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ON THE COVER



Jacob Hammons reaches out of autism to encourage those who read his words.

Photo by Sarah Alvarez.

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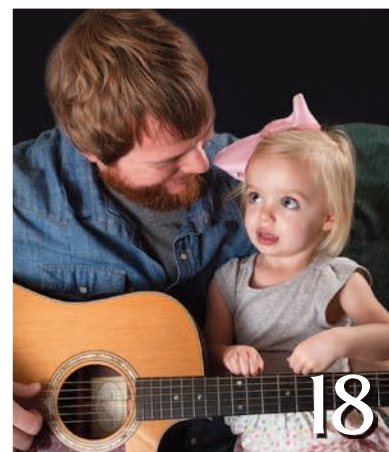
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Editor's Note

Hello, Friends!

While the younger generation gathers school supplies for their launch into a whole new year of learning, I'm devising new methods of exploring life. Brains need as much stimulation as calves, thighs, torsos and forearms, you know. In fact, prior years of investigation turned me toward a way of perceiving the muscle inside our skulls that is changing the way I operate. If I can become flaccid in my body, then certainly I run the risk of losing strength in my mind.

So how do we maintain this multimembraned organ?

Feed it, flex it and facilitate its foraging for freshness. This I shall do with your brains in mind also. Finding invigorating stories about inspiring people who are incorporating their heart and soul into everything they do might fatigue another. But this process sparks my vitality. May it prompt your growth as well.

Here's to new beginnings!

Melissa

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Unlocking Brilliance

— By Lisa Bell

Autism kept Jacob Hammons from communicating for the first 12 years of life. After learning to communicate, he stated, “It’s a terrible thing to be trapped inside your mind.”

No longer trapped, this delightful young man debunks theories of autistic children being unaffectionate and antisocial. Jacob can be animated, likes an occasional tickle and Dr Pepper. Once he focuses, he can sit for over an hour — something that would not have happened before.

Dan and Michelle Hammons knew early in Jake’s life something wasn’t right. He seemed unaware of them. They thought he might be deaf, but tests revealed, although his hearing wasn’t great, he *could* hear. Multiple doctors’ visits and searching for answers finally took them to Dallas. They received the official diagnosis of PDD (Pervasive Developmental Disorder) before Jake turned 3 years old. The doctor more or less said, “Put him in a home.”

“Michelle and I made the decision that we were gonna beat this thing,” Dan said. “It’s been a journey.” The

entire family, including their older son, Daniel, accepted the challenge, not realizing how difficult life with autism might become. Jacob, nonverbal for the first 12 years of life, had no way to communicate with his family. Taking Jacob to a store often meant turning around and walking out. His frustration level with not being able to express what he wanted escalated as something like a temper tantrum.

In the fall of 2012, Michelle discovered HALO, located in Austin. The center teaches RPM (Rapid Prompting Method), which helps nonverbal children and adults express everything locked inside their brain.

They took Jacob to meet Soma. “I call her the autism whisperer,” Dan said. “Within 15 minutes, she had him communicating.” Starting with simple yes/no questions, Jacob answered her questions. She pulled out a spell board, and for the first time, his parents learned what he wanted to be for Halloween. They didn’t think he could read but watched their son spell clown. “Michelle bawled,” Dan said. “I thought Soma was manipulating.” Before long, however, he changed his mind.

During the last three years, Jacob has continued to amaze his parents and brother. He commands a vast vocabulary, sending Dan searching for a dictionary when he uses words like *esoteric* in a sentence. He watches YouTube videos in different languages and understands them.

The Hammons hired Jacob’s teacher, Adriana, fresh out of college. The couple agrees she has been a godsend. While many professionals put a limit on his abilities, she came in and decided Jacob could do anything. “If you could measure his IQ, he’d be off the charts,” Dan said. “He does mathematics in his head I can’t do on a calculator.”





Left to right: Daniel, Michelle, Dan and Jacob Hammons.

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Friends hanging out at the park. Left to right: Nathan Ladner, Tim Weekley, Corey Spalding, Hunter Schneck, Jeremiah Biggs, Daniel and Jacob.



"He's brilliant," Dan added. "My oldest son won't hug me anymore, but this one hugs me all the time."

Michelle works with other autistic children. "Many of them are very affectionate," Michelle said.

All that brilliance was locked inside Jacob's mind, deftly hidden simply because he couldn't talk. "I was not always communicating, until Soma taught



me. She really was my savior,” Jacob said, using his spell board. The board is a simple laminated board with letters on one side, numbers and symbols on the other. Jacob is becoming better with typing, so he can use technology to communicate better.

After hearing a sermon at church, Jacob wanted to launch a Facebook page to raise awareness and understanding of autism. By early June, he had 914 followers along with friends in 11 countries and 15 states. Jacob loves “talking” with people and isn’t afraid to approach a stranger in the park for a little one-on-one. Conversations with Jacob aren’t fast-paced, but they are incredibly real.

The years haven’t been without problems. They both wanted the same thing. Michelle wanted to talk about it, and Dan wanted to fix it. About 90 percent of families with autistic children end in divorce. When asked how they stayed together, Dan said, “I just love her. She drives me insane. There’s no alternative. When I married her, she’s it.”

Michelle is certified in RPM and volunteers to help other children besides Jacob. “Five years ago, I never dreamed we’d be where we are today. He helped start a program for special needs kids at church. We have six kids now, and Jacob is a big jungle gym,” she said.

Dan praises Michelle for all of the hard work she’s done. By default, much

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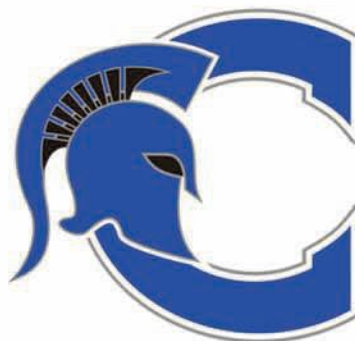
of his focus lands on Jacob, but he is extremely proud of 17-year-old Daniel, as well. "He's an awesome kid," Dan said.

At 12, Daniel began complaining of his leg hurting. After seeing many doctors who dismissed the issue as a cyst, Dan and Michelle decided they should have it removed. The surgeon immediately had suspicions, and pathology confirmed the malignancy. Dan sat in the office with his oldest son, hearing the news. "I felt like I was gut-shot. Autism, OK, but cancer,



who! We walked out with my mind far away, and this 12-year-old patted me on the back saying, 'Dad, it's gonna be OK. It's gonna be OK.' He's wise beyond his years."

After discussing it as a family, they opted for radical surgery, instead of radiation and chemo, which would stunt his growth. Now celebrating five years cancer free, at 6 feet 4 inches tall and 230 pounds, Daniel takes to the football field with a slight hobble and gives everything he can. He's learned perseverance well from his family.



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"Jacob's a great brother. Now that he can communicate, he seems more relaxed and enjoys going places. I love Jacob's sense of humor, and he makes me laugh," Daniel said. "I enjoy spending time with him and wrestling with him."

When the boys were younger, they'd go places and leave without doing what they paid for. "The last few years have been a blessing," Michelle said. "We have an appreciation for spending time as a family going to the movies, the waterpark, bowling, church and restaurants."

The Hammons spent years of frustration before finding HALO. They dream of having a resource center to help other families find solutions sooner. To dads, Dan said, "You *can* solve the problem. It just takes a long time."

Jacob is doing great making up for 12 years of feeling trapped. "I am too excited. I have a gift. I think there are children who need help. I can help spread awareness," he stated. At 15, he's already written a children's book for that very purpose and plans to write more.

A hero in many circles, Jacob has a hero, too. "He's near to my heart. It's my dad," he said. As parting wisdom, he said, "Stay strong, and never, never, never give up." **NOW**



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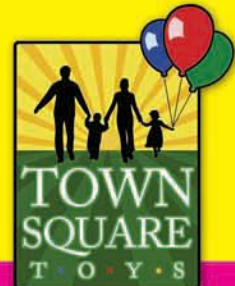
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BITTERSWEET

— By Lisa Bell

David Tribble's hands shook slightly as he read the letter from The Voice. They wanted him back. The once-in-a-lifetime experience left him with the hardest decision of his life. Three days is one thing, but three weeks, when you have a wife and baby, is an entirely different situation. Returning and going forward meant leaving his family alone. Unfortunately, the timing didn't coincide with a school break or summer. Taking off for that long would have meant losing his job as a teacher at Crowley Middle School. "At that stage, with that demand, I had to deny the invitation and choose my family," David said. "It was the hardest decision I ever had to make. I'm growing up."

Everything happened so fast and kept moving forward for the local artist. The trip to Austin for an audition came first. Two weeks later, the phone call. "You're going to LA. We need four days," they said.

"I can give you three," David replied.

"OK. You can catch the red-eye back," they agreed.

Leaving LA at midnight, and then teaching the next day after



"I had to trust my wife and what God was saying to both of us.

I'm not worrying about my desires – God knows my desires."



almost no sleep produced a wild day David barely remembers. Auditioning for the popular television show, where some musicians fulfill their greatest dream, changed his life.

He wanted to go and then go back. "But it's not about me," he said. "Since I married my wife and our daughter was born, things had shifted. I don't think those decisions worked with what I have committed to." The process stretched him beyond his comfort zone, pushing him beyond normal boundaries. He met some great people and wrote the song "Bittersweet." Although he didn't return and continue with the competition, the letter reassured him of his ability to be comfortable doing something more with his music. No regrets. "I had to trust my

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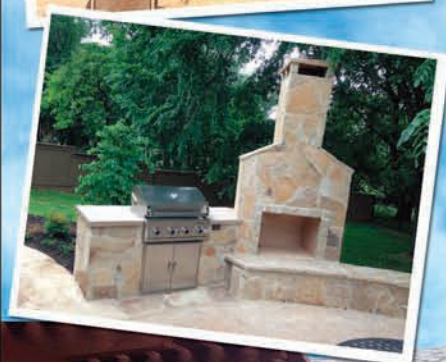
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wife and what God was saying to both of us. I'm not worrying about my desires — God knows my desires," he said. "I have a peace about it." David believes that in the future God will honor his choice to put his family first.

David "Trib" was born in Texarkana. Although his family relocated to Sherman, Texas, during his early school years, he remains a huge Arkansas Razorback fan, in line with his father who went to school at the University of Arkansas. David graduated from Stephen F. Austin State University in 2001, and soon after that, he moved to the Fort Worth area as a new teacher in the small town of Godley. He started his career coaching football, basketball and baseball. Young, willing to learn and available, he loved the job.

David, going into his 12th year of coaching and teaching for Crowley ISD, still loves the opportunity to work with kids. Earlier in his career, he coached more than one sport, but when his daughter, Harper Rose, arrived in September 2012, in the middle of football season, he decided she was more important than any sport. He gave up coaching everything but track. He also teaches eighth-grade science, the only subject that ever really made much sense to him. A typical male, he likes playing



around with stuff. In his college years, he developed a strong interest in geology and even worked in the lab for a semester.

David's wife, Erin, teaches second-graders in Aledo. They celebrated six years of marriage last month. David first met Erin through the drummer of his band, who happened to be dating (and eventually married) her sister. At the time, Erin was still in high school, and David was teaching. He didn't think of her as a potential girlfriend — she was just a kid. But she grew up over the years as did he. On February 28, 2008, at Erin's mother's birthday party, "That was it," he said. He knew her, knew her parents, but all they knew about each other was surface level. They started dating and truly got to know each other. Within three months, they became engaged. "She's been putting up with me ever since," he laughed.

As a kid, David sang in church. He didn't love it at the time. He was just a kid in the choir but went on trips and enjoyed some cool experiences as part of the group. He continued singing in choir until his seventh-grade year. When his parents divorced, he lost interest, as he attempted to deal with the emotions of life's circumstances. Around 18, he picked up his stepdad's guitar and a very old book and taught himself to play three

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chords. Songwriting soon followed as an outlet for working through feelings of isolation and a host of other emotions. Instead of songs filled with pain or negative sounds, David wrote about love and sometimes about God. He played sports but wasn't very good. Yet, he could get lost in the guitar. "That was sport enough for me," he said.

David has a distinctive voice, and his musical style combines an interesting mix of rock, folk and soul. He looks forward to opportunities where he can share his work. Different events fill his spare time — weddings, parties and other venues. Church music remains an important part of David's life, as well. He leads youth worship at Reece Prairie Baptist Church in Joshua, a position he has enjoyed for almost 12 years. He plays at other church events, when possible. Spring break and

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summer months give him opportunities he otherwise might not be able to pursue. Because of his job, he can travel during school breaks.

Connected to Young Life, an organization working with inner city youth in Dallas, he sometimes plays events for them. Late in 2014, David joined Tunes for Tots, a community of musicians that join forces, producing events to benefit children's charities all over the world. Whether leading worship or taking on the role of singer/songwriter, his passion for music shows.

With four recordings completed, David continues finding ways to share his music. This summer, he's involved with Extreme Tours out of Nashville, Tennessee. He wants to try to produce a recording each year, as well as to write the perfect song, always with the hope of others hearing. Dallas/Fort Worth is a good place for music, and on August 21 he plays at Shaw's Patio, Bar & Grill. While most musicians want to become famous, David said, "It isn't about getting big. What is big anyway?" He simply longs to share music through the gifts God has blessed him with.

Ultimately, David would like to work full time in a worship leader position. In the meantime, he finds joy in working with kids, teaching and pouring into their lives in a good way. "The opportunity I have to teach is such a cool one," he said. "I get a chance to share something of worth with these children, or a glimpse that may make a difference." Some things in life truly are bittersweet — and worth every minute. **NOW**



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— By Melissa Rawlins



At Home With

Coming full circle, Jack and Cynthia Renfro have found retirement requires a lot of work. But their pleasures are well worth the effort. Jack had grown up on a farm, on a parcel of land granted to his forefather after the Oklahoma Land Rush. Cynthia graduated from high school in Arlington, Texas, in the home of a minister with his own construction company, who also kept farm animals and enjoyed hunting. When the



Jack and Cynthia Renfro





Renfros neared retirement, they found land in the country east of Burleson. Purchasing the place in March 1994, they've had no vacation since.

It took them five years to decide to build the house. First, the land had to be cleared and room made for their vision. They built their stock tank where two gullies came together, and then they filled unwanted gullies with entire oak trees and dirt, even covering a little bitty, old wooden house Jack found on the property. Now the Renfros' land is useful as pasture for the cows the couple wanted.

Jack and Cynthia worked as a team over the course of many long weekends, building fences first and then barns. Cynthia enjoys fresh eggs and chickens, and as her collection grew, she'd tell Jack she needed another chicken house. Holding boards while he measured and marked them, she'd help him build another shelter for their hens.

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by Cynthia from floor plans found in *Southern Living* magazine, they hired a builder but also pitched in where they could. "Cynthia and I saved money by painting the whole house ourselves, three coats inside and two outside," Jack said. They also installed insulation in the walls, vinyl tiles in the guest bathroom and all the cabinet doorknobs.

Working on wood is second nature for this couple. Throughout their house, Cynthia has decorated with crafts she and Jack made during the last 30 years. She draws some of her own patterns, and he uses his band saw to help her create the shapes for her crafts, which for many years she sold at craft markets, such as Mountain View College. Her kitchen is a showcase of their artistry.

The hutch next to her oak dining table holds an assortment of her painted

cookie jar lids. A table she bought at Canton and then painted green and cream with flowers to match her kitchen, displays Grandma and Grandpa shelf sitters. She painted the stools, milk jugs and skillets hanging not far from a framed depiction of chickens, which she cross-stitched. Nearby is Jack's 3-by-3-foot shadow box of a barn, complete with miniature animals. Beyond the bench in front of the bay window looking out to their pasture, the cows are sometimes so close it appears they're looking in. If they're observant, they can see an old cheese box Cynthia painted,

nestled against the wall not far from a most unusual three-in-one step stool, seat and ironing board gracing the center of the kitchen's sunroom.

Cynthia's eye for heartwarming decor comes from a youth surrounded by relatives who were both functionally and artistically creative. Her mother used to can desserts, jellies and jams. Now, Cynthia gets creative even while

cooking, and what she cooks for Jack's dinner depends upon whether she's got something already canned — like the meat pot pie he loves.

Cynthia cooks surrounded by her handmade flower arrangements. Jack's sister-in-

law taught her this craft. A very pretty arrangement with birdhouses Cynthia painted is displayed on the living room mantel. On the brick hearth is a Singer sewing machine decorated with flowers.



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“Jack’s grandma used to make their clothes from Simplicity patterns on that sewing machine,” Cynthia said. Her Raggedy Ann doll sits on the other



side of the fireplace. On the adjoining wall is her cross-stitch and crewel work displayed above a heart-carved shelf that she designed and Jack cut out.

In his office, Cynthia displays a few dolls she made in the late '80s: a rabbit, a lamb and a teddy bear. “We sold a ton of those rabbits, which were the hardest to make, and only a few of the lambs,” she recalled. She also cross-stitched the saying above Jack’s computer: *Love Is The Little Things You Do*. This is where he relaxed during the cold months of last winter, trying to answer Cynthia’s question about whether Burleson named Renfro Street after Jack. Making use of his PC and an Internet connection, Jack hit the mother lode.

Knowing only his dad’s name, Jack found a big list of Renfros and proved his ancestral link to the city to which he and Cynthia retired. Between 1695-1702, John and Mary Renfro had three sons on American soil: John, William and Joseph. William had two sons: another William, who was the great-great-great-great-grandfather of Jack, and a man named James, who was the great-great-grandfather of Rev. Henry Carter Renfro, founder of Burleson.

Finding information about the Renfroes landing in Jamestown, Virginia, when that state included what is now Kentucky and half of Tennessee, Jack discovered that the Washington farm was next to the Renfro farm and that young George Washington learned how to survey from young James Renfro. “Renfro dropped the e off his name to tell him apart from other Renfroes,” Jack explained.

Thirty years ago, when Jack was engaged in a productive career managing

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auto parts stores and Cynthia was at home, she learned the art of crocheting from her friend Janet, who partnered with her in craft shows. Now the Renfros' master bedroom holds many examples of Cynthia's artistry, including blankets she crocheted with a long hook — one with a popcorn stitch. The corners of this room are perfect for displaying a beautiful, marble side table and two velvet-covered mahogany chairs from Cynthia's great-aunt's estate.

When Cynthia and her friend, Janet, challenged each other to cross-stitch a board game, the couples would play monopoly on the artistic cloth. Now, Cynthia's board hangs in the Renfros' guest room, above the bed on which Cynthia placed a pillow cross-stitched with the saying, *Happiness Is Found In Little Things*. When resting here, guests look upon a wall of shelving that stores Cynthia's colorful, orderly collection of canned fruit, meat and vegetables — and pot pies.

Continuing traditions from both their childhoods, the Renfros appreciate the work they did in their youth. Just as they



were taught, they now eat all that they grow. Jack's grandma always raised cattle and chickens, shelled beans and peas for canning and made Jack shell a quart before playing. Then, he'd tell her, "When I'm grown, I won't do this anymore!" But in retirement with Cynthia, Jack's been shelling seven quarts of beans at a time, and she keeps telling him, "Grandma would be proud." **NOW**

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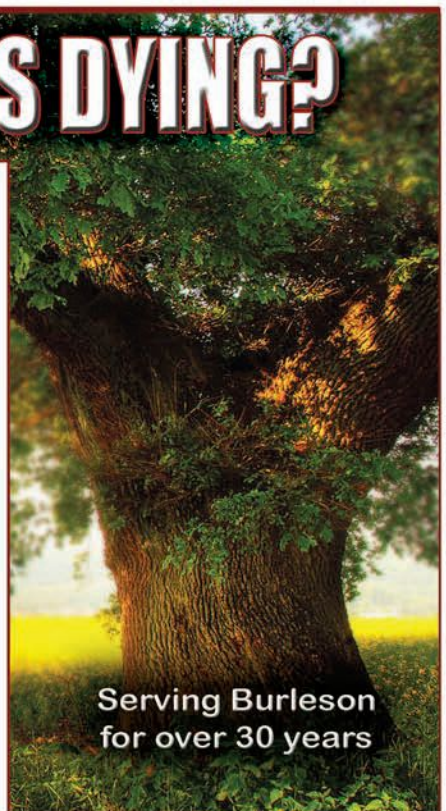


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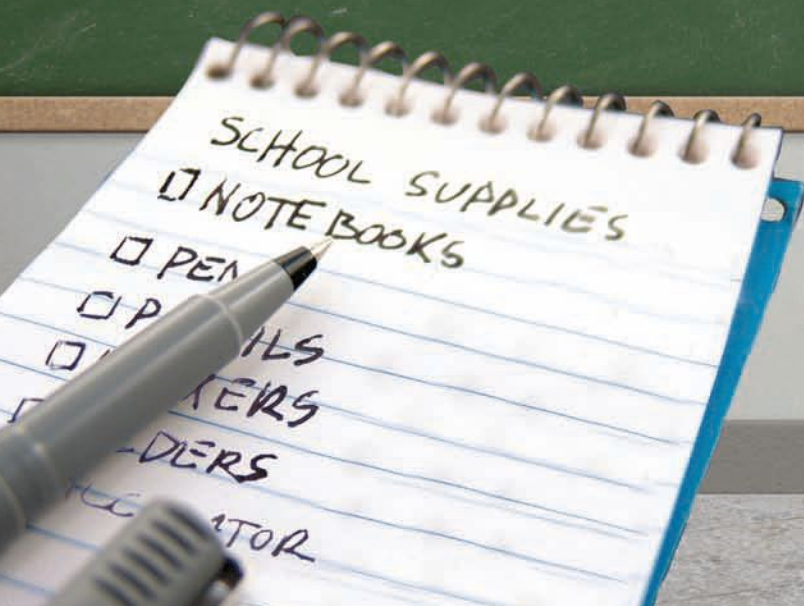
— By Melissa Swedoski

Summertime in Texas means outdoor fun, vacation or camps. It also means back-to-school time, right in the dog days of August. From new outfits and haircuts to new schedules and freedom never before had, there are plenty of challenges to be handled. While you remember the true investment of education, it's best to prepare ahead for both expenses and changes.

Shopping Season Helpful Hints

The long-standing tradition of back-to-school shopping means new clothes and shoes, braces and glasses, pencils and paper. Whether there's one student in the family or many, budgeting for expenses is imperative, and research is necessary when purchases are technology-related. According to the National Retail Federation, families spent approximately \$670 on back-to-school items in 2014. This year's numbers will likely increase, as electronic items continue to be part of the supply list.

Summer style will still be in before fall fashion takes over, but as most parents are aware, today's students live in the digital age, so they will be watching retailer websites and social media to see what's trending, what's out of style and what's fresh this fall.





Tips for back-to-school shopping:

- **Start early and pace yourself.** Since certain items will always be on the list, parents can buy over time and spend less.
- **Use shopping apps and websites.** Most retailers, both large and small, have websites or are on social media, and they send out notifications when they have sales. Using retail and coupon apps can help parents stay abreast of the sales.
- **Shop locally.** Many small businesses in your town carry all the items you need with amazing customer service and more diversity.



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- **Consider specialty shops.** In addition to discount and department stores, check out the electronic and/or clothing stores around. Some students may prefer western wear, and there are specialty stores catering



to that. Other students may prefer dressier school clothes over casual, and there are wonderful boutiques available. Almost every local store and national retailer also knows to have uniform pieces in stock.

- **Remember drug stores.** These stores may be overlooked, but when it comes to makeup, hair care, personal grooming items and more, drug stores can provide some great finds.



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Don't Forget Personal Care:

- **Physicals.** If a student is going to be involved in any sports activity, the school district will require an approval from a physician, to verify the student passed the physical. Several districts offer free physicals, so check with your school to see if this is offered and for the date and time.



- **Vaccinations.** Although age determines what vaccinations your child will need, all students must be up-to-date on their shots, with complete records filed at the school.
- **Vision and dental.** The beginning of school is a good time to have students' eyes checked, in case they might need glasses or a new prescription, while dental checkups for growing young people are important to overall health.
- **Hair care.** Whether or not your district has a specific dress code notation for hair, the beginning of a school year is a good time to decide if a student needs a trim, a new style or perhaps a change in shampoo and conditioner.
- **Makeup.** Some young ladies will begin using makeup, depending on



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their grade level and family rules. It never hurts to go by a beauty counter in a local store for a makeover and/or instructional session.



Some of the technology-related items you might need:

- 8GB or higher flash drive
- AA batteries
- Graphing calculators
- Electronic device for assignments and research such as a tablet or a desktop or laptop computer
- Cellphone or smartphone

Mark your calendar for tax-free weekend from August 7-9. As in previous years, clothing, footwear, school supplies and backpacks priced under \$100 are exempt from sales taxes for the weekend. This also includes items bought online, by telephone or by mail. Shoppers can even use layaway plans to take advantage of the sales tax holiday.



College Students

For first-timers or returning students, supplies are often purchased on an as-



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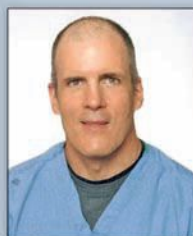


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needed basis. They will need electronic devices for their coursework, as well as notebooks and pens. Keep in mind that supply needs will change as the school year progresses.

Clothing based on the location of the college is important, so keep in mind if the weather will be warmer or colder than the student may be accustomed to at home, and plenty of fashionable, casual clothing is the norm for college students.



There's also the need to have dorm furniture to make living a little more comfortable, as well as personal grooming items, since many students will likely be sharing bathroom space for the first time. Try not to fall into the temptation of taking too many keepsakes from home, since there will be a limit on the amount of storage available, as well as display space.

Finally, some students may be considering getting their first credit/debit card or parents may be providing them with an emergency credit card. Parents should be sure to have a healthy conversation with them about spending habits and what constitutes a moment of real need, which would necessitate its use.

From transitioning grade levels to new schedules and time management, going back to school presents many new challenges. Be sure to talk about handling emotions that come with tougher coursework, along with changes in friendships and relationships. Finding new bus routes or walking to school can be intimidating for young children, so parental support is paramount. Be involved with your child's decisions, and he or she will be more willing to share the journey with you. **NOW**

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Becky Montgomery and her husband, Chuck Bailey, welcome you to their expansive showroom, full of functionally artistic remodeling ideas.

Tip-top Transformations

Harmonize your home with help from The Cabinetry & Tile Store.

— By Melissa Rawlins

Stepping inside The Cabinetry & Tile Store's lovely showroom assures you that your home remodel will be tip-top. The owners treat your home as if it were their own. Chuck Bailey and Becky Montgomery — marriage partners, business partners, leaders in their church and community — find success comes from listening for the little things other people want.

When clients describe their dreams, Chuck and Becky are challenged to figure out the best approach. Whether flooring, wall treatments or cabinetry, there is very little on the interior of a house The Cabinetry & Tile Store can't do. "To look at somebody's house and come up with something that just may work is fun," Chuck said. In bathrooms, for example, people are

replacing tubs with spas, turning minishowers into linen closets or replacing large tubs with walk-in showers that have a seat.

Through three years of operating The Cabinetry & Tile Store, Chuck and Becky have formed relationships with trustworthy craftsmen and contractors. They honestly provide and install canned lighting, ventilation, electrical, plumbing, texture and paint, cabinetry, tiling, flooring, glass shower doors, windows, countertops, construction and brick. "I find each of our trades are always on the job when they're scheduled to be there," Chuck said.

He typically performs the field measurements and then double-checks the integrity of the plans after Becky researches the design, selects colors and pulls together renderings. As Becky

orders cabinetry and other materials, Chuck coordinates the project and provides clients a clear idea of their project's duration.

"It's not about me. It's about you," Chuck said. "When we're all through with the free consultations and complete design process, if this is not what you're looking for, don't feel like you have to work with us. If it's not going to be a good marriage, it's not going to work out anyway."

Building a rapport with Becky and Chuck frequently begins over a cup of coffee in the couple's 1,800-square-foot showroom, which they expanded over the winter to include an 1,800-square-foot warehouse for staging each high-quality material to be used in individual residential renovations. Nervousness subsides when people who've been thinking of remodeling first visit The Cabinetry & Tile Store.

"I find myself telling them to slow down, relax and don't think they have to finish the project in one day," Chuck said. He also tells them he does not want to know their budget number. Instead he seeks to learn their complete vision, which is often inspired by the beautiful product on display in the showroom.

Becky's gentle, knowledgeable guidance reveals insight into trends and design technique. "In cabinetry, the color grey is so strong. It started in furniture, as is typical," she said. "In porcelain tile, it's the wood look, and they're coming out with new patterns that are more attractive all the time."

Once Becky and Chuck put the client's ideas into a picture they agree upon, they start working on numbers. "If the budget is too high, that's fine, and I want them to tell me that," Chuck said. "We can begin negotiating down to something that is within their budget and still something they are happy with."

He and Becky work in a similar fashion on each project, always for the good of the customer. "He'll tell me whether our design is practical from a mechanical side," she said. "We're a good balance." This cheerful couple works to bring your home into harmony. **NOW**



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Alicia Brigham and Hailey Crampton have fun with Minion Bob at Party Warehouse.



A family enjoys time together at The Hot Sounds of Summer Concert in Old Town Burleson.



John and Kathy Volkman's granddaughter, Ashlyn Corbin, entertains the Burleson Chamber After Hours with her fiddle playing.



Ayden Flores, Logan Payne, Lillianna Flores and Lucy Payne spend their summer selling cold drinks in Crowley.



As Deputy Chief of Burleson Police, Cindy Aaron retires, as her sons, TW and Roy, help celebrate her 30 years of service.



Friends McKenzie Hurd and Harli Woolsey hang out at the Burleson Public Library.



Carolyn Reed and her team sell homemade baked goods at City Market to raise money for All Stars Softball.



Melinda Wolff celebrates the Fourth of July with kisses from Ellie, a guest at The Pines Pet Pampering.



Anna Carreno and Samantha Campbell enjoy a girls night out at TGI Friday's.



Citizen of the Year Art Bruckes, with Art Bruckes State Farm's office manager Tammy Sanderson, sponsors the Young Professionals networking event at Old Town Brewery's Sky Bar.

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Safety Tips as Vacation Plans Heat Up

As the economy continues to rebound, Americans are preparing for summer vacation trips around the country. According to Phocuswright's U.S. Consumer Travel Report, six in 10 U.S. adults traveled for leisure in 2012, the same number as in 2011. However, vacationing away from home can present safety risks, as well as pleasures.

You can help make family trips more enjoyable by taking a few simple steps to reduce the possibility you will become an easy target for thieves who prey on tourists, or that your home will be robbed in your absence. Following some simple precautions can make your family vacation a memorable one for all the right reasons.

To help you enjoy a safe family vacation, the following are some tips:



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Add an Important Item to Your Back-to-school List.

For parents, back-to-school season means it's time to stock up on school supplies. But it can also be a good time to think about how to save for your child's future education.

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Make sure your home is protected while you're away:

- Stop mail and newspapers, or ask a neighbor to pick them up every day.
- Put several household lights on timers, so they turn on and off at appropriate times.
- Arrange to have grass mowed while you're gone.
- Ask a neighbor to park in your driveway overnight — anything that might suggest someone is home.

Make sure you don't pack unnecessary items and that your valuables are protected:

- Clean out your wallet or purse before you go. Take only essential credit cards.
- Carry your purse close to your body or your wallet in an inside front pocket.
- Pack as lightly as possible. Lots of heavy, cumbersome bags will slow you down and make you more vulnerable to getting robbed.
- Keep a separate record of the contents of checked luggage. Keep anything of value, such as medicine and jewelry, in a carry-on that stays with you.

In unfamiliar locations, you and your family should try to blend in with the crowd and not look too much like tourists:

- Don't display expensive jewelry, cameras, bags and other items that might draw attention.
- Check maps before you go out, so you can tour confidently.
- Stick to well-lit, well-traveled streets at all times.
- Leave an itinerary of your trip with someone at home in case you need to be contacted. Carry an extra passport photo with you just in case you need to replace a stolen passport.
- Don't use your home address on your luggage tags. You don't need to let anyone know where your empty house is located. Consider using your business card instead. **NOW**

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August 2 — 6

Family Camp: 6:00-8:30 p.m., Pathway Church, 325 N.W. Renfro. Sign up early for this free week of fun, creative, engaging activities for both kids and their parents. With special guest speaker, Jim Burns. Call (817) 295-5832.

August 4

JACC Quarterly Luncheon: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Joshua Community Room, 907 S. Broadway. Guest speaker: Sheriff Bob Alford. \$15 members; \$20 non-members. Joshua Area Chamber of Commerce, (817) 556-2480.

August 5

Summer Reading: 10:00 a.m., Crowley Public Library, 409 Oak St., Crowley. Every hero has a story. Enjoy this fun, free "carnival" program that celebrates kids' daily reading progress. Contact Library Director Christina Winner, (817) 297-6707.

August 7

Lunch & Learn: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Burleson Public Library, 248 S.W. Johnson Ave. Free small business workshop presented by Tim McRay on the topic of driving peak performance and generating more. Bring your

own brown-bag lunch. Call (817) 295-6121.

Round Up For Riders: 6:00-9:30 p.m., Historic Hilton Hotel, 815 Main St., Fort Worth. Support the mission of Wings of Hope Equitherapy, and enjoy an evening of dinner, auctions and boots up. To purchase your ticket or table, contact Executive Director Allison Gross, (817) 790-8810.

August 7 and 28

Family Night: 7:00-8:00 p.m., Joshua Community YMCA, 1009 Joshua Station Blvd. Always free. Family Activity Nights are open to everyone 3 years old to adults. For more information, call (817) 645-9622.

August 11

BISD New Employee Luncheon: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Burleson High School. Join sponsors Texas Health Resources – Huguley / Burleson / Cleburne in welcoming new BISD teachers and professionals to the Burleson community. \$25. Sponsor a teacher. RSVP (817) 295-6121.

August 18

Business After Hours: 5:30-7:00 p.m., WestStar Mortgage, 835 S.W. Alsbury Blvd.,

Suite H. This fun evening of networking is free to Burleson Area Chamber of Commerce members. Call (817) 295-6121.

August 20

Breast Cancer Care Support Group: 6:00-7:00 p.m., Pathway Church, 250 N.W. Tarrant Ave., Suite L. Call Nedra Lamar, (817) 915-5529.

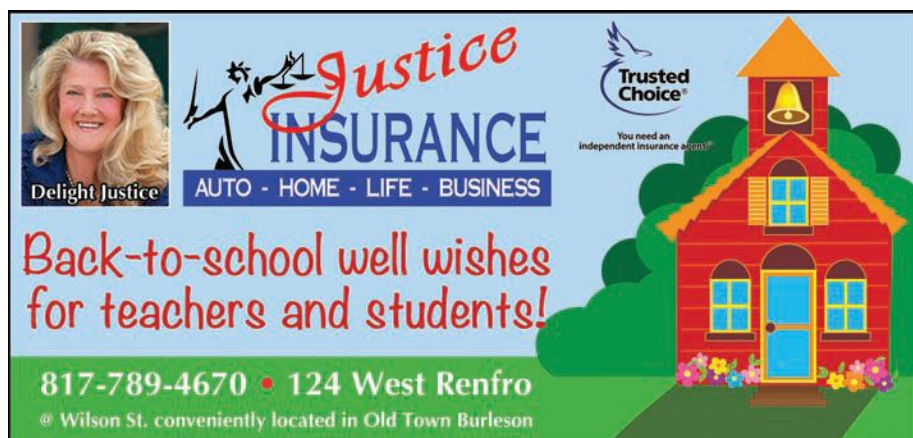
August 29

Masonic Lodge Pancake Breakfast: 7:00-10:00 a.m., 209 N. Magnolia St., Crowley. For more information, contact Jim Hirth, (817) 297-1942.

September 7

Pathway Prep Kid's Triathlon: 7:30 a.m., Southwestern Adventist University. This timed event is open to children of all ages. Proceeds benefit Pathway Prep Christian Academy's Christ-centered University-Model school supporting home centered education in Joshua. Registration \$40 per person or \$20 per relay participant. Contact (817) 480-2600.

Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your event details to melissa.rawlins@nowmagazines.com.



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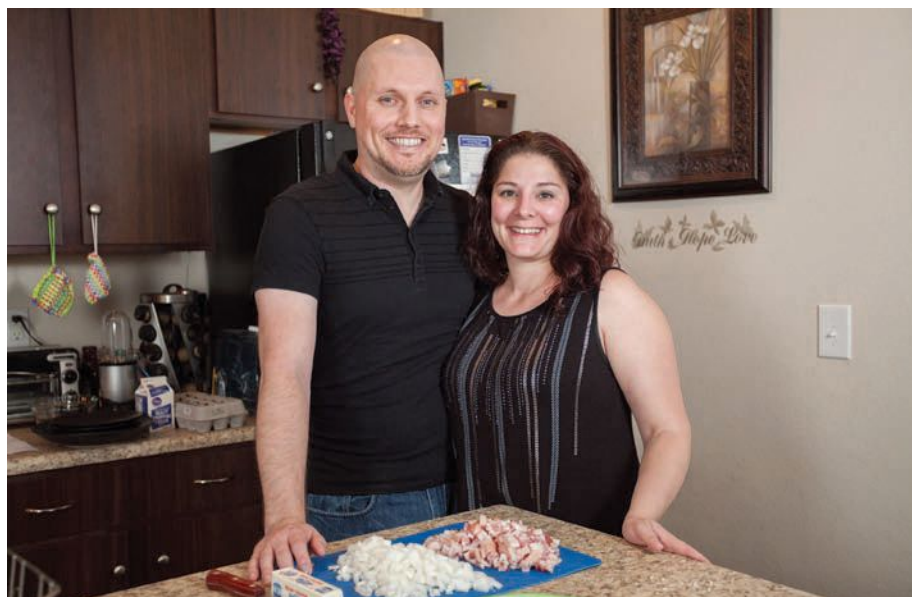
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In the Kitchen With Jesse and Sabrina McLeod

— By *Melissa Rawlins*

One of Sabrina McLeod's fun memories from childhood in Ithaca, New York, was preparing a meal in one of her family's restaurants. "We went out back of the restaurant, picked raspberries and blackberries, and then we cleaned and prepared them for our specialty dessert, Berries and Zabaglione [zah-bahl-YOH-nay]," Sabrina said. Her father taught her to be comfortable experimenting, while always serving the best to her loved ones. Years later, Jesse's business brought the McLeods to Burleson, where their son is growing up in the fun-loving family tradition. The couple likes foods from all around the world and makes social events out of cooking and eating. Here, they share recipes for simple Asian and Italian meals, which are fun to follow with light desserts, like popcorn flavored with butter, stevia and paprika, best enjoyed while chatting. **NOW**

Fresh Basil Pesto

2 cups fresh basil leaves, packed
1/3 cup pine nuts or walnuts
3 medium-size garlic cloves, minced
1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 cup Parmigiano-Reggiano or Romano cheese, freshly grated
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

1. Combine basil with nuts in a food processor and pulse a few times. (If you are using walnuts instead of pine nuts and they are not already chopped, pulse them a few times before adding the basil.) Add garlic. Pulse a few more times.
2. Slowly add olive oil in a constant stream, while the food processor is on. Stop to scrape down the sides of the food processor with a rubber spatula. Add grated cheese and pulse again, until blended. Add a pinch of

salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste.

3. Serve with your favorite bread, toast or crackers as an appetizer or toss with gnocchi, pasta or grilled, diced meat as an entrée.

Pasta Carbonara

A 10-minute meal that tastes gourmet.

1 lb. smoked bacon, diced
1 white onion, diced
4 Tbsp. butter
2 tsp. black pepper (divided use)
1/2 lb. spaghetti, cooked
3 oz. chicken stock
7 eggs
1 oz. heavy whipping cream
1-2 cups Parmesan cheese, freshly grated

1. Combine the first three ingredients in a skillet, cover with a lot of pepper and sauté.
2. Add cooked spaghetti to skillet and cook

until all the butter and bacon grease has absorbed into the pasta.

3. Add chicken stock and stir.
4. Break eggs into a bowl. Add whipping cream. Break the yolks and mix a bit, but do not whip.
5. Take skillet off fire. This way, when adding eggs they will not scramble. Constantly stir until pasta is fully coated.
6. Add Parmesan and additional pepper to taste. Serve while hot and steaming.

Smoky Popcorn

A light, s'morish dessert.

1 tsp. paprika
1/2 Tbsp. stevia
4 Tbsp. unsalted butter
1 bag microwave popcorn

1. Put first three ingredients in a microwave-safe bowl.
2. Pop the popcorn.
3. Heat butter with stevia and paprika until fully melted. Add to the bag of popcorn; toss until fully coated.
4. Pour into a bowl and enjoy.

Sesame Ginger Chicken

2 Tbsp. soy sauce
2 Tbsp. honey
1 Tbsp. sesame seeds, toasted
1/2 tsp. ground ginger
4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cubed
2 green onions, with tops, cut into thin strips

1. In a small bowl, combine the first four ingredients; set sauce aside.
2. Pound chicken breasts to 1/4-inch thickness. Cut into cubes. Marinate in sauce for 2 hours.
3. Toss chicken and soy sauce mixture in a wok. Cook cubes until nicely browned all over and slightly sticky with the sauce.
4. Garnish with onions.

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