottery adorn each shelf. "I started collecting the McCov pottery because of a family name," Mariyln shared. "I used to collect Hummel bells, plates and figurines, but I stopped adding to my collection after my mom passed." This allowed room for her mom's special pieces to be merged with her own. They are now lovingly displayed in the china cabinet in the home's formal dining room.









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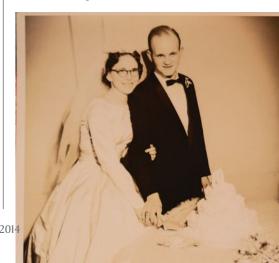




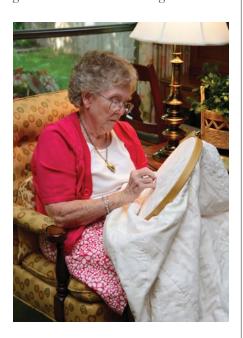
Other noteworthy keepsakes include: a Zenith tube radio that was once Bob's television set as a boy, now in the kitchen and still operational; an antique rocker in the master bedroom which Mariyln's mom used to rock her when she was a baby; and the unique cement and mosaic bench in the front yard Don and one of his granddaughters handcrafted. The pie display case in the far corner of the living rooms holds some of the couple's prized possessions — quilts in all shapes, sizes and colors, with the oldest dating back to the 1870s. "We resurrected the pie case," Don said. "It's now a quilt cabinet with the original glass and hardware still intact."



Many of the quilts they have collected were pieced and quilted by others, but the ones that hold special meaning to them are the ones they have handcrafted themselves. "I have been quilting since 1981," Mariyln said. "Don didn't start quilting until after his 65th birthday." They have over 50 quilts in their collection.



The largest and most intricate quilt Don has worked on to date is the Last Supper Quilt seen annually during the local Bethlehem Revisited event. "There are 51,816 pieces in this quilt," Don admitted. "It took me two-and-a-half years to finish it, but God wanted it done. The quilt has been to almost 400 places, including 38 states and six countries. It goes where God wants it to go."



Another of Don's masterpieces is found in the guest room. The bedroom suite first belonged to Mariyln's parents before being passed down to her as a child. Don's first attempt at embroidery is found on the amazing quilt adorning the bed. "It's the Mary Engelbreit Quilt," Don explained. "It took a year to embroider and another year to quilt."

Marilyn is currently putting her expertise on a quilt that will no doubt be added to the couple's list of favorites upon its completion. "I saw a similar solid white one and decided I wanted to make one of my own," Mariyln explained. "The center is a pillow sham. I've used old white linens, a damask duvet cover, tea towels, handkerchiefs, dollies from Germany and eyelet lace purchased in Austria. The only thing new is the backing fabric."

The talent Don and Mariyln are blessed with goes well beyond measure. The union they've made and the home they've shared were stitched in love long before either one of them began the art of quilting. And theirs is stitching that will last for generations to come. **NOW** 

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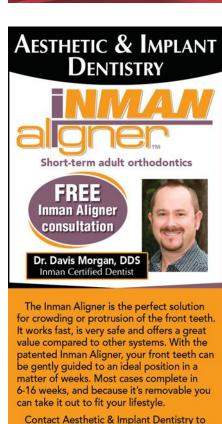
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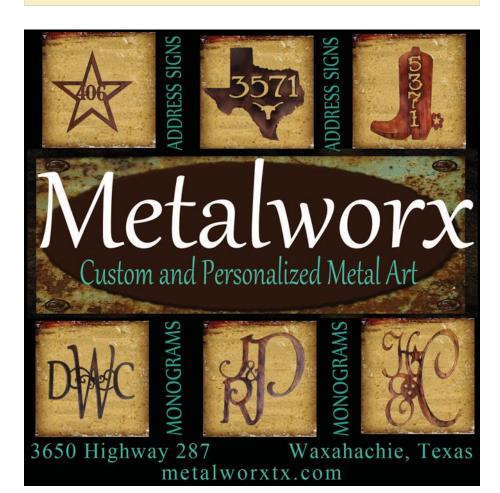
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course plus an advisory period, what used to be called homeroom. You'd think that would be enough for the mother of three, including a 4-year-old, not to mention being in her third semester of graduate school at Southwestern Assemblies of God University. But, she also volunteers her time advising the student council, believing that being involved in extra-curricular activities is the best way to get to know the kids.

Born and reared in El Paso, Karina planned to attend SAGU for her undergraduate degree, after much consideration. It was one of the few Christian colleges in the country that allowed a double major at the time. She even chose it without visiting Waxahachie and didn't apply to any other schools for backup. She loved the small-town community so much so that she decided to stay and start her career here. Thinking she would teach at the high school level, her student teaching was completed at Waxahachie High School. After graduation, Karina was working at Home Depot when she received a call from the Finley Junior High principal, who strongly encouraged her to interview for an open position at the school. She never dreamed of teaching junior high and was holding out for an opening at the high school, but it was only two days before the new school year. She agreed to the meeting, and the rest is history. Now, she will tell you junior high kids are her favorite kind of people — a little misunderstood and just starting to come into their own.

Although this is her 14th year as an educator, Karina didn't start out teaching English. With a double major in business/ technology and English, she spent the first four years of her career teaching







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computer and technology. She decided to make the switch so she could engage with her kids more. "I couldn't have captivating conversations with the backs of their heads," Karina laughed. "It was really hard to get to know their thoughts and connect with them in that environment." Yet, she still incorporates technology into her classroom by using a lot of nonfiction informational texts, especially on Newsela.com, a nonfiction literacy and

"Generally,
most people
remember their
kindergarten
and high school
teachers,
so if they're
coming back
to see me, that
makes me feel
really good."





current events website geared toward kids in the fourth through 12th grades. She's prepping them for a future when most content, nonfiction and fiction, will reside online.

Still, her students have to read and report on texts from the well-thought-out book list she posts each year. Karina stated that by the time her kids enter eighth grade, they've already explored a lot of fiction. So instead, she focuses on teaching them how to navigate news stories and current events, and then analyze and assess the relevant information. They can be assigned stories or choose the articles they want to read. This current generation of students, known as the Millennial Generation, will read and process more written information than any other generation to date. She poses such questions to her students as, "How will this information affect me or change who I am?" and "Is what I'm reading accurate?" It's more of a discovery method of learning for the kids, and it makes them happy they have a choice in what they read.

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One of the biggest challenges her job poses is trying to fit grammar, writing, reading, communication and research in the 45 minutes allotted per class. And, what challenges her most in terms of the educational system is its main focus on testing. While that is also most parents' concern, she tends to pay attention to the job at hand — if the students are engaged and learning what she's teaching, then the tests will show it.

When jokingly asked what she does in her spare time, Karina didn't hesitate. She prides herself as a crafty individual, and makes hair bows to sell as a way to decompress after a long day of being mother to tons of kids, her own included. And she couldn't leave out her affinity for country music. In fact, she's a member of the Brad Paisley fan club in order to get the best seats at his concerts. Hovered above the steel cabinets of her classroom are tons of photos and memorabilia of the star, including a picture of the two of them backstage after a show. Although



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she loves the singer's music, the wall art and decor in her room is sort of a running joke with her students. "I hung up my first picture of Brad, and then my kids would randomly show up with magazine and photo clippings of him," Karina laughed. "They think it's silly but love giving me a hard time."

Still, at the end of every school year, Karina gets misty eyed as she wonders how or what she could have done better as an instructor. However, when her previous students come back specifically to visit her, all grown up and leading productive lives, those doubts subside. "Generally, most people remember their kindergarten and high school teachers, so if they're coming back to see me, that makes me feel really good," she smiled. The proof is in the pudding, so she must be doing something right. NOW



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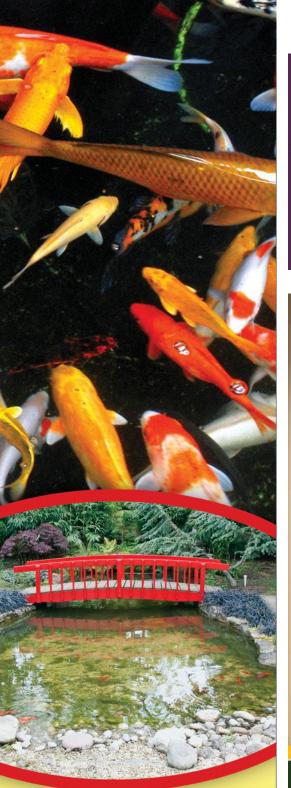
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With its colorful varieties of Japanese carp darting among rocks and plants, this touch of nature transforms any backyard into an oasis.

create a tranquil environment but ensure years of refreshing enjoyment for the whole family. There are how-to guides for installing koi ponds, available in print and online, and serious garden lovers prefer the do-it-yourself approach. But if you're like most homeowners, you're not a landscape designer or even a seasoned gardener. You will, therefore, likely opt to buy ready-made pond and waterfall kits. It's an expedient route to a beautiful result, yet it pays to be informed.

Whether choosing a local contractor or a national chain to implement the water garden of your dreams, you should acquaint yourself with the process. You should also know how best to address issues from building ordinances that might impede your project to the proper maintenance of the pond, its plants and fish.



### Do you really want a pond?

Before making a decision between a pond or water feature, consider the significant difference. A koi pond will require dedication to upkeep, which a water feature won't. "Ponds are miniature ecosystems with plants, animals and microorganisms working in harmony to achieve balance," explains a how-to

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page at Lowes.com. "Ponds are alive and require different care; all need to be circulated in the summer and aerated in the winter."

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# What to know before you build.

Before your landscaper or contractor lays out your koi pond, consult the local code enforcement department. There may be laws restricting the depth of your pond or access to it, and you'll need to be prepared to meet those or other requirements. Ordinances may also mandate fencing types, a building permit or an inspection of the site before and after construction. Finally, call 811 free of charge to request that all gas, electric, phone and cable lines be mapped out for your safety.





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#### **Collaborate with** your builder.

You may want to hire either a landscape designer who specializes in gardens and pools or an independent contractor. But you can also pick one of many construction companies that now perform the excavation and initial cultivation of koi ponds.

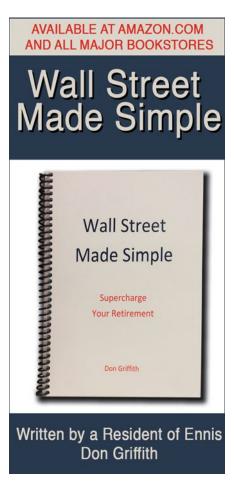
Work from architectural drawings or images of your builder's former projects or provide your own vision for the size and layout of the pond. Incorporate highlights of your existing garden, for instance a gazebo or arbor, into the scheme. Decide with your builder on the kind of stone to be used for pathways around your pond.

Perhaps you'll want a small, rustic terrace constructed nearby so guests can admire the carp whizzing to and fro. A grotto or other forms of recessed seating along the path to the pond are attractive ideas for individualizing the addition of a koi pond to your garden.

#### Select the location.

Choosing the perfect site for a koi pond is key to reducing maintenance while optimizing safety and enjoyment. Make sure the pond is built lower in the surrounding landscape, but not so low that runoff threatens the pond with fertilizer or other lawn chemicals. The pond should sit in an area that receives four to six hours of sunlight. A location fully exposed to the sun will cause issues of overheating and algae accumulation. Placement in full shade will prevent water lilies and other plant life from prospering.









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Your builder will need to network with a licensed electrician to ensure safe placement and service for a pump and filters, decorative lighting and other amenities. The pond should also be constructed within access of water hoses and sprinkler lines.



#### Pick your fish.

There's a wide variety of koi to choose from. Distinguished by brilliant colors and patterns, the most popular types are the white-skinned, red-marked Kohaku; Asagi, with light blue and red markings; and Bekko, yellow skinned with black spots. Koi are hardy, resisting most parasites, and can live for 50 years. Koi are omnivorous, eating peas, watermelon and lettuce. But a specially designated, commercially available food is recommended, because it's nutritionally balanced and made to float, thereby bringing the fish to the surface. Koi will grow accustomed to feeding times







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and the feeder, and can be trained to eat from the feeder's hand. Feeding is not recommended when the water temperature falls below 50 F.



#### Protect your fish.

The bright colors of koi that attract the admiration of garden lovers also draw predators like cats, raccoons and birds. Ponds should have a section deep enough for koi to hide in and ledges that are high enough from the surface to prevent animals from attacking. Nets covering the pond are sometimes suggested to keep away predators.

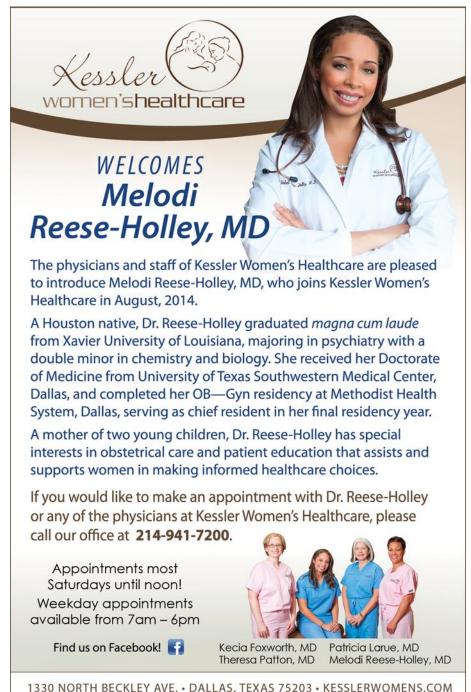


The possibilities for enjoying the peace and beauty of koi ponds are boundless. While adding a distinctive decorative element to your garden, this creative yet affordable feature will enhance your love of nature, aid the environment and provide family fun for generations.









### Business NOW







#### The Lofts at Crossroad Centre

411 Alliance Blvd. Waxahachie, TX 75165 (972) 937-9290 www.Loftscc.com

#### Hours:

Monday-Friday: 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Saturday: 10:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m.



Amanda Williams welcomes visitors and prospective clients to The Lofts. She's ready to share all the upscale complex has to offer.

# **Sitting Pretty**

Amanda Williams finds great satisfaction in her new career.

— By Sandra Strong

Mr. Megarity, successful entrepreneur and business owner, saw something in Amanda Williams, which she was unable to see in herself at that time. Now several years later, Amanda is sitting pretty as the manager of The Lofts at Crossroad Centre, an upscale apartment complex, conveniently located near the intersection of I-35 and Hwy. 287. "I had just recently started a new season in my life," Amanda said. "I had moved to the complex after selling my home in Spring Grove and was living in Building Three. Not long after, I met Mr. Megarity, owner of The Lofts. He saw a potential for growth."

After that chance meeting, Amanda was offered the position of secretary, which lasted all of three days. "I was promoted to

assistant manager," she said. "That position lasted about a year." Next month, she will celebrate her second anniversary as the manager of the upscale, gated community and will soon begin her tenure as regional manager over the Waxahachie location, as well as two new similar complex locations in Frisco and Arlington.

Amanda couldn't be happier with the way her life has turned out. "I love to be with people, so this is the perfect job for me," she confessed. "I was already invested in the Waxahachie community when God blessed me with this job. I believe He gave it to me so I could meet people who have been where I've been in life."

The Lofts at Crossroad Centre consists of 222 apartments,

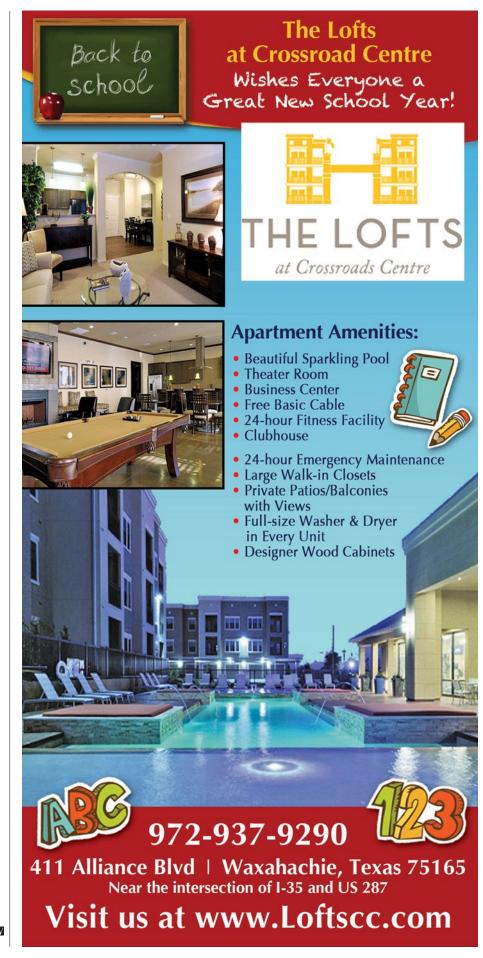
### Business NOW

offering one-, two- and three-bedroom abodes with resident safety a priority. One- and two-bedroom apartments come in three distinctive floor plans, while the three-bedroom apartment has a floor plan of its own. Some units come with an attached garage and/or an attached garage with ample storage area, while others are available with detached garages and storage areas. "We have a lot to offer," Amanda said. "Some of the amenities that come with the rental packages include: 24-hour emergency maintenance, basic cable, designer wood cabinetry, Berber carpet, crown molding, large walk-in closets, private patios/ balconies with great views and full-sized General Electric washers and dryers.

Common areas are equipped with Wi-Fi. The party room is available free-of-charge to residents during the day from 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. and can be rented after hours. "The business center is strictly for the residents," Amanda added, "Residents are able to print, fax and conduct online banking in an environment conducive to personal business. And the fitness center is open 24/7, too." Amenities also include: a theater room, clubhouse and a beautiful pool with several padded areas for sunbathing and wadding areas that serve as the pool's bookends for those with small children.

Although the majority of the residents at The Lofts work outside their homes, the complex takes great pride in being both child- and pet-friendly. "A large percentage of residents commute to and from Dallas, so it tends to be quiet during the week," Amanda explained. "We welcome anyone from young adults to the elderly. In fact, we currently have a Korean War veteran living here."

Amanda and her two leasing agents, Nichole Chesser and Kellye Johnson, greet prospective residents with a smile, and they are always ready to share what The Lofts at Crossroad Centre has to offer. "We are an upscale complex that really does have something for everyone," she said. "I may have come to The Lofts with no prior experience, but it didn't take me long to understand God's intervention was meant to be." NOW



## Around Town NOW



IMPACT Waxahachie presents the Ellis County Young Marines with a Drug Prevention Resources, Inc. Drug Awareness Kit to use in their Drug Demand Reduction Activities and Presentations.



The community is well represented at the ribbon cutting for John Houston Custom Homes in the Katy Lake Subdivision.



Shelia Stites and her daughter, Connie Settle, look on as granddaughter, Danica Settle, gets her first pedicure.



Brett and Cindy Hess are this year's Crape Myrtle King and Queen.



Kaitlyn and Sebastian Chase stay cool and have fun during The Avenue Church VBS event.



Prospects 9U teams come together and enjoy a wiffle ball game in honor of Timothy Valerius.



Pro Star Rental is now open for business.





The Spirit of Waxahachie Marching Band plays patriotic music during the annual Fourth of July Crape Myrtle Parade.

# Let's do something together for community

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senior adults - for our city.



# What If You're at Fault?

Did you know that if your dog bites someone at the park, you could end up with the medical bills? And if your child posts defamatory information online, you may owe for damages? Even if someone is accidentally injured while on your property, you may be the one liable. You can prepare for the unexpected and unintended by investing in personal liability umbrella coverage.

#### How Does It Work?

Home and auto insurance typically include some liability coverage, and it can be added to renters insurance for a fee. You can also purchase a Personal Liability Umbrella Policy in addition to underlying policies if you want extra coverage — which can be smart. "We live in a very litigious society," said Michael Barry, vice president of media relations for the Insurance Information Institute (III). "The liability insurance on your home or auto policy could be exhausted quickly if you were to be sued. Umbrella liability steps in to fill the coverage gap."

#### Is It Affordable?

The III estimates that \$1 million in personal liability insurance costs \$150 to \$300 per year. You could benefit by budgeting for the expense. "It's a wise move as part of an overall plan to protect your assets," Barry said.

#### What Does It Cover?

Personal liability umbrella insurance may cover damages and legal fees if you're found at fault in certain situations. This coverage may include incidents that happen away from your home, involve "attractive nuisances" such as pools or trampolines, and that aren't typically covered by home and auto policies, such as defamation of character, libel and slander.

#### What Are Its Limits?

Personal liability umbrella insurance won't cover injury or property damage related to business. If you work out of your house, look into other options for protecting your homebased business. NOW

This article contains only a general description of coverages and is not a contract. Details of coverage or limits vary in some states. All coverages are subject to the terms, provisions, exclusions and conditions in the policy itself and in any endorsements.

Adam Rope is a State Farm agent based in Waxahachie.

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#### Through December

Waxahachie Downtown Farmer's Market: Saturday, 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., S. Elm St. For more information, call (469) 309-4111.

#### August 2

Mt. Peak Cemetery Annual Ice Cream Supper/Fundraiser: 6:00 p.m., FM 875, Midlothian. Ice cream, hotdogs and drinks will be sold. Bounce house and face painting for the children. Bring a cake for the auction that begins at 7:00. All proceeds are used for the upkeep of the cemetery grounds.

#### August 9

Ellis County Wildlife Expo: 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Waxahachie Civic Center. Learn all about the wildlife industry from wildlife experts and industry leaders. Tickets are available at Ark Country Store through mid-July or they are \$5 at the door. For more information, visit www.arkcountrystore.com.

Benefit Nate: 5:00 p.m., KJT Auditorium, 1216 S. Paris St., Ennis. The benefit fundraiser for Nathan Gunn will include music, auctions and food/bar available. Tickets are \$15 per person.

#### August 10

Jammin' for Brooke: 3:00-8:00 p.m., Chautauqua Auditorium, Getzendaner Park. Thanks to the help of Sam Taylor, bands playing include: Reveille Sisters at 4:00, Calamity Janes at 5:00, Larry White & Friends at 6:00 and Scott Taylor's Allstar Review at 7:00. Proceeds from the afternoon concert will go toward medical bills for Brooke Foster. For more information, contact Sharon Aday at (972) 935-3100.

#### August 14

2nd Thursday Ladies' Night Out: 5:00-8:00 p.m., downtown Waxahachie. Enjoy special discounts and promotions.

#### August 19

3rd Annual Joint Community Chamber of Commerce After Hours Reception: 4:00-6:00 p.m., Mid-Way Regional Airport. For more details, call (972) 937-2390.

#### August 22

Summer Moonlight Movie: Monsters University: 9:00-11:00 p.m., downtown Waxahachie. Bring lawn chairs and/or blankets. On-site concession stand will be available during the free event. Call (469) 309-4111 for more information.

#### August 30

Bristol Opry: 7:00 p.m. Old Bristol Schoolhouse, Union Hill Road at Church Street. Call (972) 846-2211 for more details.

#### Ongoing:

#### Mondays

Celebrate Recovery: 7:00-9:00 p.m., Lighthouse Coffee Bar, 1404 N. Ninth St., Midlothian.

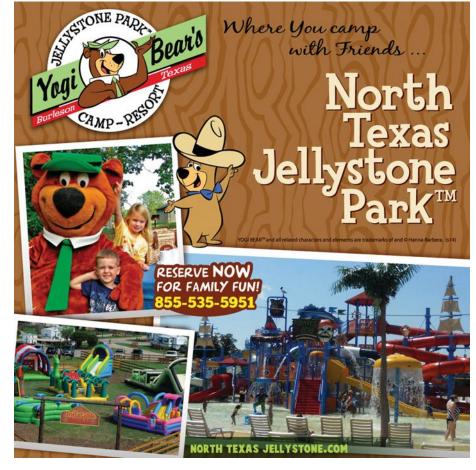
#### Tuesdays

Waxahachie Toastmasters meeting; 6:30 p.m., Lyceum at Sims Library. For more information, call (469) 245-8681.

#### Fourth Mondays

Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis County meetings: 6:30-8:30 p.m., Waxahachie Bible Church, 621 Grand Ave.

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







## Health NOW



## Mass Trouble

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

We are so scientifically advanced that we can now tell by a simple mathematical formula how overweight we are. A look in the mirror doesn't quite tell the entire story. The body mass index (BMI) measures body fat based on your height and weight. The score can be used as a screening tool to determine weight categories that may indicate your risks of developing diseases and conditions associated with being overweight or obese, such as premature heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, type 2 diabetes, gallbladder disease with gallstones, breathing problems, high LDL cholesterol, osteoarthritis and some cancers. BMI discussed here is regarding adults. The criterion used for children and teenagers is age and sex specific for them. The BMI for adults does not use age or sex.

The BMI formula is weight in pounds divided by height in inches squared x 703 or weight (lbs.) / height (in.) x height (in.) x 703. If the formula is a bit complicated for you to calculate, you can go online and any number of websites will do it for you. A safe website operated by the National Institutes of Health that will safely calculate your BMI is www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/obesity/BMI/ bmicalc.htm.

#### Your BMI categories:

18.5 or less Underweight 18.5 to 24.99 Normal Weight 25 to 29.99 Overweight 30 to 39.99 Obesity

In interpreting your score, the higher the number, the more elevated your risks are for health problems. Here are some things to consider when taking note of your number: The BMI weight measurement consists of body fat and muscle. This can skew the results for some people. Usually older adults have a greater concentration of body fat than younger adults. Women, on average, have more body fat than men. Athletes have more muscle mass, whereas sedentary individuals have less muscle mass. Because of the increased muscle mass, trained athletes will have a higher BMI.

Since a look in the mirror and only one test on body mass cannot give you the whole story, it is wise to consult with your physician for guidance in these matters. However, if you are overweight, you can avoid many of the diseases by simply losing weight. Again, your doctor can assist you in the best plan for your health. Weight is only one part of so many debilitating diseases and disorders that interfere with the quality of life. Your physician will perform tests specific to you and order other tests as he deems appropriate to accurately determine your risk. NOW

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



# Cooking NOW



## In the Kitchen With Ryan McElhany

— By Sandra Strong

Ryan McElhany has always been curious. As a child, he took things apart to better understand how they worked. He would then use the pieces to create something new. "Cooking is similar," he explained. "I enjoy the 'knowing' and sampling of new ingredients — even the bizarre ones. Knowledge makes it much easier to improvise."

He began cooking in 2007 as another way to help around the house when he and his wife, LaShera, had their first child. Now Ryan experiences the heart in his culinary creations when one of his daughters wanders into the kitchen to help. "We have three girls, Addie, Emmie and Libbie," he shared. "Addie, as the oldest, regards herself as my sous chef." Everything Ryan cooks now is self-taught through the good, old-fashioned trial-and-error method.

# Black Bean and Sweet Potato Chili

Serves 10.

1 1/2 Tbsp. olive oil

2 onions, chopped

8 cloves garlic, chopped

2 1/2 Tbsp. chili powder

1 Tbsp. ground coriander

1 14.5-oz. can fire-roasted tomatoes

1 14.5-oz. can tomato sauce

2 15-oz. cans black beans, rinsed

2 chipotle chilies in adobo, minced

1 Tbsp. adobo sauce

2 tsp. dried Mexican oregano

Chicken broth, as needed

Coarse kosher salt, to taste

Ground black pepper, to taste

2 cups sweet potatoes, 1/2-inch cubed

Fresh cilantro, chopped Pickled jalapeños

**1.** Heat oil in a large pot over medium heat; add onions. Cook until translucent, stirring

often, about 8 minutes. Add garlic; stir for 1 minute. Sprinkle with chili powder and coriander; stir for 1 minute more.

- **2.** Stir in next 6 ingredients. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low; covering with lid slightly ajar. Simmer 15 minutes. Add broth as needed for desired consistency.
- **3.** Season with salt and pepper. Stir potatoes into chili. Simmer uncovered over mediumlow heat until potatoes are tender; about 30 minutes.
- **4.** Serve with cilantro and jalapeños.

# Chicken Braised With Leeks and Figs

Serves 4.

1 Tbsp. butter

2 cups leeks (4 large), cut into

1-inch rounds

2 Tbsp. all-purpose flour

3/4 tsp. salt

1/4 tsp. black pepper

16 oz. chicken drumsticks, skinned (4 4-oz. portions)

16 oz. chicken thighs, skinned

(4 4-oz. portions)

1 1/2 cups chicken broth

3 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar

1 Tbsp. honey

6 sprigs parsley

I sprig thyme

16 medium fresh figs, lightly skinned

1 Tbsp. fresh parsley, chopped

- **1.** Melt butter in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add leeks; sautéing 5 minutes or until tender. Remove leeks from pan; set aside.
- **2.** Combine flour, salt and pepper in a large Ziploc baggie. Add chicken; seal and shake to evenly coat. Add chicken to pan; cook 10 minutes to brown on all sides. Add broth.
- **3.** Return leeks to pan. Add next 5 ingredients. Bring to a boil; cover and reduce heat; simmer 10 minutes, or until chicken is done. Remove parsley and thyme sprigs. Sprinkle with fresh parsley and thyme. Serve over cooked bulgur or polenta.

#### Citrus Chicken Tacos

Serves 6.

1 Tbsp. butter

I medium onion, chopped

1 cup water

1 Tbsp. soy sauce

1/3 cup dark brown sugar

1 1/2 Tbsp. chili powder

I large orange, quartered

I large lime, quartered

4 chicken breasts

I Tbsp. fresh cilantro, finely chopped Salt and pepper, to taste

6 corn tortillas

- **1.** Melt butter over medium heat in a large pan. Add onion; cook until translucent. Add next 4 ingredients. Add juice from orange and lime.
- **2.** Place remaining peels along outer perimeter of pan. Add chicken to center of pan; cook through, turning occasionally. Remove chicken and set aside. Remove orange and lime peels; save as garnish if desired.
- **3.** Reduce liquid to a glaze. Chop or shred chicken. Return chicken to pan, making sure to coat evenly. Sprinkle with cilantro. Season to taste.
- **4.** Fill tortillas with meat mixture. Serve as tacos with garnishes of your choosing.

# Renfro Healthcare Center's Back-To-School Celebration!

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